



Islamabad POST

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Shehbaz-Ilham meeting

Pak, Azerbaijan commit to boost bilateral relations

The Prime Minister also thanked President Ilham on Azerbaijan's steadfast support extended to Pakistan during the recent conflict with India. The Prime Minister stated that Pakistan had also extended consistent support to Azerbaijan in challenging times



DNA

KHANKENDI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, visited Azerbaijan to lead Pakistan's delegation in the 17th Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Summit in Khankendi, Azerbaijan, held on 3-4 July, 2025. On the sidelines of the Summit, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held a productive bilateral meeting with H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan. The PM congratulated the President of Azerbaijan for hosting the 17th ECO Summit in an exemplary manner. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also conveyed his gratitude to President Aliyev and the people of Azerbaijan for the gracious hospitality extended to him and his delegation during his recent visit to Lachin, Azerbaijan, from May 27-29, 2025. The Prime Minister also thanked President Ilham on Azerbaijan's steadfast support extended to Pakistan during the recent conflict with India. The Prime Minister stated that Pakistan had also extended consistent support to Azerbaijan in challenging times. The two leaders agreed to enhance their cooperation in the fields of trade and investment while expressing satisfaction over the progress made regarding the investment prospects. Both leaders reiterated their resolve to strengthen the economic partnership, especially Azerbaijan's investment in Pakistan. The PM reaffirmed that the recent interactions between the leadership of both countries had helped in making the relationship ever stronger. The Prime Minister reiterated his invitation to President Ilham to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience.

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Briefs

MS, CEO of hospital arrested

DNA

PAKPATTAN: On the orders of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the Medical Superintendent (MS) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital in Pakpattan were arrested on Saturday in connection with the deaths of 20 children. The chief minister made a surprise visit to the hospital and took immediate notice of the tragedy. On her instructions, police took MS Dr Adnan Ghaffar and CEO Health Dr Sohail into custody from the hospital premises. According to govt sources, the two officials were arrested for their alleged negligence and attempts to conceal facts related to the incident. A first information report (FIR) has also been registered against both officials.

Pay raise of Govt servants notified

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The pay hike was announced as part of the budget for the coming fiscal year, where the salaries of federal employees from Grade 1 to 22 would be raised by 10pc and retired government servants would be eligible for a 7pc pension increase. According to one of the notifications, dated July 4, basic pay to armed forces personnel, civil armed forces, and civil employees of the federal government are subject to the pay raise.

Holiday Notice

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

Post-war accusations

China helped Pakistan with 'live inputs': India
Lt Gen Singh says Turkiye also provided key support to Pakistan, equipping it with drones, "trained individuals"

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: China gave Islamabad "live inputs" on key Indian positions during Pakistan's deadly conflict with its neighbour in May, the deputy chief of India's army claimed on Friday, calling for urgent upgrades to the country's air defence systems. The nuclear-armed rivals used missiles, drones, and artillery fire during the four-day fighting — their worst in decades — triggered by an attack in April on Hindu tourists in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) that New Delhi blamed on Islamabad, before agreeing to a ceasefire. Pakistan has denied involvement in the attack. India fought two adversaries during the conflict, with Pakistan being the "front face" while China provided "all possible support", Lieutenant General Rahul Singh claimed at a defence industry event in New Delhi. "When the DGM (director general of military operations) level talks were going

on, Pakistan ... said that we know that your such and such important vector is primed and it is ready for action ... he was getting live inputs from China," he claimed. However, Singh did not elaborate on how India knew about the live inputs from China. India's relationship with China was strained after a 2020 border clash that sparked a four-year military standoff, but tensions began to ease after the countries reached a pact to step back in October. India had earlier said that although Pakistan is closely allied with China, there was no sign of any actual help from Beijing during the conflict. Regarding the possibility of China providing satellite imagery or other real-time intelligence, India's chief of defence staff had said such imagery was commercially available and could have been procured from China or elsewhere. Pakistani officials have previously dismissed allegations of receiving active support from China in the conflict.

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DPM Dar, FM of Azerbaijan, agree to strengthen ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday met with the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov on the sidelines of the 17th ECO Summit in Khankendi. During the meeting, the deputy PM congratulated Azerbaijan's leadership on the successful hosting of the Summit and lauded its proactive role in ECO. "We reaffirmed that recent high-level exchanges have further strengthened our bilateral ties and expressed commitment to deepening cooperation across diverse sectors," he added.

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After Ashura PTI to start anti-govt movement

PTI founder says "it would be better to establish monarchy instead of implementing 27th Amendment"

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Aleema Khan, sister of incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, on Friday said the party's patron-in-chief had directed that the party should begin its movement against the government after the 10th of Muharram. Speaking to media outside an anti-terrorism court in Rawalpindi, she conveyed the PTI founder's message, stating he said it would be better to establish a "monarchy" instead of

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RWANDA NATIONAL LIBERATION DAY



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Mushahid Hussain Syed, Sindh Governor Kamran Tesori, High Commissioner of Rwanda H.E. Harerimana Fatou and others cutting cake to celebrate the Rwanda National Liberation Day, at Islamabad Serena Hotel. — DNA

At Pak-Afghan border

30 terrorists eliminated

Terrorists' movement was detected in Hassan Khel area of N Waziristan on night of July 1-2 and July 2-3

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Security forces have eliminated at least 30 Indian-backed terrorists trying to infiltrate through Pakistan-Afghanistan border in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's North Waziristan district, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Friday. The military's media wing said the movement of a large group of "khawarij" (terrorists), belonging to the "Indian proxy Fitna-al-Khawarij", was detected near border area in Hassan Khel on the night of July 1-2 and July 2-3. According to the ISPR, troops engaged the infiltrators and thwarted their attempt to infiltrate, with "precise and skillful engagement," resulting in all 30 Indian-sponsored terrorists being "sent to hell". A significant quantity of weapons, ammunition and explosives was recovered from the neutralised terrorists.

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President, PM laud security forces

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday paid tribute to the security forces for eliminating 30 Indian-backed Khawarij terrorists while attempting to infiltrate through the Pak-Afghan border in Hassan Khel area of North Waziristan. The president and prime minister, in their separately issued statements, commended the bravery of security forces for carrying out

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KARACHI TRAGEDY

Nine dead, several trapped as building collapses

Rescue operation to continue overnight; high-level committee to probe collapse

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: At least nine people lost their lives — three women, five men, and a seven-year-old boy — and eight were rescued on Friday after a five-storey residential building collapsed in the Baghdadi area of Karachi's Lyari. Rescue operations remain ongoing, with authorities estimating that up to 25 people may still be trapped under the rubble. "There are more than 400 buildings that have been declared dangerous. We have two options: either persuade people to leave or evict them forcefully," the city's mayor said. However, every government tries to persuade people rather than using force. Today's unfortunate event is proof that when the government tells you something, listen," he said. In Lyari, buildings are constructed side by side. As a result, when the building collapsed, residents of two adjacent structures — one two-storey and the other seven-storey — were evacuated as a precaution. Police and Rangers have made announcements urging residents to stay away from the site. According to local officials, the

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building — located in a compound — had 20 apartments. The scene was marked by chaos and distress as relatives of the trapped victims attempted to assist rescue workers, inadvertently disrupting operations. Rangers and City Wardens were later deployed to cordon off the area and stop people from approaching the site. Heavy machinery has arrived to clear the debris. Rescue personnel are using a Trapped Person Locator — a device that detects heartbeats under rubble — to identify survivors. This equipment is deployed after each layer of rubble is cleared, making the operation lengthy but thorough. Authorities said the mission may take several more hours to complete. Despite fatigue, rescue workers have not taken breaks, and preparations are underway to install floodlights for continued operation after dark. Deputy Commissioner South confirmed that six families were residing in the building at the time of the collapse. An affected resident from Thatta, whose aunt's family lived on the fourth floor, said: "We don't know how many are still inside.

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CM Sindh unveils e-Cabinet app to modernise governance

CM revealed that the provincial government currently incurs over Rs 11 million annually in paper costs alone, excluding additional expenses such as file covers, boards, fuel, and staffing

KARACHI: In a landmark decision aimed at enhancing government efficiency, Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah has approved the launch of the e-Cabinet App. This innovative platform is designed to ensure robust security, transparency and environmental sustainability, achieving 100 per cent paperless operations and significantly reducing meeting preparation time by more than half, while also saving millions in government funds. The CM previously instructed the provincial IT department to develop a user-friendly e-Cabinet App to initiate paperless operations, starting with cabinet work and summaries. Following its development, a detailed demonstration of the app was presented to Mr Shah at the CM's House, attended by provincial ministers, including Sharjeel Memon, Saeed Ghani, Mukesh Chawala, Jam Khan Shoro, Zia Lanjar, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha

Wasif, Secretary IT Noor Samoo, Secretary to the CM Zaman Narejo, Secretary GA Mohammad Ali Khoso, and other relevant officers. CM revealed that the provincial government currently incurs over Rs 11 million annually in paper costs alone, excluding additional expenses such as file covers, boards, fuel, and staffing. The introduction of the e-Cabinet App is expected to provide crucial advantages, including enhanced confidentiality, security, efficient time management, and a transition towards e-governance, promoting a progressive, technology-driven image for the provincial government. Additionally, the app aims to considerably reduce the environmental impact by minimising the use of paper and related logistics. The e-Cabinet app will manage the entire workflow for the Chief Minister's summaries, cabinet meetings, and documentation for the Cabinet Committee on Finance (CCF), as well as meeting

minutes. Key features of the app include a performance dashboard to track key performance indicators (KPIs), comprehensive dashboards for the Chief Secretary and CM providing an overview of all departments, extensive search options by date, subject, or agenda, and the ability to type or attach files in various formats. Furthermore, the app offers customisable approval flows and an offline mode, enabling users to download summaries and agendas for review at any time, even without Wi-Fi. Designed with essential security measures, the e-Cabinet App marks a significant stride towards modernising governance in Sindh, paving the way for a more efficient and environmentally conscious government operation. The CM directed the Chief Secretary to suggest necessary amendments in the rules of business so that the e-cabinet App could be made operational.—APP

KP govt redrafts Anti-Beggary Bill 2025

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has finalized the redrafting of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Anti-Beggary Bill 2025, aiming to strengthen efforts to curb organized begging networks and ensure the protection and rehabilitation of vulnerable individuals. The proposed legislation, which seeks to repeal the existing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Vagrancy (Control & Rehabilitation) Act, 2020, introduces a comprehensive framework focused on prevention, rehabilitation, and social reintegration rather than punitive measures alone. According to officials, the new draft emphasizes a culturally sensitive and context-specific approach, designed to be practically implementable and responsive to the social realities of the province. When laws are drafted without considering community behaviors, resource constraints, and the actual capacities of implementing institutions, they often remain ineffective and fail to achieve meaningful change," noted Qamar Naseem, Programme Manager at Blue Veins and the principal drafter of the bill. Technical support for the redrafting of this bill was provided by Blue Veins, a non-profit organization working on social development and human rights in the province. The revised bill introduces clear definitions, prohibits the exploitation of children and persons with disabilities, and outlines mechanisms for rescue, protection, and rehabilitation, said Qamar. It envisions collaborative efforts among various government departments, civil society, and local communities to dismantle begging mafias and provide support to those forced into begging. The draft is currently under vetting by the provincial Law Department, after which it will be presented to the Provincial Assembly for approval, he added. A key highlight is the strong political commitment shown by the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, who has expressed personal interest in the early adoption and implementation of this important legislation.—APP

KP okays scholarships for 224 students

PESHAWAR: After the complete digitization of the scholarship program to ensure transparency, performance, and merit, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Foundation (KPEF) has finalized 224 merit-based scholarships for talented and deserving students from across the province who are currently studying at some of the country's leading universities. According to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Foundation (KPEF), after approval from its Board of Directors, KPEF introduced a fully digital scholarship process — the first of its kind in the country. Conceived and implemented by Managing Director Zarif Maani, this end-to-end online system operates through a secure portal, ensuring that every step of the application and selection process remains transparent, traceable, and merit-based. According to KPEF, a total of 3,669 applications were received from 32 districts, including 2,935 for undergraduate (BS) programs and 734 for postgraduate (MS) studies. Managing Director Zarif Maani explained that the foundation, in collaboration

with 30 top-tier universities, implemented a standardized and accountable selection process. These universities include Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute (GIKI), National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), FAST National University, Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad, University of Engineering and Technology Peshawar, National College of Arts, and others. Applications were reviewed through a seven-step digital mechanism that began with a public advertisement and concluded with the direct transfer of funds to relevant universities for disbursement to selected students. The multi-layered evaluation process included interviews by institutional scholarship award committees, internal verification by KPEF, publication of provisional merit lists, a one-week appeal period, and final approval. According to the Foundation, the final selection results show that 122 scholarships were awarded to BS students — 64 male and 58 female — and 98 scholarships to MS students — 49 male and 49 female — reflecting the Foundation's commitment

to gender equality and regional inclusion. Zarif Maani further stated that special attention was given to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups throughout the process. Out of 482 orphan applicants, 77 were selected; out of 285 applicants who had memorized the Quran (Hafiz-e-Quran), 26 were awarded scholarships. Additionally, ten students registered in social welfare programs were supported, and one student with a documented disability also received a scholarship. Officials noted that the selected students were not only from disadvantaged backgrounds but also talented and selected purely on merit. District-level participation showed a strong representation from areas like Charsadda, Chitral, Buner, Battagram, Dera Ismail Khan, Kohat, Swabi, and Mohmand, where the application-to-selection ratio was highest. In contrast, districts like Tank, Tor Ghar, and Hangu had the lowest selection numbers due to fewer applications and merit-based filtering. The eligibility criteria for the scholarship were clear and unambiguous. Applicants were required to have at least 70% marks or a CGPA of 3.0 in their last exam.

