



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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Pakistan deserved GSP Plus status, says EU envoy

Detailed News On Page-08

Reputation basic asset of any organization

Detailed News On Page-03



Messi and his wife caught on camera

Detailed News On Page-06



Receives Edil Baisalov

Shehbaz Sharif lauds progress in Pak-Kyrgyz ties

Reiterating Pakistan's strong commitment to regional cooperation, the Prime Minister emphasized the importance of effective and timely implementation of the decisions made during the session

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday welcomed a high-level delegation from the Kyrgyz Republic, led by Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, Edil Baisalov, in Islamabad. The delegation is visiting Pakistan to participate in the 5th Session of the Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan Joint Intergovernmental Commission (IGC), convened to bolster bilateral cooperation in diverse fields. Welcoming the delegation, Prime Minister Sharif expressed satisfaction over the successful holding of the IGC session. He commended the signing of the Protocol and multiple Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), terming them vital steps toward expanding collaboration in trade, energy, connectivity, and people-to-people exchanges. Reiterating Pakistan's strong commitment to regional cooperation, the Prime Minister emphasized the importance of effective and timely implementation of the decisions made during the session.

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Pakistan business express train launched

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has launched the Pak-Business Express train to provide better travel facilities to passengers. He also inaugurated other facilities for the passengers at the Lahore Railway Station today. These facilities include installation of escalators, and renovation of family lounge, general waiting halls and CIP lounge along with access to internet through WiFi. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, the Prime Minister commended Railways Minister Hanif Abbasi and the management of the Railways for providing world class facilities to the passengers. He said it is a first step towards a

long journey and there is a need to expand such facilities to other stations across Pakistan. Shehbaz Sharif urged the Minister for Railways to make the train service as the best mode of travel for a common passenger, improve freight system and bring the Pakistan Railways at par with the best railways' systems of the world. Talking about the recent four-day

Picture on Page 7

war with India, he said it was a difficult battle but Pakistan won it in a limited time period and the entire world has recognized this achievement. The Prime Minister said the Armed Forces of Pakistan demonstrated extraordinary courage and effectively leveraged their technological superiority, particularly

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ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation from the Kyrgyz Republic, led by H.E. Edil Baisalov, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad. – DNA

Danish envoy for support to overcome climate issues

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The outgoing Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan Jakob Linulf Tuesday underscored the urgency of climate action, and suggested that countries like Pakistan, which are deeply vulnerable to climate disruptions, need not only international cooperation but also localized strategies for resilience. He was speaking at the signing ceremony of landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Danish Embassy and SDPI here. The agreement marks the formal launch of a high-impact project aimed at integrating climate change into Pakistan's economic and fiscal planning, said a press release. Lauding the role of SDPI in leading

Pak welcomes Cambodia, Thailand ceasefire

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday welcomed the successful conclusion of the special meeting hosted by Malaysia on the Cambodia-Thailand situation as both countries agreed to an "immediate and unconditional" ceasefire in an effort to resolve deadly border clashes. "Pakistan welcomes the successful conclusion of the special meeting hosted by Malaysia on the Cambodia-Thailand situation. We appreciate the spirit of dialogue and express hope for a peaceful resolution through diplomacy and regional cooperation," Foreign Office spokesperson said in a statement.

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May 9 mayhem

Court adjourns hearing on Imran Khan bail pleas

CJP Yahya Afridi-led two-member bench adjourns hearing till August 12 on request of PTI founder's lawyer

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Tuesday adjourned the hearing of an appeal filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan against the rejection of his bail pleas in cases related to the May 9 mayhem by the Lahore High Court (LHC). A two-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi heard the plea today. However, the court adjourned the hearing till August 12 at the request of Khan's lawyer Salman Akram Raja. Khan, on Thursday, had moved the SC against the LHC's last month's verdict of rejecting his bail petitions in eight separate cases related to the May 9 riots, including the attack on Jinnah House in Lahore. In the petition, the PTI founder argued that a first information report (FIR) lacked

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Imran says 'no doubt' his sons will come

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The PTI on Tuesday swiftly rubbished media reports that said party founder Imran Khan had barred his two sons from coming to Pakistan and participating in any activity for his release. Tourist destinations Imran's sons — Sulaiman Khan, 28, and Kasim Khan, 26 — called attention to their father's incarceration for the first time publicly in May. Earlier this month, Imran's sister Aleema Khan said Sulaiman and Kasim will go to the US before

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29 Pakistanis detained by Ethiopian police

Pakistan secures repatriation of 29 nationals, fines waived in diplomatic breakthrough