National unity, peace and respect imperative during Muharram

FAISALABAD: Chairman Ulema Council and General Secretary International Khatm-e-Nubuwwat Movement Pakistan, Sahibzada Zahid Mehmood Qasmi, said that national unity, peace and respect are imperative during Muharram-ul-Haram to foil nefarious designs of miscreants and anti-state elements. Pakistan travel guide During his Juma sermon at Jamia Masjid Gol Ghulam Muhammad Abad, he said that as Islamic month of Muharram begins, religious leaders and scholars call on the nation to highlight the virtues and realities of the sacred month in a positive and respectful manner. He highlighted the significance of unity, reconciliation and solidarity and said that Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) and his companions (May Allah please with them) stood firm against injustice and falsehood. He said that this year, Muharram arrived with many challenges, making it more crucial than ever for the nation to show harmony. He said that Muharram teaches patience, tolerance and peace in addition to commemorate the ultimate sacrifice made by Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS), the beloved grandson of the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and his loyal companions in the battle of Karbala. The tragedy of Karbala has a timeless lesson of selflessness and sacrifice, he said and added that unwavering stance of Imam Hussain (AS) in the face of tyranny remains a guiding light for Muslims around the world. He urged the nation to follow in footprints of Imam Hussain (AS) which is the only way to counter the threats posed by external enemies and oppressors. He also highlighted the oppression faced by the people of Palestine and illegally Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir and called on the Muslim Ummah to move forward in unity to support the oppressed and uphold justice. He said that the month of Muharram also serves as a reminder to uphold respect for sacred Islamic figures and teachings. He urged the people to avoid any speech or behavior that could insult the revered companions of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), his caliphs, Umm-ul-Momineen and Ahl-e-Bait (May Allah please with them). He also stressed the need to adhere to "Paigham-e-Pakistan". This is a code of conduct issued by the government and it can help ensure peaceful observances throughout the holy month, he added. He also urged religious speakers and orators to refrain from provocative speeches during Muharram. He advised the youth to adopt positive attitudes and avoid sharing objectionable content on social media. He said that scholars and preachers have a crucial role to play in promoting an atmosphere of peace and mutual respect during Ashura commemorations. He said that love for Ahl-e-Bait is an integral part of Islamic faith and Imam Hussain (AS) has proved himself as an unmatched model for all Muslims.—DNA



SWAT: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engr. Amir Muqam laying floral wreath at the grave of Shaheed AC Bajaur Faisal Ismail.

Timely blood donation can save lives'

LAHORE: Principal of Ameer Uddin Medical College and Lahore General Hospital, Professor Dr. Farooq Afzal, has emphasized the life-saving importance of timely blood donation, particularly for accident victims. He was addressing an awareness walk organized by the Blood Donation Society of Ameer Uddin Medical College at Lahore General Hospital on Friday. Highlighting the alarming rise in road accidents due to the fast pace of modern life and technological advancements, Prof. Afzal said that injuries and fatalities have surged, making the availability of blood more critical than ever. "If accident victims are given blood on time, many lives can be saved," he said.

He urged the public, especially the youth, to understand their moral and religious responsibility to donate blood regularly. Quoting a verse from the Holy Quran, he stated, "Whoever saves one life, it is as if he has saved all of humanity." He added that donating blood is not only a humanitarian act but also a source of spiritual satisfaction. "It is a noble gesture that brings inner peace to the donor," he noted. Prof. Afzal explained that during major accidents and natural disasters, injured individuals often require urgent blood transfusions. Similarly, many surgical procedures depend on multiple units of blood. Unfortunately, a lack of awareness and common misconceptions prevent even close relatives from donating.—APP

Rule of law forms basis of civilized society: Kundi

CHARSADDA: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday emphasized that the rule of law is the cornerstone of a civilized and strong society, asserting that lawyers play a pivotal role in upholding it. He expressed these views while addressing the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected office bearers of the Charsadda District Bar Association as the chief guest. The Governor administered the oath to the new officials and congratulated them on assuming their responsibilities. Governor Kundi expressed hope that the new leadership of the Bar would actively contribute

to the delivery of justice and improvement of legal services. He highlighted that Charsadda Bar holds a distinct identity not only in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but across Pakistan due to its consistent constitutional, democratic, and intellectual struggles. Praising the legal fraternity, the Governor noted, "Lawyers have always been at the forefront of the struggle for the rule of law, judicial independence, and the protection of human rights." He added that the responsibilities of lawyers have increased manifold in the current times. He urged lawyers

to not only safeguard the rights of their clients but also play a constructive role in promoting justice, tolerance, and harmony in society. Emphasizing the importance of access to justice for all, he said lawyers must remain particularly mindful of their professional responsibilities toward the underprivileged and middle-income segments. Concluding his address, Governor Kundi lauded the services of the Charsadda Bar Association and expressed confidence that the association would continue to uphold its rich traditions in strengthening the justice system.—APP

UBG delegation's Gurdwara Janam visit promotes harmony

NANKANA SAHIB : A high-level delegation from the United Business Group (UBG) visited the Gurdwara Janam Asthan Guru Nanak Dev Ji in Nankana Sahib. The purpose of the visit was to promote interfaith harmony, religious tolerance, and a message of respect and solidarity with minorities in Pakistan. The UBG delegation received a warm welcome from the President of the Guru Nanak Ji Sewak Jatha and the Coordinator for the Ministry of Human Rights and Minority Affairs, Sardar Palvinder Singh, who provided a detailed briefing on the historical, religious, and cultural significance of the Gurdwara. On this occasion, meaningful discussions were held on key topics such as Sikh-Muslim relations, religious rights of minorities, and social harmony. UBG

Patron-in-Chief S.M. Tanveer stated that minorities in Pakistan are constitutionally and practically guaranteed complete religious freedom. He emphasized that the business community should foster not only economic growth but also promote social and religious harmony. Visits like these are important steps in that direction. UBG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari shared his views, noting that Sikhs and Muslims share a common spiritual heritage for centuries. The teachings of Baba Farid Shakar Ganj (RA) and Guru Nanak Dev Ji still echo the message of humanity, tolerance, and mutual love. The inclusion of Baba Farid's poetry in the Guru Granth Sahib is living proof of this spiritual connection. Sardar Palvinder Singh appreciated the arrival of the UBG dele-

gation, stating that when a representative business group visits the religious sites of minorities and conveys a message of unity, peace, and brotherhood, it strengthens Pakistan's positive image. He further shared that the Ministry of Human Rights and Minority Affairs is actively promoting interfaith harmony throughout the country. President of the Nankana Chamber of Commerce, Sardar Mian Nadeem, also addressed the gathering, saying that the land of Nankana Sahib is not only sacred to the Sikh community but also symbolizes peace, tolerance, and spirituality for people of all faiths. He appreciated the UBG delegation's visit as evidence of the business community's serious commitment to minority rights, religious respect, and harmony.—APP

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Anis for reassessing contemporary epistemologies in light of Islamic thought

ISLAMABAD : Growing concerns over the ethical vacuum and fragmented understanding fostered by dominant Western knowledge systems have underscored the urgent need to reassess contemporary epistemologies through the lens of Islamic tradition. The Islamic concept of knowledge fosters the holistic development of the human personality and builds information, knowledge, and skill upon moral and spiritual foundations. A system of thought and education grounded in social realities and religious principles can serve as an effective means to address global crises and promote human dignity. This was observed by Prof. Dr. Anis Ahmad, renowned scholar and vice chancellor of Riphah International University, while delivering

a seminal lecture titled "Revisiting the Concept of Knowledge," at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad, as part of its lecture series "The World Today and the Future of Humanity." The event was organized in collaboration with the Markfield Institute of Higher Education (MIHE), UK, International Institute of Muslim Unity, Malaysia, and Islamic Studies Department at Bahauddin Zakaria University (BZU), Multan. Head of Research at MIHE, Dr. Haroon Bashir, and Dr. Abdul Qudoos Sohaib from BZU also spoke on the occasion. The event was moderated by Prof. Dr. Mustafeez Ahmad Alvi. In his address, Dr. Anis Ahmad critiqued the prevailing Western paradigms of knowledge, which

he said have contributed to global ethical disorientation, deepening inequalities, and environmental degradation. He emphasized that the modern commodification of knowledge has reduced it to an economic and bureaucratic tool, severed from its spiritual, moral, and holistic dimensions. He argued for a revival of the Islamic concept of knowledge, which rests on

Tawheed (divine unity) and Wahi (revelation) as foundational sources. Prof. Ahmad underscored that in Islam, knowledge is not merely an intellectual exercise but a moral and transformative endeavor that connects human beings to their Creator and one another through justice, ethical responsibility, and the pursuit of the common good. Citing examples from

classical Islamic thinkers such as Ibn Sina and Ibn Arabi, he highlighted their efforts to integrate reason, revelation, and spiritual insight. He pointed to the Qur'anic emphasis on concepts like tafaquh (deep understanding), ta'auqul (rational reflection), and tadhakkur (moral remembrance), stressing the need to reconstruct educational and epistemic frameworks grounded in these principles. The lecture concluded with a call for intellectual decolonization and a rejuvenation of Muslim educational institutions that not only produce functional knowledge but also cultivate wisdom (hikmah), ethical behavior, and holistic human development.—DNA



National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY

July 01/Japan Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada National Day

July 01/Somalia Independence Day

July 04/USA Independence Day

July 05/Algeria Independence Day

July 09/Argentine Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium National Day

July 20/TRNC Independence Day

July 23/Egypt National Day

July 26/Cuba National Day

July 26/Liberia National Day

July 30/Morocco National Day

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DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666



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CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

MDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

CDA chief reviews progress on ‘Gardenia Hub’

Randhawa directed concerned departments to expedite the construction of contemporary flower shops that would not only add to the city’s visual appeal but also provide a vibrant space for residents to engage with nature

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islama- bad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, paid a visit to the CDA Nursery on Friday to inspect the ongo- ing transformation of the facil- ity into the ‘Gardenia Hub’—a landmark horticulture project aimed at enhancing Islamabad’s green infrastructure, promoting environmental sustainability, and boosting recreational spaces for residents. During the visit, Chairman Randhawa was accom- panied by Member Engineering, Member Environment and other senior officials of the CDA. The delegation reviewed the upgradat- ion work currently underway at the nursery, which is being rede- signed as a modern horticultural complex. Randhawa directed con- cerned departments to expedite the construction of contemporary flower shops that would not only add to the city’s visual appeal but also provide a vibrant space for



residents to engage with nature. “These shops will serve both aes- thetic and commercial purposes, turning the area into a recreation- al hub for families,” he noted. A key component of the project is the development of advanced, cli- mate-controlled greenhouses to ensure optimal plant growth in all weather conditions. These facili- ties will also support research in- itiatives aimed at enhancing plant resilience and biodiversity. In a bid to promote innovation in plant cultivation, the Gardenia Hub will also house a state-of-the-art Tis- sue Culture Laboratory. This lab will use modern biotechnology to propagate new and rare plant species, potentially expanding the range of flora available for urban landscaping and conservation. The CDA also plans to establish a dedicated floral display area

showcasing both seasonal and off-season flowers. This space will be open to the public and is intended to foster greater com- munity interest in gardening and environmental stewardship. High- lighting the broader impact of the initiative, Randhawa stated that the project aligns with the CDA’s green agenda and reflects its com- mitment to sustainable urban de- velopment. “The Gardenia Hub is not just a beautification effort—it’s about creating jobs, supporting research, and setting new bench- marks for urban horticulture,” he said. He instructed officials to ensure that all construction and landscaping work adheres to international standards and is completed within the spec- ified timeline. “We want this to be a showcase project that re- flects Islamabad’s identity as a modern, eco-conscious capital,” Randhawa emphasized. The Gar- denia Hub, once completed, is expected to serve as a model for similar initiatives in other cities, reinforcing Islamabad’s repu- tation for greenery, innovation, and quality of life.

Flag March held to reaffirm commitment to Muharram security

SSP expressed hope that the peace-loving citizens of Islamabad would continue to fully cooperate with the police and administration to maintain law and order in the city

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police on Friday held a flag march in collaboration with other law enforcement agencies to demonstrate their commitment to main- taining peace and promot- ing unity during the holy month of Muharram. A po- lice spokesperson told APP that the flag march was led by SSP Operations Muham- mad Shoaib Khan, and covered various areas of the city. SSP Shoaib said per- sonnel from the ICT Police and other law enforcement agencies participated in the march, which started from the Pakistan Sports Complex and culminated at the same point after passing through different routes in the federal capital. SSP said the purpose of the flag march was to reinforce the message of peace, religious har- mony, and the resolve of the Islamabad Police to ensure foolproof secu- rity arrangements dur- ing Muharram. He said all necessary measures were being taken for the security of Majalis and processions throughout the city. SSP Shoaib said strict implementation of the code of conduct and standard operating pro- cedures (SOPs) issued for Muharram had been directed. He said special monitoring of social me- dia was also underway and legal action would be taken against those spreading sectarian ha- tred or inciting religious discord. SSP Shoaib said no one would be allowed to take the law into their own hands, and violators would face strict legal consequences. SSP ex- pressed hope that the peace-loving citizens of Islamabad would continue to fully cooperate with the police and administra- tion to maintain law and order in the city.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Residents of Tarlai area fetching drinking water from a nearby Naan shop due to insufficient supply of water in the area.