NEWS DESK / DNA

ADDIS ABABA: The Embassy of Pakistan in Addis Ababa has successfully facilitated the repatriation of 29 Pakistani nationals who were detained by Addis Ababa Police in March 2025 for violations of immigration regulations and involvement in unauthorized employment activities in Ethiopia. In an unprecedented and commendable move, the Government of Ethiopia agreed to waive substantial fines, amounting to several thousand U.S. dollars per person, that had

been levied on the detainees. This remarkable act of leniency reflects not only the growing goodwill between Pakistan and Ethiopia but also the Ethiopian government's recognition of humanitarian considerations. The Embassy actively engaged with Ethiopian authorities at the highest level to resolve the issue. The Ambassador of Pakistan held a series of meetings with senior officials, including Dr. Dema Negwo, Chairperson of the House of People's Representatives (HoPR) Standing Committee

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Air India audit finds 51 safety lapses

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: India's aviation watchdog found 51 safety lapses at Air India in its July audit, including lack of adequate training for some pilots, use of unapproved simulators and a poor rostering system, according to a government report seen by Reuters. The annual audit was not related to the deadly Boeing 787 crash last month that killed 260 people in Ahmedabad, but its findings come as the airline faces renewed scrutiny after the accident. The Tata Group-owned airline is already facing warning notices for running planes without checking emergency equipment, not changing engine parts in time and forging records, along with other lapses related to crew fatigue management.

MWM announces nationwide protest

Senator Raja Nasir Abbas says Rs50 billion spent by pilgrims now wasted

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) has announced a nationwide peaceful protest and sit-ins in response to the government's ban on by-road travel for Arbaceen pilgrims, calling it unconstitutional, unethical, and unacceptable. Speaking at a press conference in Islamabad, MWM chief Senator Allama Raja Nasir Abbas strongly condemned the government's move to block overland routes to Iran and Iraq during Arbaceen. He said: "This is a violation of our constitutional right to religious freedom under Article 20. We will not accept any illegal or immoral act."

PAC grills FBR, industry ministry over sugar crisis

Committee questions tax relief, subsidy, and rising sugar export profits

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has sought the names of sugar mill owners from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) in connection with the ongoing sugar crisis. During the committee's session, chaired by Junaid Akbar Khan, FBR officials were asked to share details of mill owners who benefited from export subsidies and tax exemptions, while the Ministry of Industries and Production was grilled over the rising sugar prices and the rationale behind sugar import and export decisions.

Editorial on Page 5

Committee member Riaz Fatyana alleged that the nation had been defrauded of Rs287 billion under the guise of sugar prices and that those who highlighted the issue, such as Punjab's cane commissioner Zaman Wattoo, were sidelined. He questioned the inconsistency in government claims, citing sugar as surplus one moment and in short supply the next. The secretary for industries explained that the sugar industry is regulated by

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Omar Ayub writes to CJP

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: After the recent sentencing of several PTI leaders and lawmakers by the anti-terrorism courts (ATCs), Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan wrote a letter to the chief justice against the "constitutional and procedural violations" in the May 9 riots cases. The anti-terrorism courts in different cities sentenced several PTI senior leaders and lawmakers to 10 years 'imprisonment in the May 9 mayhem cases last week. In his letter, the opposition leader appealed to Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Yahya Afridi to review the conduct of all ongoing May 9 trials to ensure compliance with the principles of fair trial and due process. He also sought the top court to review and,

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Palestinians have right to viable state: Dy PM Dar

He said, "For over 75 years, the Palestinian people have endured occupation, displacement and denial of their fundamental rights, including their inalienable right to self-determination"

CENTRELINE REPORT

NEW YORK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar Monday said Pakistan reaffirmed its unwavering and principled support for the Palestinian peoples' inalienable right to a viable, independent and contiguous state of Palestine based on the pre-1967 borders with Al-Quds Al Sharif as its capital. He was speaking at the United Nations High-Level International Conference on "The Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution" in New York. He said, "For over 75 years, the Palestinian people have endured occupation, displacement and denial of their fundamental rights, including their inalienable right to self-determination." "This prolonged injustice is not just a political failure but a moral stain and a persistent threat to international peace and security," he said, adding, "Today Gaza is a graveyard of international law and humanitarian principles." He said the death and destruction inflicted by Israel, including the killing of over 58,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, was an unconscionable breach of international humanitarian law, the



United Nations resolutions and the binding measures of the International Court of Justice. Blockade of aid, deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure including refugee camps, hospitals and aid convoys crossed every red line of legality and humanity, he asserted. He said, "The collective punishment of Palestinians must stop now, and we must immediately act with purpose." "It is high time for credible and enforceable international action on key priorities." He called for an unconditional, immediate and permanent ceasefire across Gaza and all Palestinian-occupied territories and implementation of UN resolution 2735.

UK to recognize Palestine state: Starmer

NEWS DESK

LONDON: U.K. Will Recognize Palestinian Statehood in September, barring Israel-Hamas cease-Fire. Prime Minister Keir Starmer of Britain said his country would make the move unless Israel agrees to a cease-fire with Hamas. Ireland, Spain and Norway all officially recognised a Palestinian state last year. France announced to recognize Palestine just last week. Britain has long maintained that recognis-

He commended the efforts of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt and the United States on the Palestinian issue. He urged full and unimpeded humanitarian access, especially of life saving food and medicines to Gaza and the protection of humanitarian teams. He underlined the need for financial and political support for UNRWA – a lifeline for millions of

ing Palestine as a state must be on condition of direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. More than 200 MPs - over half of them Labour - including Labour chair of the Commons foreign affairs committee Emily Thornberry, last week called on Sir Keir to immediately recognise a Palestinian state. However, the prime minister had repeatedly indicated he would not budge on the issue, saying he "very strongly" believes the only long-term solution to the Israel-Gaza conflict is a two-state solution.