Fruit & veg sellers master excuses to outwit customers

ISLAMABAD: The colorful piles of fresh fruits and vegetables at Islamabad’s stalls may look inviting, but beneath the surface lies a well-practiced game of evasion and profiteering. From blaming rising trans- port costs to claiming high prices at the mandi, shopkeepers craft clever excuses to outsmart customers daily and dodge government price lists, hiking rates at will. These tactics not only squeeze the average shopper’s wallet but also leave price control committees in a constant chase, turning regu- lation into an uphill battle. Every morning, the city administration is- sues official rate lists to protect consumers from sudden price hikes. These lists cover essentials, from onions and tomatoes to mangoes and poultry, yet on the ground, they’re often ignored or hidden from view. At 8 this morning, a middle-aged man hag- gled over tomato prices. The vendor insisted on Rs. 90 per kg, despite the government’s list—clearly displayed nearby—fixing the price at Rs. 55. It might as well have been invisible. This wasn’t an isolated case. A

quick survey of five stalls in the same market showed tomato prices ranging from Rs. 65 to Rs. 100, while the official rate remained Rs. 55. Mangoes listed at Rs. 200 per kg were being sold for as high as Rs. 450. Prices seemed to hinge more on custom- er awareness than any regulation. Many shoppers, unaware of their rights, don’t even know that these price lists exist. “I honestly didn’t know there was a daily rate list,” said a G-9 resident. “I just assumed prices changed by area.” Others echoed similar confusion. “It feels like every shop runs on its own rules,” said a stu- dent from F-8 sector. “Nobody follows the list, and we don’t know how or where to complain.” “We have to buy these things regardless,” added a housewife from I-11. “No one takes these lists seriously. We’re just at their mercy.” Low public awareness plays directly into vendors’ hands. When questioned, shopkeepers offer a familiar rotation of excuses: transport strikes, fuel prices, poor harvests, or inflated mandi rates. “Humain peechay se mehngi

mil rahi hain,” is the default line. While some reasons occasionally hold merit, they’re often exaggerated to justify ran- dom markups, especially during high-de- mand days. But Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon talking to APP dismissed these justifications. In a conversation, he confirmed that Sabzi Mandis across the city were complying with official rates. “The shopkeepers’ complaints are baseless,” he said, urging people to verify by visiting the mandi themselves. This dis- connect raises a key question: if wholesale markets are following official prices, why are retailers allowed to flout them so openly? Legally, ven- dors may add a justified profit over wholesale rates, but not inflate prices arbitrarily. Yet enforcement of the Price Control and Preven- tion of Profiteering and Hoarding Act, 1977 remains weak. Deception is common. Some vendors display the rate list as a formality; oth- ers hide it behind crates or omit MRPs from packaged goods. Many simply quote different prices to different customers based on how informed or unaware they seem.—APP

National Climate Dialogue to explore Pakistan’s growing climate challenges

ISLAMABAD: Freedom Gate Prosperity (FGP) hosted the National Climate Dialogue 2025 to explore actionable re- sponses to Pakistan’s escalating climate challenges. The event brought together climate experts, legal profession- als, policymakers, and youth advocates to discuss sustain- able solutions and develop a unified approach to inclusive climate action, said a press release here on Friday. Shafqat Aziz, Head of FGP’s Climate Change Division, welcomed participants during the opening session and outlined the dialogue’s agenda. His remarks were followed by a passion- ate youth perspective delivered by Saaremeen Fatima, a young climate activist advocating for intergenerational cli- mate responsibility. The dialogue served as a vital platform to bridge gaps between governance, legal reform, media, and grassroots resilience. Its aim was to forge a collective roadmap for sustainable and people-centered climate re- sponses. Addressing a session on heatwaves, resilience, and agricultural adaptation, Mohsin Leghari, former Pun- jab Minister for Irrigation and Finance and a noted cli- mate advocate, emphasized that climate adaptation must be rooted in data-driven strategies, farmer inclusion, and risk-aligned agricultural planning. “Building resi- lience is no longer optional — it’s a survival imperative,” he said. Joining virtually, Ammara Durrani, a senior development policy expert, stressed the importance of people-centric climate solutions. “Climate action must empower youth and women in green economic activity, enable district-level media as the voice of the people, and restore the ethic of care within our ecosystems,” she noted. In his remarks, Muhammad Anwar, CEO of FGP, reaffirmed the organization’s grassroots com- mitment: “FGP stands ready to translate today’s insights into collaborative, community-rooted action, especially for those most vulnerable to climate impacts.—APP

AIOU, IOU partner in Islamic higher education

ISLAMABAD: World-renowned Islamic scholar and Chancellor of the Interna- tional Open University (The Gambia), Dr. Bilal Philips, paid a special visit to Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) on Friday along with his team. On this occasion, a formal ceremony was held during which both institutions agreed to enhance mutual cooperation in the fields of Islamic higher education, research, and academic exchange. The ceremony was presided over by Prof Dr Shah Mohyuddin Hashmi, Dean of the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, who warmly welcomed the guests and gave a detailed briefing on AIOU’s academic, research, and international activities. He expressed a strong desire to initiate joint programs with the International Open University in Islamic education, research, faculty exchange, and student exchange programs. Dr. Zahid Majeed, Director of Collaboration and Exchange, highlighted the university’s modern educational infrastructure, its ongoing global collaborations, and various in- itiatives aimed at promoting education and student welfare. Dr. Bilal Philips appreciated the university’s efforts and particularly emphasized the need for joint research and academic partnerships in areas such as Islamic psy- chology, Islamic banking, and finance. He stated that partnerships among educational institutions in the Muslim world are vital for intellectual growth, scholarly guidance, and the unity of the Ummah. This meeting is expected to mark a significant milestone in the promotion of Islamic education, inter- national cooperation, and global research. It will play a vital role not only in the academic domain but also in socio-intellectual development.—DNA

Govt accelerates EV transition with focus on infrastructure

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC) on Friday hosted a high-level consultative meeting with electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers and senior government officials to identify strategies for scaling up EV adoption and reduc- ing the country’s reliance on fossil fuels. The meeting, chaired by Secretary MoCC&EC Aisha Humera Moriani, focused on expanding EV charging infrastructure, introducing motorcycle retrofitting at scale, and exploring financing options to make electric vehicles more accessible and affordable. These discussions are part of Pakistan’s efforts to meet its climate targets, which include 30 per cent EV adoption by 2030 as outlined in its 2021 Na- tionally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Pakistan travel guide “Inadequate EV charg- ing infrastructure, particularly in urban areas, is a major barrier,” Moriani said during the meeting. “Without significant investment in this area, the transition to electric mobility will remain out of reach.” Senior officials from the Ministry of Industries and Production, Engineering Development Board, and key departments within MoCC&EC attended the session, along with representatives from prominent EV manufacturing and import firms. Participants highlighted the urgent need for robust policy support and a national-level push to convert Pakistan’s vast fleet of fuel-powered vehicles—especially two- and three-wheelers—to electric. Pakistan travel guide Pakistan currently has over 37 million fuel-powered vehicles, including nearly 29 million motorcycles running on petrol. _APP

Smart mobile command units to oversee security of 181 Muharram processions

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Po- lice have deployed modern mobile control rooms to oversee the security of 181 Muharram processions, assisting and guiding over 16,000 deployed personnel across the federal capital. A police spokesperson told on Friday that these mobile units have been equipped with integrated commu- nication systems and are linked with the central control centre to ensure real-time monitoring and rapid coordination during the religious gatherings. He said the mobile control rooms will accompany the main processions through- out their routes and help enforce the security plan in coordination with other law enforcement and intel- ligence agencies. He said federal ministers, Chief Commissioner Islamabad, and Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Na- sir Rizvi visited the mobile control room on Wednesday to inspect its technological setup and review securi- ty arrangements on the ground.—APP

IRSA releases 275,954 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 275,954 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 408,931 cusecs. Accord- ing to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1520.00 feet which was 118.00 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 272,900 cusecs and 151,500 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jh lum at Mangla Dam was 1178.50 feet, which was 128.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 21,577 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kal- abagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 203,798, 178,886, 122,717 and 54,770 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from Riv- er Kabul, a total of 45,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 42,779 cusecs released from Riv- er Chenab at Marala.—APP

Briefs

Ayaz lauds security forces for successful operation

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Friday lauded security forces for a successful operation against the Indian-supported Fitna-e-Khawarij along with Pakistan-Afghanistan border. In a statement issued by the National Assembly Secretariat, Ayaz Sadiq paid glowing tribute to the forces, specifically commending them for eliminating 30 Fitna-e-Khawarij during the operation. "The timely and effective action against terrorists is a testament to the security forces' professional capabilities," the Speaker said. He emphasized that "India-backed terrorists are being brought to justice." Expressing national solidarity, the Speaker asserted, "The entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with security forces against Fitna-e-Khawarij." He highlighted the nation's pride in its security institutions, saying, "The nation is proud of the sacrifices and bravery of its security institutions.—APP

350 Afghan students arrive in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As many as 350 Afghan students have reached Pakistan to pursue studies in top-tier Pakistani universities across diverse disciplines under HEC Allama Muhammad Iqbal Scholarships to Afghan Students (Prime Minister's Directives). HEC held a reception to welcome the students at the HEC Regional Centre Peshawar. The development marks a significant milestone in academic cooperation and people-to-people relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The students will undergo a specially designed preparatory course before their admission in the fall semester. In addition, 50 PhDs and 100 Master's students will also join in September, 2025 to pursue their education in Pakistan. The Allama Muhammad Iqbal Scholarships Programme is a mega initiative of the Government of Pakistan, under which 4500 scholarships are being awarded to Afghan students under. On their arrival, the students were received by In-charge HEC Regional Centre Peshawar Mr. Nasir Shah and Project Director Allama Iqbal Scholarships Programme Jehanzeb Khan. Representatives of National University of Technology (NUTECH) Islamabad and National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences (NUCES-FAST) Faisalabad were also present on the occasion. The Allama Muhammad Scholarships Programme reflects the shared commitment of Pakistan and Afghanistan to deepening educational collaboration with a spirit of Islamic brotherhood and neighborhood. Project Director Jehanzeb Khan expressed his enthusiasm in hosting the scholars, stating, "We are honoured to welcome these young ambassadors of Afghanistan to Pakistan. Their presence will not only enrich our academic institutions but will also strengthen the cultural.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Tripartite MoU Signing Ceremony at COMSATS. Ambassadors of Syria, Morocco, Jordan, Yemen, Ethiopia and a diplomat from the Azerbaijan embassy took part in the MoU signing ceremony. —DNA

Railways upgrade vulnerable unmanned level crossings

For years, the official said the unmanned railway crossings – lacking barriers and gatekeepers – have been sites of deadly collisions between trains and road vehicles or pedestrians

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has completed the conversion of around 175 unmanned level crossings into manned level crossings to improve public safety and control the accidents in the country. "This effort is part of a broader strategy to address a persistent safety crisis on the rail network, historically plagued by accidents at unmanned crossings," an official in the Ministry of Railways

told APP. For years, the official said the unmanned railway crossings – lacking barriers and gatekeepers – have been sites of deadly collisions between trains and road vehicles or pedestrians. He said these accidents, often resulting from the absence of warning systems or safety protocols, have caused numerous fatalities and injuries, generating significant public concern and pressure for systemic change. Keeping in view, he

said that Pakistan Railways enacted the Railway Level Crossing Policy in 2019. A cornerstone of this policy is the outright ban on constructing new unmanned crossings across the entire network. The focus has shifted squarely towards upgrading existing hazardous crossings, he added. He said the scale of the challenge is evident in the current statistics, out of total 2,777 railway level crossings in the country, a concerning 1,416 remain unmanned

and inherently riskier. The official said that only 1,361 are currently manned, staffed by gatekeepers who operate the barriers to control road traffic as trains approach. He said the responsibility for financing the conversion of unmanned crossings into manned ones falls to provincial and district road-owning authorities, as mandated by Section 12 of the century-old Railways Act, 1890. The official said that Pakistan Railways is actively pursuing these provin-

cial governments for sponsorship agreements to fund the ongoing conversions as earliest. To maximize the safety impact, he said the authorities have identified and prioritized the 550 most vulnerable unmanned crossings nationwide for urgent upgrade. However, the official said that the conversion of these critical sites remains contingent on securing the necessary funding commitments from the respective provincial governments.

Fuel hike hurting the masses

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, the President of the Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, the President of All Karachi Industrial Alliance, the Chairman of the FPC-ICI Advisory Board, and the President and former provincial minister, Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Friday that the recent increase in oil and gas prices is intensifying hardship for both the public and the business community. He stated that the new taxes introduced in the budget, along with the energy price hikes, could prove detrimental to Pakistan's economy and its people. Mian Zahid Hussain noted that despite relative stability in global crude markets following the recent conflict between Iran and Israel, the substantial increase in domestic fuel prices raises serious concerns. Speaking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the government has chosen energy prices as a soft target to raise revenue and has increased the petroleum levy. This, he

argued, is unjustified when international crude prices have fallen from \$85 per barrel last month to around \$65 now. Providing expensive fuel to the public is a flawed decision, he added, as it will simultaneously fuel inflation, raise production costs, and damage industry and household budgets alike. Mian Zahid Hussain emphasised that the petroleum levy hike was done under the IMF directives. Instead of curbing gas theft and line losses, the government has shifted the burden onto industrial, commercial, and residential users. He warned that while this policy might generate immediate revenue, it will slow down long-term economic growth. Across the world, governments are either subsidising energy or maintaining price stability to curb inflation and revive industries. In contrast, Pakistan is witnessing simultaneous increases in the cost of essential goods, production, and transportation, which is worsening economic pressures.

He pointed out that India has not raised oil prices in over a year, and Bangladesh has reduced the prices of petrol,

diesel, high-octane, and kerosene multiple times. Mian Zahid Hussain stressed that instead of raising energy prices, urgent and immediate reforms are needed. Circular debt has surpassed Rs 2.7 trillion, electricity theft exceeds 17 per cent, and line losses are far above regional averages. Without addressing these systemic issues, any increase in prices will offer only temporary relief while also encouraging more theft and non-payment. The government, he urged, must base its decisions on global trends, consumer affordability, and industrial challenges. If energy prices are hiked solely to reduce the fiscal deficit, it will lead to rising poverty, unemployment, and business closures. He called on the government to adopt transparency, consultation, and realism in policymaking. This, he emphasised, is crucial to build trust and enable real improvements in the energy sector. Without this transparency, expensive energy will continue to be a permanent obstacle to Pakistan's economic recovery.

OGDCL, PMYP, NAVTTC sign MoU

ISLAMABAD: A landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between OGDCL, the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), and the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) to empower Pakistan's youth.

The signing ceremony, held at OGDCL headquarters in Islamabad, was attended by senior officials from all three organizations, including Ahmed Hayat Lak, Managing Director/CEO of OGDCL, Chairman Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan of PMYP, and Chairperson Gulmina Bilal Ahmad of NAVTTC.—APP

8th Muharram procession ITP rolls out special route plan

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has finalized a special route and diversion plan for the 8th Muharram procession scheduled to take place on Friday. An official told APP that the main procession will start from Jamia Al-Murtaza in G-9/4 and proceed through Rohtas Road, Tufail Niazi Road, Shan-ul-Haq Road in G-9/1, and Police Quarters Service Road. It will culminate at House No. 14 near Jamia Al-Sadiq in G-9/2. He said that Rohtas Road (Police Quarter Turn), Tufail Niazi Road (G-10 side), and Khurram Road will be closed to general traffic during the procession. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Captain (R) Syed Zeeshan Haider advised the public to use alternative routes including Neelum Road, 9th Avenue, Jinnah Avenue, and Srinagar Highway to avoid inconvenience. CTO Zeeshan said that citizens may also use Margalla Road and the 7th Avenue Loop as alternate options.—DNA

Pak win Asian Youth Girls Netball Championship

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan clinched the Asian Youth Netball Championship 2025 after defeating Maldives in the final at the Jeonju Hwasan Gymnasium, Jeonju-si, South Korea on Friday. According to Pakistan Netball Federation Pakistan displayed exceptional teamwork and skill throughout the match, dominating all four quarters with scores of 17-5, 34-17, 45-23 and finally sealed the win at 60-35. Stand-out performances were delivered by Leya Raza Shah, Alisha Naveed, Sumayya Kouser, Haleema, Jasmine Farooq, Alina, Amani, Parisa and Farah Rasheed, who collectively maintained Pakistan's stronghold on the game from start to finish. Chairman of the Pakistan Netball Federation Mudassar Arian, President Sameen Malik, and Secretary General Muhammad Riaz extended their heartfelt congratulations to the national team for their remarkable victory. The Asian Youth Girls Netball Championship 2025 was held from June 27 to July 4 under the banner of the Asian Netball Federation, featuring top youth teams from across the continent

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Sherry calls for combating 'Water Crisis'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change Sherry Rehman on Friday expressed concern over Pakistan's severe water crisis, ranking third globally and urged urgent steps including rainwater harvesting, forest protection, small dams, water recycling and modern weather alert systems, to address climate change impacts. In an exclusive conversation with a local news channel, the Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee called for a robust and coordinated response to

Pakistan's escalating water crisis. Emphasizing the urgency of the situation, she stated that according to World Bank and IMF reports, Pakistan ranks among the top three countries most at risk of water scarcity and warned that the problem will worsen if provincial and national governments fail to act in unison. She urged a shift from reactive to proactive water governance, highlighting the need for stronger institutional coordination between federal and provincial authorities. Rehman outlined several key strategies to address the crisis, including widespread rainwater

harvesting initiatives, construction of small and medium-sized dams, rehabilitation of outdated irrigation infrastructure and the promotion of water-efficient farming techniques. She also stressed the importance of forest conservation and the use of climate-smart technologies such as early weather warning systems and real-time water monitoring. Rehman added that without a unified approach backed by political will, the water crisis could become a full-blown national emergency, threatening livelihoods, agriculture and overall climate resilience. Responding to a query, she mentioned that the Senate Standing Committee has held sev-

eral meetings with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to review early warning systems and preparedness measures. She expressed concern over the lack of timely alerts and stressed the need to enhance forecasting technologies and coordination between departments. Rehman also called for strict anti-encroachment measures, particularly near riverbanks and hotels built in ecologically sensitive areas, warning that such developments increase the risk of flooding and environmental degradation. She reiterated that climate resilience demands not only policy reform but enforcement and local accountability.

Karachi Tragedy—
a reflection of
national apathy

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ANOTHER tragedy has struck Karachi—a city that never sleeps, yet never seems to awaken from the nightmare of misgovernance and human suffering. A five-storey residential building collapsed like a house of cards, reducing concrete and steel to dust, and with it, burying precious human lives under the rubble. Mothers, children, elderly residents—people with dreams, memories, and hopes—were mercilessly crushed. And once again, all we are left with are rescue sirens, news flashes, hollow statements of sorrow, and the same old promise of “strict action” against those responsible. This isn’t just the story of a building collapse; it’s the story of a system collapse. A collapse of values, governance, justice, and above all—humanity. This heart-wrenching incident speaks volumes of the sheer apathy of the concerned quarters. It screams of the poverty that shackles millions of Pakistanis, forcing them to live in crumbling, unlivable structures because they simply do not have a choice. The truth is bitter and painful: People don’t live in such dangerous buildings by choice—they do so because poverty has left them with no options. They cannot afford repairs, renovations, or even relocation. Their rooms, their so-called homes, are more like ticking time bombs. And yet, nobody cares. There are no jobs. No opportunities. The wealth of this country remains concentrated in the hands of a select few, while the rest are left to struggle, to suffer, and to perish. The Sindh government, as usual, remains absent when needed most. Corruption continues to rot the roots of every institution in the province. Reports abound of public funds being misused, siphoned off into the pockets of the powerful, leaving behind a trail of broken roads, overflowing gutters, and unsafe buildings. Accountability is a joke. Inspections are either never done, or signed off without a second glance. Everything is available for a price—even human life, it seems. But let us not limit this tragedy to Sindh alone. This is the state of governance across the country. Pakistan as a whole is grappling with a systemic collapse. There is no mechanism in place to protect the common citizen. No one to listen to the cries of the poor. No government department that takes its duty as sacred. The entire structure of the state has



been hijacked by individuals who are more interested in filling their own coffers than serving the people who elected them. This country was meant to be a welfare state. An Islamic Republic, where the principles of justice, equality, and compassion were supposed to guide every policy and law. But look around—where is that vision? Where is the care for the weak, the protection for the vulnerable, the support for the broken? In Pakistan today, the poor have no right to live, let alone dream. Their lives are expendable, their deaths mere statistics. If you are not part of the elite, the powerful, or the connected, then this country is not meant for you. It suits only the bigwigs—the untouchables who roam freely in their bulletproof vehicles, while the common man lies buried under concrete slabs. We hear stories every day—of parents committing suicide after killing their own children because they can no longer feed them. Is this the land our founding fathers envisioned? Is this the state that was supposed to uphold the values of Islam, where helping the oppressed is a divine duty, and serving the people is an act of worship? And yet, nobody fears God anymore. Nobody fears accountability—not in this life, nor the hereafter. Especially those in power. They act with impunity, as if they will live forever, as if there is no Day of Judgment. But there will be a day. A Day of Reckoning where each misdeed, each stolen rupee, each ignored cry for help will be brought to account. But for now, they continue to live in denial, mocking not just the people, but the very God they claim to serve. For how long will this continue? For how long will the poor continue to suffer in silence? For how long will the corrupt thrive, while the helpless are buried under the weight of injustice? For how long will injustice be the rule and not the exception? This tragedy in Karachi is not an isolated incident—it is a symptom of a much deeper disease. It reflects the moral decay of a nation that has forgotten its soul. A nation where human life has no value, and where suffering is just another news headline. What we need is not just mourning and condemnation. We need a revolution of conscience. We need the rulers to remember their purpose—not to rule, but to serve. We need institutions that value human life. We need a media that doesn’t move on to the next story, but keeps asking the hard questions. And above all, we need citizens who hold the powerful accountable, who remember that silence in the face of injustice is complicity. To the families who lost their loved ones in this tragedy, no words can ease your pain. But let this not be just another forgotten incident. Let this be a wake-up call. Let this be the moment where we as a nation say: Enough is enough. Because if we continue to let the poor die like this—unnoticed, unprotected, uncared for—then we are all complicit in the crime. And we too, will have to answer one day—not just to history, but to God. May God have mercy on the souls we lost. And may He awaken the dead conscience of those who still rule over the living.

How BeiDou Won the Wars for Pakistan and Iran

Qamar Bashir



Iran’s use of BeiDou in the Israel conflict demonstrates exactly why China built it in the first place: to break America’s monopoly on digital positioning and to offer its partners an independent alternative. Iran’s military had long feared that in any conflict scenario, reliance on U.S. GPS could turn into a fatal liability. Iran’s success also exposed something deeper: the shifting architecture of global power is no longer grounded only in physical assets or economic might, but in digital control. Navigation satellites—once the domain of scientific curiosity—are now the silent arbiters of battlefield...

IN two recent wars that nearly tipped the world into a full-scale global conflict—one between Pakistan and India, and the other between Iran and Israel—a new determinant of military dominance emerged. In both cases, countries under pressure, Pakistan and Iran, not only stood their ground but struck deep into enemy territory with astonishing precision and devastating impact. Pakistan, in a five-day war with a much larger adversary, crippled India’s air force and destroyed strategic installations inside India. Similarly, in a 12-day war with Israel, Iran destroyed numerous high-end Israeli military, economic, and strategic assets, ultimately forcing Israel to beg for a ceasefire. The common denominator in these unlikely victories? Both nations abandoned reliance on the U.S.-controlled GPS and instead used China’s BeiDou satellite navigation system. This was not merely a technical switch, but a strategic shift that defined the outcome of both conflicts. Had they used the U.S. GPS, which Washington has the power to degrade or deny at will, these nations would have stood little chance of success. There is growing speculation that this was also a calculated downgrading of the GPS system by the U.S. for India and Israel, to teach a geopolitical lesson to India—whose regional ambitions and anti-U.S. posturing were becoming problematic—and to Israel, whose growing influence over American politics and dominance in the Middle East were starting to challenge U.S. primacy. In both wars, the side relying on BeiDou emerged victorious. This silent yet transformative transition from American to Chinese satellite guidance marks a game-changing shift in global warfare and digital sovereignty. Without access to BeiDou, Iran’s ability to hit critical Israeli targets with such devastating effect would have been close to impossible. Had Iran relied on U.S. GPS, it would have been vulnerable to jamming, signal scrambling, and location degradation—methods long used by the Pentagon to retain navigational supremacy in conflicts from Iraq to Kosovo. But BeiDou changed that equation. It gave Iran independence. It gave Iran accuracy. And it gave Iran the capacity to strike in ways that stunned Israeli defenses and shook the strategic confidence of its Western allies. Until recently, the United States maintained unchallenged dominion over satellite-based navigation. Its GPS system, launched in 1978 and globally operational since 1995, was the invisible backbone of the

modern world—from military command centers to Uber rides. GPS offered civilian accuracy of around five meters and classified military accuracy within centimeters. Its 31-satellite constellation blanketed the Earth, making it indispensable not only for warfare but for commerce, transportation, communication, and finance. Over 160 countries still rely on it. But reliance breeds vulnerability. China, observing this vulnerability, took a different path. In the early 2000s, following several episodes in which Chinese military maneuvers were exposed to potential disruption via U.S. GPS control, Beijing began rapidly constructing its own alternative: the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System. By 2020, BeiDou achieved full global operational capability. Today, it features over 45 active satellites and provides coverage that matches GPS worldwide—while delivering superior accuracy across Asia and the Middle East, where Iran happens to sit. But BeiDou is not merely a mirror of GPS—it is in many respects an enhancement. Its civilian precision ranges from 2.5 to 5 meters, and its dual-frequency capability, now standard across its receivers, ensures better resilience against jamming. Where GPS’s most advanced services are reserved for GPS-III satellites and American military clients, BeiDou distributes its capabilities more widely to allies and commercial users. That shift is not just technical—it is geopolitical. Iran’s use of BeiDou in the Israel conflict demonstrates exactly why China built it in the first place: to break America’s monopoly on digital positioning and to offer its partners an independent alternative. Iran’s military had long feared that in any conflict scenario, reliance on U.S. GPS could turn into a fatal liability. Iran’s success also exposed something deeper: the shifting architecture of global power is no longer grounded only in physical assets or economic might, but in digital control. Navigation satellites—once the domain of scientific curiosity—are now the silent arbiters of battlefield supremacy and economic resilience. Satellite time synchronization controls everything from stock exchanges and ATM networks to flight corridors and power grids. Without reliable satellite signals, entire national systems collapse. And for decades, America held the keys. Now, China holds a second set. And countries are lining up to accept them. More than 150 countries have now integrated BeiDou into their telecommunications, transportation, defense, and financial systems. Many of these nations

are members of or partners to China’s Belt and Road Initiative. Their digital highways, ports, drones, farming machinery, and even bank servers are beginning to pulse to the rhythm of Chinese satellites. In Africa, smart tractors powered by BeiDou now harvest with sub-meter precision. In Central Asia, freight trains synchronize their transcontinental journeys using Chinese space-time signals. In Southeast Asia, civilian air routes increasingly rely on BeiDou for real-time tracking. In Latin America and the Middle East, military clients are exploring Chinese receivers to replace their dependency on GPS. This diffusion of navigational power is part of a larger Chinese strategy—not merely to match the United States, but to build a parallel system that renders American hegemony optional. China’s push toward multipolarity isn’t just visible in trade routes or military drills—it is written in the stars. BeiDou is one pillar of this architecture. Others include China’s lead in 5G infrastructure, its rollout of the Digital Yuan, its investment in artificial intelligence and quantum computing, and its ambitious space exploration agenda. Beijing has understood what few others fully appreciate: that a superpower in the 21st century is not defined solely by its GDP or missile count, but by its ability to offer sovereign alternatives to global systems of control. BeiDou is exactly that—a sovereign alternative. It allows nations to chart their own course, free from the threat of digital sabotage or external command. In doing so, it shifts alliances not only through diplomacy or ideology but through circuitry and signal. The clash between Iran and Israel revealed many things—military capability, political alliances, intelligence gaps—but above all, it revealed the arrival of a new digital order. It showed that China’s technology is no longer confined to factories or export catalogues. It is now embedded in warfare, embedded in sovereignty, and embedded in the most critical decisions a nation can make. With BeiDou, China did not just launch satellites. It launched influence, independence, and irreversible momentum. And in doing so, it may have quietly changed the future of conflict—and the future of control.

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

Pakistan: Glass half full

Dr. Abdus Sattar Abbasi

This improvement in the life expectancy indicates significant development in social and personal life domains. Because, life expectancy doesn’t improve with healthy intakes only, several other factors such as job opportunities, stress management, smoking patterns, health facilities and so on equally contribute to it. This improvement in life expectancy suggests advancement in several sectors. Use of tobacco has detrimental effects on health; data suggests there is significant reduction in the use of tobacco in the last 25 years from 38% users to 20% smokers today which is less than United States

I WAS invited in a seminar at University of Punjab on June 20, 2025, titled, “Glass half full or half empty: Understanding social and political transformation in Pakistan through data”. The guest speaker was Mr. Bilal Geelani, the Executive Director of Gallup Pakistan. I had a mixed feeling after listening to Mr. Geelani who successfully showcased ‘glass half full’ with the help of data spanning last 25 years. Data is a collection of facts, opinions, figures, trends, numbers and patterns. To be data driven is generally considered good for the stakeholders to analyze the situation at hand. However, it is individual’s perspective which shapes conclusions from the data under consideration. The very first striking slide was the population growth from 1947 when we started our journey with 33 million and now being 240 million suggests that the country progressed significantly to fulfill requirements of such a huge population. But the fact which surprised me the most was the detail about life expectancy in Pakistan which was 44 years in 1960s and now it is 67 years with an exception of 74 years in the capital city of Islamabad. This improvement in the life expectancy indicates significant development in social and personal life domains. Because, life expectancy doesn’t improve with healthy intakes only, several other factors such as job opportunities, stress management, smoking patterns, health facilities and so on equally contribute to it. This improvement in life expectancy suggests advancement in several sectors. Use of tobacco has detrimental effects on health; data suggests there is significant reduction in the use of tobacco in the last 25 years from 38% users to 20% smokers today which is less than United States. But still there is a need to further curtail smoking to bring it to the level of most developed counties at least if not eliminated completely. Alleviation of poverty and spending on education remain prominent concerns for everyone in the country. If you listen to Mr. Geelani, the situation of these two sectors is not that bleak as we usually think of. He contended that poverty reduced by 25 percentile in the

last 25 years and stands at 20% as compare to 45% in the year 2000. We know that the GDP of Pakistan has grown substantially over the last three decades from 100 billion USD in 2000 to around 400 billion USD today. Now the question is where people spend their earnings and the answer is, in education especially higher education where enrolment has gone sky high from 0.3 million students in the year 2000 to 2.8 million students currently enrolled in HEIs of Pakistan. Higher education is a luxury, if there is such a huge increase in the enrolment of HEIs both in public and private universities; it means prosperity prevails in the society. Data presented by the speaker on literacy was amazing; our understanding remains that literacy rate in Pakistan is around 62%. But, he argued that the focus of our efforts during last two to three decades to improve literacy was the young population. If we look at the literacy of our population up to 25 years of age the data suggests it is 80%, which is the result of our effective policies to improve the literacy. Data speaks truth and it suggests significant improvement in the yield of our major crops like wheat and maize. Recently we witnessed an interesting indicator of prosperity in the society especially in this region i.e. availability of the toilet to the households. According to the data almost 638 million people do not have access to the toilet in India. In Pakistan only 5% people do not have access to the toilet and that in the rural areas. Mobility stats have also significantly improved over the decades with sharp increase in motorcycle users. Most interesting part of discussion was the political environment of the country which revolves around people less than 30 years of age. Pakistan’s 50% population is less than 30 years of age which is a real strength for the country from both economic and political point of views. In politics the age group between 18 to 29 years is shaping political discourse because they have started voting significantly during last two decades. Existing parties including PML (N) and PPP are continuously losing their vote bank for the last two decades which suggest that they probably

failed to understand the sentiment of this segment of population between 18 to 29 years of age. People in this age bracket do appreciate schemes like laptops and infrastructure development but they consider it as their right. These young people aspire for identity and prominence on the global stage, they need a kind of leadership which can represent them with pride and honor. Traditional slogans have lost their attraction so does conventional political parties. There is a huge space for new thoughts, novel approaches and fresh vision to lead young population of Pakistan. PTI and TLP gained popularity in the same segment of the society. Existing parties have to completely revamp their image to accommodate thriving young population of Pakistan; otherwise new players will eventually cease their existence in coming years. This is what data suggests. There are two factors of the portrayal of gloomy picture of Pakistan. First the availability heuristics, people believe in what they listen every day in their lives. Our mainstream media and social networking platforms both usually promote pessimism in the society broadcasting negative indicators. We hardly observe these encouraging trends in our mainstream prime hour debates. Therefore people start believing in what is available to them to watch. Second factor is the vested interest of a specific segment of the society which aims to win grants and privileges from Western countries and donors. They highlight undesirable affairs of the society to secure their interests. Therefore international audience also started to believe in the negativity as a preeminent indicator for Pakistani society. We have demonstrated our strengths to entire world during recent India Pakistan conflict with exceptional technological expertise, defeating one of the best fighter jet platforms available today. This speaks volumes about our abilities. We only need to propagate our strengths instead of indulging in untoward instances which are not uncommon to any society on this planet. Remember, glass is half full dear Pakistanis, let’s celebrate!

Briefs

Pakistan, Azerbaijan commit to boost bilateral relations

FROM PAGE 01
Accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and Special Assistant to PM Tariq Fatemi, Prime Minister Shehbaz arrived at Shusha city to lead the Pakistani delegation at the Summit being held under the theme 'New ECO Vision for a Sustainable and Climate Resilient Future'.

At the summit, the prime minister will share Pakistan's perspective on key regional and global challenges, reaffirm Pakistan's commitment to the ECO Vision 2025, and advocate for enhanced intra-regional trade, transport connectivity, energy cooperation, and sustainable development.

On the sidelines of the Summit, PM Shehbaz held a productive bilateral meeting with the president of Azerbaijan where he congratulated him for hosting the 17th ECO Summit in an exemplary manner. The prime minister also conveyed his gratitude to President Aliyev and the people of Azerbaijan for the gracious hospitality extended to him and his delegation during his recent visit to Lachin, Azerbaijan, from May 27 to 29.

30 terrorists eliminated

FROM PAGE 01
"The security forces demonstrated exceptional professionalism, vigilance and preparedness, and prevented a potential catastrophe," the ISPR said. The military's media wing asked the Taliban rulers to check and prevent the use of Afghan soil by "foreign proxies" for orchestrating terrorist activities against Pakistan.

"The security forces of Pakistan remain resolute and unwavering in their commitment to defend the nation's frontiers and to eradicate the menace of Indian-sponsored terrorism from the country," it said.

The development came days after 13 Pakistan Army soldiers were martyred when an explosive-laden vehicle of the Indian-sponsored terrorists rammed into security forces vehicle in North Waziristan district. The military's media wing on, in a statement on June 28, said that a vehicle-borne suicide bomber attempted to explode himself on a security forces convoy, which was intercepted by the leading group, foiling his nefarious design. However, in their desperation, the ISPR had said the explosive-laden vehicle was rammed by the "Indian-sponsored kharjis" into one of the vehicles of the leading group.

Subsequently, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir vowed that all facilitators, abettors, and perpetrators of terrorism will be relentlessly pursued and brought to justice without exception and at all costs.

Pakistan has witnessed a surge in cross-border terror incidents since Taliban rulers returned to Afghanistan in 2021, particularly in the bordering provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. The country saw a slight uptick in militant attacks in May 2025, even as heightened military tensions with neighbouring India failed to trigger a significant escalation in violence from extremist groups. Data released by the Islamabad-based Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) indicates a 5% increase in attacks compared to April, though the overall picture suggests militant groups largely remained contained despite the regional geopolitical climate.

China helped Pakistan with 'live inputs': India

FROM PAGE 01
Beijing, which welcomed the ceasefire in May, has helped Pakistan's struggling economy with investments and financial support since 2013.

India's white-ball tour of Bangladesh 'postponed'

"They (the BCCI) said it's difficult for them to come in August," says BCB official

DNA

NEW DELHI: The Indian cricket team's upcoming tour of Bangladesh, which was set to feature three ODIs and three T20Is from August 17 to 31, has reportedly been postponed indefinitely, Indian media reported on Friday. According to the reports, the delay follows a directive from the Indian government to the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), citing heightened political tensions between the two countries as the reason. Neither the BCCI nor the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has officially confirmed the postponement. The Bangladesh Cricket Board had already begun preparations for the series, including the sale of media rights,



Spain thump grieving Portugal to make Euro 2025 statement

"What I enjoyed the most was starting quickly, starting like this allows you to be more patient and wait for Portugal who were forced to attack," said Spain coach Montse Tome. "I think the team did brilliantly and I'm very happy"

BERN: Spain showed why they are favourites to win Women's Euro 2025 by hammering Portugal 5-0 in their Group B opener on Thursday as both teams paid tribute to Portuguese men's international Diogo Jota who was killed in a car crash. The world champions were two ahead inside seven minutes in Bern thanks to goals from Esther Gonzalez and Vicky Lopez and never looked back from there, rattling in three more thanks to Alexia

Putellas, another for Gonzalez and a late header from Cristina Martin-Prieto. "What I enjoyed the most was starting quickly, starting like this allows you to be more patient and wait for Portugal who were forced to attack," said Spain coach Montse Tome. "I think the team did brilliantly and I'm very happy." La Roja lead Italy, 1-0 winners against Belgium, on goal difference after showing no mercy to Portugal who were grieving compa-

triot Jota after his death alongside his brother Andre Silva in a car crash in northern Spain. Portuguese fans marched to the ground ahead of the match with banners and chants honouring Jota and the tributes continued once supporters were in the Wankdorf Stadium. The capacity crowd stood for a moment's silence while a group of Portugal fans held up cards which read "Rest in Peace", while a banner said

"thanks for everything". "I would like to take a moment to pay respects to Diogo and his brother and say that we're thinking of his family," said Portugal coach Francisco Neto. "I was assistant coach for the under-19s when he played there and we met there. We kept contact. He always knows the result (of the women's team), he followed the team and the players. This is the culture in Portugal. Today is a really, really sad day." - APP

President, PM laud...

FROM PAGE 01
The successful intelligence-based operations. "Security forces' operations will continue until the complete elimination of terrorists. It is commendable that Pakistan's security forces are successfully conducting operations to eliminate Indian-backed terrorists," the president said. He also reaffirmed the nation's unwavering resolve to eliminate terrorist elements and defend the nation. Prime Minister Shehbaz, who is currently on a two-day visit to Azerbaijan, said that Pakistan's courageous security forces served as an unyielding shield to protect the nation. "The entire nation salutes the security forces. We are determined to eliminate all forms of terrorism from the country completely," the prime minister reiterated.

Webster and Carey again steady Australia in West Indies

ST. GEORGE'S: A second consecutive century partnership between Alex Carey and Beau Webster lifted Australia to 286 all out on the opening day of the second Test against the West Indies at the National Cricket Stadium in Grenada on Thursday. Rapidly fading light denied the Aussie opening bowlers a couple overs against the West Indies opening pair of former captain Kraigg Brathwaite, playing in his 100th Test, and John Campbell. Less than a week after their second innings effort in the first Test paved the way to a 159-run victory in Barbados, the sixth-wicket pairing of Carey and Webster put on 112 to ensure that the Caribbean bowlers were again thwarted in pursuit of a swift demolition of the visitors' first innings. Carey, as usual, was all positivity in a top-score of 63 off 81 balls, an innings highlighted by one six and ten fours. Webster, who continues to impress in his first year of Test cricket, was more measured in his innings of 60, occupying 115 deliveries during which he struck one six and six fours, playing the sheet-anchor role through a succession of partnerships after Australia slipped to 93 for four in the morning session after opting to bat first. He was eventually ninth out by the run out route, coming back for a non-existent second run in one of his few errors of judgement in the course of his innings. "It was pretty simple really: keeping the straight balls out and trying to score when it was a bit wider or too straight," said Webster in talking about his innings after the day's play. "The wicket offered a little bit again so it was a really good effort to get the total we did." - Agencies

Sinner strolls into Wimbledon round three

LONDON: Jannik Sinner swept into the third round of Wimbledon on Thursday as the world number one thrashed Australia's Aleksandar Vukic 6-1, 6-1, 6-3. While several of Wimbledon's top stars have suffered shock exits, including third seed Alexander Zverev and world number four Jack Draper, there has been no hint of an upset in Sinner's opening two matches. The 23-year-old has dropped just 12 games in demolishing Vukic and Luca Nardi to make the last 32 at the All England Club. Sinner's biggest struggle came in the final game as he had to wait until his sixth match point to serve it out and saved a break point with a sensational cross-court forehand winner. "I enjoyed it because I won the game! If not, I don't know," said Sinner after an unusual show of flamboyance as he whipped up the crowd's adulation on saving the break point. "The match can change very, very quickly. If he breaks me there it can go long distance. "I was lucky with that shot so thank you to my racquet which somehow made it to put the ball in court. I'm very happy to win in straight sets." After blowing a two-set lead and three match-points in his agonising French Open final defeat on clay against Carlos Alcaraz in June, Sinner is on a mission to make amends on grass in London. - Agencies

Pstart Catalan ultra-nationalism polarises Spanish town

RIPOLL: In a modest town in the Spanish region of Catalonia, a group of cyclists excitedly gathered for photos with Silvia Orriols, whose ultra-nationalist, anti-Islam separatist party is on the rise. "Silvia, we're with you!" one supporter exclaimed alongside Orriols, who posed smiling under the midday sun next to the town hall in Ripoll. Once unknown outside the town, Orriols burst onto the scene in 2023 when her recently founded Alianca Catalana (Catalan Alliance) party won the mayoralty following municipal elections. A year later, Alianca Catalana's populist and anti-immigration message saw it enter the regional parliament with two seats, riding a wave of far-right gains across Europe and beyond. "We are not far right, or of the left, or of the right. We are Catalan nationalists," the former administrative employee, 40, told AFP from her office in Ripoll town hall. The small municipality of 10,700 souls grabbed international attention in 2017 because it was there that jihadist attackers who killed 16 people in Barcelona and nearby Cambrils, mostly youngsters of Moroccan origin, grew up. "I am Islamophobic in the sense that the progress Islam is making on our continent scares me, and I'm here to try to stop it," added Orriols. Had it not been for the 2017 attacks, the mother of five children with medieval Catalan names admitted she would not have entered politics. Her message has caught on among part of the electorate of the wealthy northeastern region experiencing a demographic boom, with foreigners making up 18 percent of its population. "We Catalans are first: those who have been here all our lives, our fathers and grandfathers," said Montse, a 59-year-old nurse who had just grabbed a photo with Orriols. "If an immigrant comes and can integrate, great. But I think this mass we're receiving is terrible," added Montse, who declined to give her surname. - Agencies

Pak players move in Asian Jr Squash C'ships finals

In Girls U-13, Mahnoor Ali [3/4] (PAK) beat Maisarah.B.K.N [1] (MAS) 11-7, 11-5, 11-7 (3-0)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan players Nauman Khan, Ahmed Rayyan Khalil, Muhammad Sohail Adnan, and Mahnoor Ali have qualified for finals of the 32nd Asian Junior Individual Squash Championships 2025, at South Korea. The semifinals concluded at 32nd Asian Junior Individual Squash Championships 2025 with Pakistani players Nauman Khan, Ahmed Rayyan Khalil, Muhammad Sohail Adnan, and Mahnoor Ali winning their respective matches, said a press release.

In Boys U-19, Jooyoung Naa [1] (KOR) beat Abdullah Nawaz [3/4] (PAK) 11-7, 10-12, 11-2, 11-4 (3-1).

In Boys U-15, Nauman Khan [1] (PAK) beat Aryaman S (IND) 11-5, 11-1, 11-5 (3-0); Ahmad Rayyan Khalil (PAK) beat Yuen.T.L [3/4] (HKG) 11-8, 11-2, 11-1 (3-0).

In Boys U-13, Muhammad Sohail Adnan [1] (PAK) beat Am-arya.B (IND) 11-5, 11-1, 11-2 (3-0).

In Girls U-13, Mahnoor Ali [3/4] (PAK) beat Maisarah.B.K.N [1] (MAS) 11-7, 11-5, 11-7 (3-0).

On Saturday, Ahmed Rayyan Khalil and Nauman Khan will play against each other in Under-15 Category, Muhammad Sohail Adnan will play against Ayyan Dhanuka (India) in Under-13, and Mahnoor Ali will play against Yin. Z (China) in the Under-13 Girls Final. - Agencies

Czech mountaineer Kolouchová dies during Nanga Parbat expedition

According to Karrar Haidri, Vice President of the Alpine Club of Pakistan, Kolouchová, 46, reportedly fell between Camp I and Camp II, possibly due to an oxygen cylinder explosion

ISLAMABAD: The mountaineering community in Pakistan and around the globe is mourning the tragic loss of renowned Czech climber Klara Kolouchová, who died during her expedition on Nanga Parbat (8,125 meters) in the early hours of Thursday. According to Karrar Haidri, Vice President of the Alpine Club of Pakistan, Kolouchová, 46, reportedly fell between Camp I and Camp II, possibly due to an oxygen cylinder explosion. "The unfortunate incident took place at around 4:00 am near Bunar Base Camp in the Diامر district of Gilgit-Baltistan," he confirmed. Rescue teams and local authorities were promptly informed and have launched recovery operations to retrieve her body from the fall site, Haidri said. Kolouchová was a highly accomplished mountaineer, globally recognized as the first Czech woman to summit both Mount Everest and K2. She had arrived in Pakistan on June 15 to attempt Nanga Parbat and was accompanied by her husband and a team of five members. "This is a tragic loss not only for her family and team but for the entire international climbing fraternity," Haidri said. "She was an inspiration for many and her contributions to high-altitude mountaineering will always be remembered." The Alpine Club of Pakistan ex-



pressed its deepest condolences to Kolouchová's family and the Czech mountaineering community. Nanga Parbat, known as the "Killer Mountain," is the ninth highest peak in the world and has historically posed significant challenges to climbers due to its treacherous terrain and unpredictable weather. - DNA

Mead eyes Euros repeat for England after emotional rollercoaster

"People on the outside just saw me breaking all these records, winning all these awards," Mead told the Players' Tribune

MANCHESTER: Darling of England's coronation as European champions three years ago, Beth Mead is back among the goals ahead of Euro 2025 after the toughest moments of her career on and off the field. Mead became a household name after her six goals on home soil led the Lionesses to England's sole major tournament victory in the men's or women's game since 1966. But even that moment of elation was tinged with the emotion of her mother's battle with cancer. June Mead's diagnosis with ovarian cancer a year before the Euros provided her daughter with a "motivation I never knew that I had", the Arsenal forward later revealed.

"People on the outside just saw me breaking all these records, winning all these awards," Mead told the Players' Tribune. "Mum was on such a high watching me that season. I think for all of us, football was our anchor. It was the one thing that was distracting us, and giving us so much joy. "We rode that wave into the Euros - that whole July just absolutely flying, into the final, into lifting the trophy." Mead was still coming to terms with her newfound fame when she was shaken by the news her mother's cancer had spread. A few months later Mead suffered an anterior cruciate ligament injury - an all too common occurrence in the women's game - that would cost her a place in England's

run to a first ever World Cup final in 2023. What appeared her lowest moment, Mead now reflects on as a blessing. Her injury allowed the 30-year-old to move back home to the coastal town of Whitby in England's north-east to spend time with her mum in the final weeks before she died in January 2023. It took another nine months for Mead to return to action on the field and much longer to find the form that guaranteed her a place back in the Arsenal and England side. But the seeds of a return to brighter days were sown in those difficult times. Mead recalls seeing up to 30 Arsenal players and staff at her mum's funeral having got up at 4.30am to make the

five-hour drive from London. "They rallied around me and we found that strength together," she added. "We held onto each other. Held so many different emotions for each other. And that's what a family does." The spirit of Arsenal's band of sisters had its reward last month when they stunned the all-conquering Barcelona to win the Champions League in Lisbon. Mead was central to that success. It was her moment of magic that split the Barca defence to tee up Stina Blackstenius for the only goal. Mead has also re-established herself as a key part of the England side aiming to retain their title at the Euros in Switzerland. Mead has scored three times in her last four caps. - Agencies

DPM Dar, FM of Azerbaijan, agree to strengthen ties

FROM PAGE 01

Separately, Ishaq Dar also met Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan, Rashid Meredov, on the sidelines of the 17th ECO Summit in Shusha, Azerbaijan. "We reaffirmed commitment to strong Pakistan-Turkmenistan ties and reviewed progress on key areas of cooperation, particularly in energy, trade, and regional connectivity. We also discussed regional and international issues of mutual concern, and our shared resolve to promote regional peace and security," the deputy PM said on his social media account on 'X'. He also conveyed heartfelt thanks for Turkmenistan's support in facilitating evacuation of Pakistanis from Iran during the recent regional crisis.

PTI to start anti-govt movement

FROM PAGE 01

implementing the 27th Amendment. The announcement came days after the Supreme Court denied the party reserved seats for minorities and women in parliament. On June 27, the SC's constitutional bench ruled that the PTI was not entitled to reserved seats in the national and provincial assemblies. Meanwhile, the government has warned the PTI against creating anarchy in the name of protest, emphasising that staging peaceful demonstrations was their constitutional right, but violence could not be permitted. Aleema said that a plan for the movement has already been prepared, while the PTI founder has urged the masses to "come out for their freedom". Imran has reiterated his stance that "imprisonment is better than slavery", she maintained. Imran's sister further claimed that her brother was facing harsh conditions in jail, stating that his experience is unimaginable for his opponents. She claimed that the PTI founder spends 22 hours a day in a cell and is only allowed out for two hours. "All jail facilities for the PTI founder have been terminated," she alleged, adding that he is not allowed to speak to his children or access books. In contrast, she drew a comparison with former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, whose meals, she said, were delivered from home and who received hundreds of visitors. She also said that Nawaz and his daughter were kept in "a rest house" with all facilities available.

On the other hand, Aleema said, Imran has not been allowed to speak to his sons for the past six months. "This continued denial is both inhumane and unlawful," she wrote in a tweet. Whereas, for the past eight months, as head of the largest political party in Pakistan, Imran has been barred from meeting his party members as well, she said, adding it amounted to denying his constitutional right to political consultation and leadership. Meanwhile, PTI spokesperson Sheikh Waqas Akram said his party first postponed the nationwide protests due to the Iran-Israel war, then it delayed it out of respect for Muharram days.

Nine dead, several trapped as building collapses

FROM PAGE 01

Some have been rescued, some have died. My aunt is in critical condition." Rescue authorities noted that blocked roads and disrupted mobile signals slowed their response. Local residents initially began rescue efforts themselves before professional teams arrived.

Briefs

PSX stays
bullish, gains
1,262 more
points

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index continued with bullish trend on Friday, gaining 1,262.41 points, a positive change of 0.97 percent, closing at 131,949.07 points against 130,686.66 points last trading day.

A total of 733,079,943 shares were traded during the day as compared to 899,849,566 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 34.924 billion against Rs 43.252 billion on the last trading day. As many as 473 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 255 of them recorded gains and 177 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 41 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 58,256,083 shares at Rs 1.55 per share, Bank Makramah with 35,806,875 shares at Rs 5.12 per share and Treet Corporation with 29,716,643 shares at Rs 23.93 per share. PIA Holding Company Limited B witnessed a maximum increase of Rs2,151.83 per share closing at Rs 23,670.14 whereas runner-up was Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited with Rs46.99 rise in its share price to close at Rs23,646.99. Bhanero Textile Mills Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 32.82 per share price, closing at Rs 887.69, whereas the runnerup was Supernet Technologies Limited with Rs 23.40 decline in its per share price to Rs 801.89.—APP

Gold rates dip
by Rs.1,500 per
tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs.1,500 and was traded at Rs.355,500 on Friday as compared to its sale at Rs. 357,000 on the last trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. Pakistan travel guide The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs1,286 to Rs.304,783 from Rs. 306,069 and for 10 grams of 22 Karat it went down by Rs.1,179 to Rs.279,394 from Rs. 280,573 The rates of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.3,871 and Rs.3,318 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$15 to \$3,335 from \$3,350, whereas that of silver remained unchanged at \$36.87, the Association reported.—APP

Rupee loses
10 paisa
against US
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Friday depreciated by 10 paisa against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 283.96 against the previous day's closing of Rs 283.86. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 285.60 and Rs 286.50 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by 23 paisa to close at Rs 335.38 against the last day's closing of Rs 335.15, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen depreciated by 01paisa and was traded at Rs1.96 against Rs.1.97, whereas a decrease of Rs07 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 388.01 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 388.08. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 03 paisa and 02 paisa to close at Rs 77.31 and Rs 75.71 respectively.—APP

Weekly inflation
declines by 2.06%

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) for the combined consumption group decreased by 2.06 percent during the week ending on July 3 as compared to the corresponding week of last year (2024). However, on week-on-week basis, the SPI for the group increased by 0.73 percent during the week compared to last week, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 312.06 points as compared to 309.80 points during the past week.—APP

Last lifelines in Gaza are
being cut, UN chief warns

Civilians in Gaza are running out of safe areas in which to shelter as Israeli evacuation orders continue to expand, Dujarric added as he warned of a dire humanitarian crisis amid mounting restrictions on the delivery of aid and rising casualties among relief workers.

NEW YORK CITY: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Thursday said he was "appalled" by the escalating humanitarian crisis in Gaza, condemned recent deadly strikes against displaced people, and warned that the enclave is on the brink of total collapse as fuel supplies run out. He expressed grave concern over a series of attacks in recent days that hit locations in which Palestinians sought shelter or were trying to access food.

Guterres' spokesperson, Stephane Dujarric, read a statement that said: "Multiple attacks (have) killed and injured scores of Palestinians. The secretary-general strongly condemns the loss of civilian life."

Civilians in Gaza are running out of safe areas in which to shelter as Israeli evacuation orders continue to expand, Dujarric added as he warned of a dire humanitarian crisis amid mounting restrictions on the de-

livery of aid and rising casualties among relief workers. Israeli authorities issued a new displacement order on Thursday targeting parts of Gaza City, citing as a reason rocket fire from Palestinian groups. It affected an estimated 40,000 people, including those living in a displacement site, a medical facility, and a neighborhood previously spared evacuation orders since a temporary ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas ended in March. "As of earlier today, about 900 families are estimated to have fled," Dujarric said, adding that approximately 78 percent of the Gaza Strip has now been affected by the cumulative effects of more than 50 such orders. When combined with the effects on areas designated as Israeli militarized zones, the figure rises to 85 percent, leaving just 15 percent of the territory available for civilians to live. "Those areas are, of course, overcrowd-

ed," Dujarric said. "They also severely lack basic services or proper infrastructure." He described the remaining habitable zones as fragmented and unsafe, and compared the humanitarian conditions there to having more than 2 million crammed into Manhattan but "instead of buildings, the area is strewn with the rubble of demolished and burnt-out structures without any infrastructure or basic support." The UN Population Fund has reported that an estimated 700,000 women and girls in Gaza are experiencing "a nightmare" situation as a result of lack of access to menstrual hygiene products, water and privacy. It said it has nearly 170 truckloads of supplies ready for delivery but they remain blocked from entering Gaza. Meanwhile, the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said that nine more aid workers from five organizations have died in Gaza since last Thursday, bringing

the death toll among aid personnel to 107 in 2025, and 479 since the war began in October 2023; 326 members of UN staff are among the dead. OCHA also highlighted the significant obstacles humanitarian operations faced in June. Out of nearly 400 attempts to coordinate with Israeli authorities, 44 percent were denied, and 10 percent were initially approved but later obstructed. Only a third of the missions were fully facilitated, while 12 percent were canceled due to logistical or security issues. Four out of 16 humanitarian coordination efforts were denied on Thursday alone, Dujarric said, hindering efforts to relocate medical supplies and clear debris. "The space left for civilians to stay is shrinking by the day," he added. In his statement, Guterres underscored the fact that international humanitarian law is "unambiguous" in its requirement for civilians to be protected and their basic

needs met. He warned that the continuing blockade on fuel deliveries, now entering an 18th week, threatens to bring remaining humanitarian operations to a halt. "Without an urgent influx of fuel, incubators will shut down, ambulances will be unable to reach the injured and sick, and water cannot be purified," he said, adding that the UN and its partners might soon be unable to deliver even the limited amount of aid that remains in Gaza. Guterres repeated his call for "full, safe and sustained humanitarian access," and said the UN has a ready, proven plan to deliver aid "safely and at scale" to civilians across the territory. He also renewed his appeal for an "immediate, permanent ceasefire" and the "immediate and unconditional release of all hostages," and stressed that all parties involved in the conflict must uphold their obligations under international law.—Agencies



Islamabad: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, chairs meeting to review measures for enhancing cotton yield across the country.

Germany in talks to
buy Patriot missiles for
Ukraine after US pause

BERLIN: Germany is in talks on buying Patriot air defense systems for Ukraine to help it counter some of the heaviest Russian attacks since the war began in 2022, a government spokesperson said on Friday.

The US has paused shipments of certain critical weapons to Ukraine including 30 Patriot air defense missiles, sources told Reuters this week, due to low stockpiles, prompting warnings by Kyiv this would weaken its ability to defend itself. "There are various ways to fill this Patriot gap," the spokesperson told a news conference in Berlin, adding that one option being considered is buying the Patriot missile batteries in the United States and then sending them on to Kyiv. "I can confirm that intensive discussions are indeed being held on this matter," he said. Germany has sent three of the US-made systems from its military stocks to Ukraine, and Defense Minister Boris Pistorius last month launched an initiative to chase down more of them at the Ramstein group of some 50 nations. Pistorius will travel to Washington later this month for talks with his US counterpart about his initiative as well as production capacities, said a defense ministry spokesperson. "Of course these issues will also be on the agenda," said the spokesperson. The US Embassy in Berlin was not immediately available for comment. Pistorius has floated the idea of buying Patriot systems that could be freed up to bypass long industrial delivery times and ensure they get to Ukraine quickly. Ukraine is increasingly desperate for the systems that it relies on to destroy fast-moving ballistic missiles. Russia pummeled Kyiv with the largest drone attack of the war, injuring at least 23 people, just hours after US President Donald Trump spoke to Russia's Vladimir Putin on Thursday. Germany, Ukraine's second largest donor after the United States, has sought to take on more of a leadership role in ensuring backing for Kyiv as US support has been thrown into question under Trump. While Europe could sustain Ukraine's resistance without US military support, according to a senior German military official, the challenges would be immense.

Syria unveils new
national emblem
featuring golden eagle

DAMASCUS: The Syrian Arab Republic has launched a new national visual identity featuring a redesigned golden eagle emblem, in what officials described as a break from the legacy of authoritarianism and a step toward a state defined by service, unity and popular legitimacy. Unveiled during a ceremony in Damascus on Thursday, the new emblem reimagines the iconic Syrian golden eagle with symbolic elements representing the country's history, geography and post-conflict aspirations, the Syrian Arab News Agency reported. The redesign forms the centerpiece of a wider national branding effort aimed at redefining Syria's image at home and abroad. The eagle has long held significance in Syrian history, appearing in early Islamic military symbolism, notably in the 7th-century Battle of Thaniyat Al-Uqab, and later as part of the 1945 emblem of Syria. The new design retains this historic continuity but shifts its meaning, and the combative shield clutched by previous iterations of the eagle has been removed. Instead, the emblem now features the eagle topped by three stars representing the people symbolically placed above the state. The redesigned wings are outstretched, balanced rather than aggressive, with seven feathers each to represent Syria's 14 governorates. The tail carries five feathers symbolizing the country's major geographical regions: north, south, east, west, and central Syria — a nod to national unity and inclusivity, SANA reported. Officials described the design as a "visual political covenant," aimed at linking the unity of land with the unity of national decision-making. "The people, whose ambitions embrace the stars of the sky, are now guarded by a state that protects and enables them," said a statement accompanying the launch. "In return, their survival and participation ensure the renaissance of the state." The emblem is designed to signal historical continuity with the original post-independence design of 1945, while also representing the vision of a modern Syrian state born from the will of its people, SANA said. Officials said the elevation of the stars above the eagle was intended to reflect the empowerment and liberation of the people, and the transition from a combative state to a more civic-minded one. The symbolism also reinforces Syria's territorial integrity, with all regions and governorates represented equally. The design, they said, reflects a new national pact, one that defines the relationship between the state and its citizens based on mutual responsibility and shared aspirations. The new emblem is also intended as a symbolic end to Syria's past as a security-driven state, replacing a legacy of repression with one of reconstruction and citizen empowerment. President Ahmad Al-Sharaa, who has positioned his administration as one of reform and renewal, described the change as emblematic of "a government emanating from the people and serving them." The visual identity was developed entirely by Syrian artists and designers, including visual artist Khaled Al-Asali, in a deliberate effort to ground the new identity in local heritage and creativity. Officials said that the process was intended not only as a rebranding exercise but as a reflection of Syria's cultural and civilizational legacy — and its future potential. Foreign Minister Asaad Al-Shaibani, speaking at the event, framed the launch as part of a broader transformation in Syrian governance and diplomacy. "In every encounter, we carried a new face of Syria," he said. "Our efforts brought Syria back to the international stage — not as a delayed hope, but as a present reality." He said the country was now rejecting the "deteriorated reality" inherited from decades of authoritarian rule, and described the new emblem as a symbol of Syria's emergence as a state that "guards" and empowers its people, rather than controlling them.—DNA

Under pressure, Hezbollah
weighs scaling back its arsenal

BEIRUT: Hezbollah has begun a major strategic review in the wake of its devastating war with Israel, including considering scaling back its role as an armed movement without disarming completely, three sources familiar with the deliberations say. The internal discussions, which aren't yet finalized and haven't previously been reported, reflect the formidable pressures the Iran-backed Lebanese militant group has faced since a truce was reached in late November. Israeli forces continue to strike areas where the group holds sway, accusing Hezbollah of ceasefire violations, which it denies. It is also grappling with acute financial strains, US demands for its disarmament and diminished political clout since a new cabinet took office in February with US support. The group's difficulties have been compounded by seismic shifts in the regional power balance since Israel destroyed its command, killed thousands of its fighters and decimated much of its arsenal last year. Hezbollah's Syrian ally, Bashar Assad, was toppled in December, severing a key arms supply line from Iran. Tehran is now emerging from its own bruising war with Israel, raising doubts over how much aid it can offer, a regional security source and a senior Lebanese official told Reuters. Another senior official, who is familiar with Hezbollah's internal deliberations, said the group had been holding clandestine discussions on its next steps. Small committees have been meeting in person or remotely to discuss issues including its leadership structure, political role, social and development work, and weapons, the official said on condition of anonymity. The official and two other sources familiar with the discussions indicated Hezbollah has concluded that the arsenal it had amassed to deter

Israel from attacking Lebanon had become a liability. Hezbollah "had an excess of power," the official said. "All that strength turned into a weak point." Under the leadership of Hassan Nasrallah, who was killed last year, Hezbollah grew into a regional military player with tens of thousands of fighters, rockets and drones poised to strike Israel. It also provided support to allies in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Israel came to regard Hezbollah as a significant threat. When the group opened fire in solidarity with its Palestinian ally Hamas at the start of the Gaza war in 2023, Israel responded with airstrikes in Lebanon that escalated into a ground offensive. Hezbollah has since relinquished a number of weapons depots in southern Lebanon to the Lebanese armed forces as stipulated in last year's truce, though Israel says it has struck military infrastructure there still linked to the group. Hezbollah is now considering turning over some weapons it has elsewhere in the country — notably missiles and drones seen as the biggest threat to Israel — on condition Israel withdraws from the south and halts its attacks, the sources said. But the group won't surrender its entire arsenal, the sources said. For example, it intends to keep lighter arms and anti-tank missiles, they said, describing them as a means to resist any future attacks. Hezbollah's media office did not respond to questions for this article. Israel's military said it would continue operating along its northern border in accordance with the understandings between Israel and Lebanon, in order to eliminate any threat and protect Israeli citizens. The US State Department declined to comment on private diplomatic conversations, referring questions to Lebanon's government. Lebanon's presidency did not respond to

questions. For Hezbollah to preserve any military capabilities would fall short of Israeli and US ambitions. Under the terms of the ceasefire brokered by the US and France, Lebanon's armed forces were to confiscate "all unauthorized arms," beginning in the area south of the Litani River — the zone closest to Israel. Lebanon's government also wants Hezbollah to surrender the rest of its weapons as it works to establish a state monopoly on arms. Failure to do so could stir tensions with the group's Lebanese rivals, which accuse Hezbollah of leveraging its military might to impose its will in state affairs and repeatedly dragging Lebanon into conflicts. All sides have said they remain committed to the ceasefire, even as they traded accusations of violations. Arms have been central to Hezbollah's doctrine since it was founded by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to fight Israeli forces who invaded Lebanon in 1982, at the height of the 1975-1990 Lebanese civil war. Tensions over the Shiite Muslim group's arsenal sparked another, brief civil conflict in 2008. The United States and Israel deem Hezbollah a terrorist group. Nicholas Blanford, who wrote a history of Hezbollah, said that in order to reconstitute itself, the group would have to justify its retention of weapons in an increasingly hostile political landscape, while addressing damaging intelligence breaches and ensuring its long-term finances. "They've faced challenges before, but not this number simultaneously," said Blanford, a fellow with the Atlantic Council, a US think tank. A European official familiar with intelligence assessments said there was a lot of brainstorming underway within Hezbollah about its future but no clear outcomes.—Agencies

Egypt on alert
as giant dam
in Ethiopia
completed

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia moved on Thursday to reassure Egypt about its water supply after completing work on a controversial giant \$4 billion dam on the Blue Nile. "To our neighbors downstream, our message is clear: the dam is not a threat, but a shared opportunity," Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said. "The energy and development it will generate stand to uplift not just Ethiopia. We believe in shared progress, shared energy, and shared water. Prosperity for one should mean prosperity for all." The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is 1.8 km wide and 145 meters high, and is Africa's largest hydroelectric project. It can hold 74 billion cubic meters of water and generate more than 5,000 megawatts of power — more than double Ethiopia's current output. It will begin full operations in September. Egypt already suffers from severe water scarcity and sees the dam as an existential threat because the country relies on the Nile for 97 percent of its water. President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and Sudan's leader Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan met last week and "stressed their rejection of any unilateral measures in the Blue Nile basin." They were committed to safeguarding water security in the region, Sisi's spokesman said.—APP

UAE president,
king of Bahrain
discuss ties in
Abu Dhabi

LONDON: UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan visited King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa of Bahrain at his residence in Abu Dhabi on Thursday to discuss relations between the two countries. The two leaders discussed cooperation between Manama and Abu Dhabi, exploring ways to strengthen their ties in support of shared interests and aspirations for continued progress, development and prosperity, the Emirates News Agency reported. Several UAE officials attended the meeting, including Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, deputy chairman of the Presidential Court for Development and Martyrs Families affairs, and Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, deputy chairman of the Presidential Court for Special Affairs. The Bahraini side included Lt. Gen. Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, the national security adviser, Royal Guard commander and secretary general of the Supreme Defense Council of Bahrain, and Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, the first deputy chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports and president of the General Sports Authority of Bahrain.—APP

French air traffic
controllers'
strike disrupts
flights for
second day

PARIS: A strike by French air traffic controllers entered its second day on Friday, leaving many passengers stranded at the start of Europe's peak travel season. Civil aviation agency DGAC told airlines to cancel 40 percent of flights at the three main Paris airports on Friday because of the strike, which the air traffic controllers say is over staff shortages and aging equipment. Up to half of flights at France's other airports, mostly in the south, were also affected, DGAC added. "We are hostages of Paris," said Mariano Mignola, an Italian tourist stranded in the French capital's Orly airport with two young children. "Today we had to go home and the first available flight is July 8. We have no flat, we can't find a hotel, we can't find a car, we can't find a train, we can't find anything," he said. "We are in a panic, the children are scared and we don't know what to do." French transport minister Philippe Tabarot called the strike unacceptable as did Ryanair boss Michael O'Leary, who branded it "another recreational strike by French air traffic controllers' unions." On top of the cancellations, DGAC warned that passengers could be affected by delays and significant disruption. The Airlines for Europe (A4E) lobby group said late on Thursday that 1,500 flights had been canceled over the two-day strike, affecting 300,000 passengers and causing cascading delays.—APP

Briefs

TTAP chief
Achakzai
offers PM
talks on
unity govt

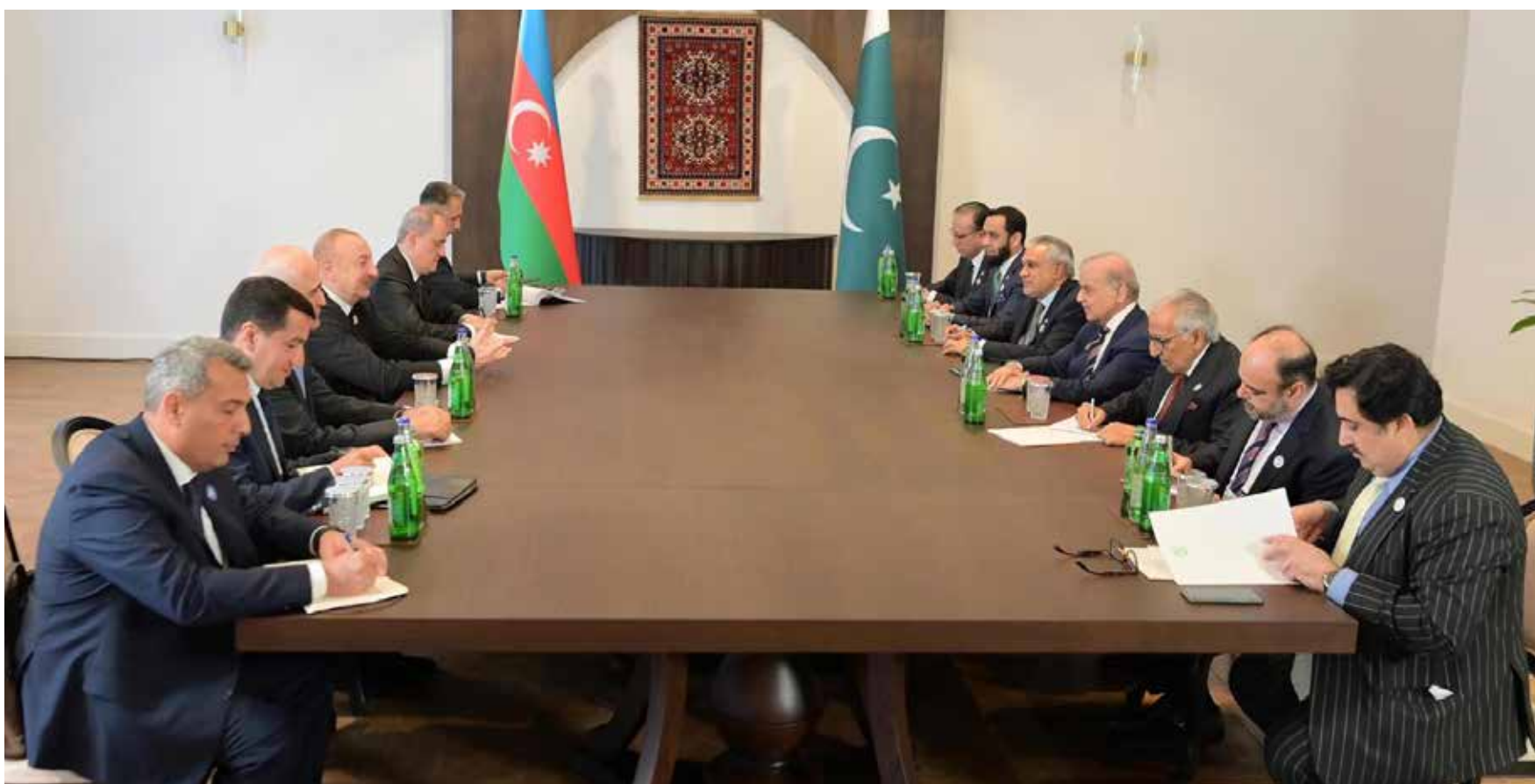
Veteran politician
says country is facing
“constitutional crisis”

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Tehreek Tahafuz Ayeen-e-Pakistan (TTAP) chief Mahmood Khan Achakzai has offered to hold talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the formation of a unity government. “I am ready to hold talks with the prime minister on the matter of unity government formation,” he said while addressing a press conference in Islamabad. His remarks on unity government comes just days after the SC’s Constitutional Bench accepted review petitions by the majority of 7 to 5 judges and ruled that the Imran Khan-founded party was not entitled to seats reserved for women and minorities in the national and provincial assemblies. Following the top court verdict, nearly 80 reserved seats in national and provincial assemblies were reallocated among other parliamentary parties. Addressing the presser, the veteran politician and Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) chairman said the country is facing a “constitutional crisis, institutional corruption, and political victimisation.”

Meteorologist
predicts heavy
rainfall spell

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Director Anjum Nazir Zaigham on Friday issued a warning of continuous heavy rainfall from July 5 to July 10 in tourist destinations stretching from north to east Punjab which could lead to urban flooding and flash floods and advised the public to stay alert. In a conversation with a local news channel, a meteorologist issued a warning about the possibility of flash floods, cloudbursts and urban flooding in several regions of the country, adding, the weather conditions are expected to intensify over the coming days, raising concern among authorities and the public alike. The affected areas include Sialkot, Faisalabad, Galyat, Murree, Naran, Kaghan, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan many of which are popular tourist destinations during the summer season, he said, adding, sudden heavy downpours and unstable weather patterns could lead to dangerous travel conditions and localized flooding. He added that tourists planning to visit these regions have been advised to take extra precautions, stay updated with official weather reports and avoid unnecessary travel to potentially hazardous areas. Authorities emphasized the importance of remaining vigilant and cooperating with local emergency services, he mentioned.



AZERBAIJAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets President of Azerbaijan H.E. Ilham Aliyev on the sidelines of 17th ECO Summit being held in Khankendi, Azerbaijan. – DNA

India mulls \$230 million drone
incentive after Pakistan conflict

*Three-year programme to cover manufacture of
drones, components, software, counter drone systems*

MONITORING DESK

NEW DELHI: India will launch a \$234 million incentive programme for civil and military drone makers to reduce their reliance on imported components and counter rival Pakistan’s programme built on support from China and Türkiye, three sources told media. India’s push to build more home-grown drones stems from its assessment of the four-day clash with Pakistan in May that marked the first time New Delhi and Islamabad utilised unmanned aerial vehicles at scale against each other. New Delhi will launch a 20 billion Indian rupees (\$234 million) programme for three years that will cover manufacture of drones, components, software, counter

drone systems, and services, two government and one industry source, who did not want to be named, told Reuters. Details of the programme have not been previously reported and its planned expenditure is higher than the modest 1.2 billion rupees production-linked incentive scheme New Delhi launched in 2021 to promote drone start-ups, which have struggled to raise capital and invest in research. India’s civil aviation ministry, which is leading the incentives programme, and defence ministry did not immediately respond to e-mails seeking comment. Reuters previously reported that India plans to invest heavily in local industry and could spend as much as \$470 million on unmanned aerial vehicles over the next 12 to 24 months, in what government and

military officers said would be a staggered approach. In the past, India has mainly imported military drones from its third-largest arms supplier, Israel, but in recent years its nascent drone industry has scaled up its cost-effective offerings, including for the military, although reliance on China continues for certain components such as motors, sensors and imaging systems. Through the incentives, India is aiming to have at least 40% of key drone components made in the country by the end of fiscal year 2028 (April-March), the two government sources said. “During [the Pakistan-India] conflict there was quite a lot of use of drones, loitering munitions and kamikaze drones on both sides,” Indian Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh said last week.

“The lesson that we’ve learned is that we need to double down on our indigenisation efforts to ensure that we build a large, effective, military drone manufacturing ecosystem.” India bans import of drones but not their components and the government has planned additional incentives for manufacturers that procure parts from within the country, the two government sources said. The state-run Small Industries Development Bank of India would also support the incentive programme by providing cheap loans for working capital, research and development needs for the firms, the government sources added. Currently, there are more than 600 drone manufacturing and associated companies in India, according to estimates shared by an industry source involved in the discussions for the incentives programme.

Russia recognises
Taliban govt

Moscow believes act of official
recognition of Afghan govt will give
impetus to productive ties, says ministry

DNA

MOSCOW: Russia has officially recognised the Taliban government in Afghanistan, becoming the first country to do so. The move came after Moscow accepted the credentials of a new Afghan ambassador. Russia said on Thursday that it wants to strengthen ties with Kabul, especially in security, trade, and fighting terrorism. In a statement, the Russian Foreign Ministry said Moscow saw good prospects to develop ties and would continue to support Kabul in security, counter-terrorism and combating drug crime. It also saw significant trade and economic opportunities, especially in energy, transport, agriculture and infrastructure. “We believe that the act of official recognition of the government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan will give impetus to the development of productive bilateral cooperation between our countries in various fields,” the ministry said. The Taliban called the step “courageous” and hopes it will encourage other countries to follow. Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi said in a statement: “We value this courageous step taken by Russia, and, God willing, it will serve as an example for others as well.” No other country has formally recognised the Taliban government that seized power in August 2021 as US-led forces staged a chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan after 20 years of war. However, China, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Pakistan have all designated ambassadors to Kabul, in a step towards recognition. The Russian move represents a major milestone for the Taliban administration as it seeks to ease its international isolation.

In KP Assembly
Opposition just 20
members short of
simple majority

PTI has 92 seats in hand; opposition’s
numbers in house rise to 53 after
restoration of reserved seats

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the opposition alliance is closing in on a simple majority as it is now just 20 seats away from tipping the balance of power in the provincial assembly. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led government currently holds 92 seats, while the opposition’s numbers have risen to 53, following the restoration of reserved seats after a Supreme Court verdict. The KP Assembly has a total strength of 145, but at the moment, there are 115 elected members. Of the remaining 30, 26 seats are reserved for women and four for minorities. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday issued a notification regarding the reserved seats following the June 27 verdict given by the Supreme Court’s Constitutional Bench. After the court ruling, the ECP reinstated the reserved seats, boosting the opposition’s position inside the assembly. JUI-F, which had seven elected members, received 10 women and two minority seats, taking its total to 19. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), which started with six elected members, got nine reserved seats and now stands at 15. Pakistan People’s Party’s (PPP) tally rose from four to 11 after being allocated 6 women and 1 minority seat.

Pakistan faces
risk of LNG glut,
warns minister

“There will be no surplus RLNG if
the power sector takes its committed
volume,” says Pervaiz Malik

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Pervaiz Malik has cautioned that Pakistan may face a surplus of imported Re-Gasified Liquefied Natural Gas (RLNG) if the power sector fails to lift its committed volumes, saying the government is exploring options – including supply diversion – to prevent stockpiles, The News reported. “There will be no surplus RLNG if the power sector takes its committed volume,” Malik said, highlighting the urgent need for improved coordination across the energy chain. He also called for a merit-based composition of the Cabinet Committee on Energy (CCOE), urging the inclusion of the Finance, Power, and Petroleum ministries. “Nominations to the Cabinet Committee on Energy should be based on merit instead of personal like or dislike,” he remarked. Commenting on potential US crude oil imports, Malik said, “We will look to the import of American crude with open mind,” noting that the WTI benchmark was cheaper than other crude grades [Brent]. Malik revealed that the closure of Pakistan’s border with Iran amid regional tensions had led to a spike in legal fuel consumption in Balochistan – a telling indicator of rampant past smuggling. “In June 2024, the oil supply in Balochistan was 8,500 tonnes for the entire month. After the border closure in June 2025, that same volume was consumed in just one week,” he said, adding that he had asked Ogra to provide data on Iranian oil smuggling.

Regulators
warned Air
India about
delay
engine fix

Air India falsified records
to show compliance of
airworthiness directive
issued by EU aviation
safety agency in 2023

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: India’s aviation watchdog reprimanded Air India’s budget carrier in March for not timely changing engine parts of an Airbus A320 as directed by European Union’s aviation safety agency, and falsifying records to show compliance, a government memo showed. In a statement, Air India Express told it acknowledged the error to the Indian watchdog and undertook “remedial action and preventive measures”. Air India has been under intense scrutiny since the June Boeing Dreamliner crash in Ahmedabad which killed all but one of the 242 people onboard. The world’s worst aviation disaster in a decade is still being investigated. The engine issue in the Air India Express’ Airbus was raised on March 18, months before the crash. But the regulator has this year also warned parent Air India for breaching rules for flying three Airbus planes with overdue checks on escape slides, and in June warned it about “serious violations” of pilot duty timings. Air India Express is a subsidiary of Air India, which is owned by the Tata Group. It has more than 115 aircraft and flies to more than 50 destinations, with 500 daily flights. The European Union Aviation Safety Agency in 2023 issued an airworthiness directive to address a “potential unsafe condition” on CFM International LEAP-1A engines, asking for replacement of some components such as engine seals and rotating parts, saying some manufacturing deficiencies had been found.

Senate
elections in
KP to be held
on July 21

Polls will be held for
seven general seats,
two seats reserved for
women, and two seats
for technocrats

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The ECP has announced a revised schedule for Senate elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, setting July 21 as the new polling date. According to a notification, a copy of which is available with Geo News, elections will be held for seven general seats, two seats reserved for women, and two seats for technocrats including Ulema. The polling will take place at the provincial assembly building in Peshawar from 9am to 4pm. In March 2024, the ECP declared in response to the applications of five women MPAs-elect of the opposition parties in the province that if the speaker of the provincial assembly fails to comply with the directions of the high court to administer oaths to the lawmakers elected to reserved seats.

Pak, Russia vow to expand
road, rail connectivity

Initiative aims to transform Pakistan into a
strategic transit hub by enhancing trade corridors

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: In a significant development on regional connectivity, Pakistan and Russia have agreed to collaborate on establishing a robust rail and road network to link Pakistan with Central Asia and Russia, providing landlocked states direct access to warm waters through Pakistan. The agreement was reached during a high-level meeting between Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan and Russian Federation’s Deputy Minister of Transport Andrey Sergeyevich Nikitin on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) ministerial conference in Tianjin, China. The two leaders emphasised accelerating infrastructure development across the region to facilitate trade and economic integration. The initiative aims to transform Pakistan into a strategic transit hub by enhancing trade corridors and logistical routes extending to Russia and Central Asia. Highlighting Pakistan’s ongoing modernisation efforts, Federal Minister Khan said the country is digitising its transport infrastructure, introducing barrier-free motorways, mandatory e-tagging, and comprehensive

CCTV surveillance. He stated that these reforms are part of Pakistan’s broader goal to optimise regional connectivity and cross-border trade. Deputy Minister Nikitin acknowledged the potential of Pakistan-Russia cooperation in transforming regional trade dynamics and reaffirmed Russia’s commitment to pursuing joint transport and infrastructure projects with Pakistan. The meeting also included discussions on the broader objectives of the SCO conference. It is noteworthy that the Pakistani delegation led by Khan actively participated in the three-day SCO event in Tianjin. Chinese Minister of Transport Liu Wei also welcomed the Pakistani delegation. The delegation members also engaged with multiple counterparts from member states. In his address, Minister Khan elaborated on Pakistan’s communication sector reforms, increased revenue from the National Highway Authority and motorways over the past 15 months, and strategic plans to enhance land links through China and Afghanistan. The Pakistani delegation, including the federal secretary for communications and other senior officials, underscored Islamabad’s commitment to prioritising transportation as a key enabler for regional trade growth.

JULY 2025

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