Palestinians. He called for international accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity and an end to impunity for Israel. He said a genuine and irreversible political process should be undertaken to end the occupation of Palestine.

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Health advisor inaugurates largest solarization project in KP

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali has said that the provincial government has initiated practical steps to modernize, sustain, and strengthen basic healthcare services across the province. He made these remarks while inaugurating a 20kW solarization project at the Rural Health Center (RHC) Regi Lalma here on Tuesday. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Health Secretary Shahidullah, HCIP Project Director Dr. Bilal, senior officials of the health department, local representatives, and members of the community. Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali shared that under the Health Care Improvement Project (HCIP), 195 Primary Healthcare Facilities, including Category C and D hospitals, will be shifted to solar energy systems within the next six months.—APP

12 shops sealed, Rs 300,000 fine imposed over hoarding

LAHORE: The district administration sealed 12 shops and imposed fines exceeding Rs 300,000 in a major crackdown against overpricing and hoarding, here on Tuesday. During the enforcement drive, five FIRs were registered against serious violators. A special focus was placed on curbing artificial inflation in sugar prices, with more than 400 inspections conducted across Lahore. These efforts resulted in 63 detected violations, 33 FIRs, and the sealing of 31 additional shops dealing in overpriced or hoarded sugar. DC Syed Musa Raza said that the administration is fully committed to ensuring that essential commodities remain available at government-notified prices. He confirmed that sugar is now being sold at Rs 173 per kilogram, as per official rates. Assistant Commissioners and Price Control Magistrates remain active citywide, conducting regular inspections and taking immediate action against violators.—APP

Zero tolerance for transparency in financial matters of hospitals

CHINOT: Deputy Commissioner Safiullah Gondal has said that there was zero tolerance for transparency in financial matters of government hospitals, and the available funds should be utilized in a transparent manner. He said this while presiding over a meeting of the District Health Council. The administrative and financial issues of government hospitals came under discussion in the meeting. The meeting reviewed the measures taken regarding the local procurement of medicines and the Deputy Commissioner stressed the need to formulate a comprehensive strategy due to the rush of patients at the District Headquarters Hospital. He said that there should be no negligence in the arrangements for the relatives of patients in hospitals. The wings should be kept fully functional.—APP

Islamabad, Addis Ababa eye stronger urban cooperation

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to Pakistan, called on the Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, at CDA Headquarters today. The meeting was held in a very cordial atmosphere in which matters of mutual interest, with a particular focus on strengthening bilateral cooperation in urban development, and tree plantation drive, streams came under discussion, with an emphasis on sustainable city management. Chairman CDA apprised H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula about the performance of CDA, particularly the key development projects completed as well as those currently underway in Islamabad. He highlighted the Authority's strategic vision to transform the capital into a modern, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable city. The Chairman also briefed the Ambassador about CDA's special focus on uplifting of the water channels and creating eco-friendly public spaces that enhance the city's livability and global appeal.

During the meeting, H.E. Jemal Beker proposed Ethiopia's participation

in Islamabad's Margalla Hills plantation campaign, inspired by Ethiopia's Green Corridor Project in

Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative. Chairman CDA also welcomed the idea of establishing a sister-city

and green urban solutions. He emphasized that Ethiopia's expertise in urban sustainability could signifi-

cantly benefit Islamabad's future development plans. H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula appreciated the excellent performance of CDA under the leadership of Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa for making Islamabad

a beautiful capital. He expressed Ethiopia's keen interest in enhancing bilateral cooperation in areas

new avenues of collaboration in smart city solutions, urban greenery, and capacity building through institu-



of capital city sustainable infrastructure, and environment-friendly urban growth. The Ambassador also showed interest in learning from Pakistan's experience in managing capital city development. Both sides agreed to explore

tional linkages and technical exchanges. The meeting concluded on a positive note, with a mutual resolve to advance practical cooperation between the two nations through sustained engagement

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RCCI two-day health expo, summit kicks off

DNA

Rawalpindi: The two-day Health Expo and Summit being organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has begun, attracting significant participation from government officials, foreign diplomats, and industry stakeholders. The event was graced by the Minister of State for Finance, Mr. Bilal Azhar Kayani, and the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Tourism, Mr. Sardar Yasir Ilyas, along with a large number of foreign ambassadors at Pak China Friendship Center Islamabad. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Mr. Bilal Azhar Kayani emphasized the government's commitment to creating a conducive environment for the business community. "The government's role is to provide

facilitation, while business growth is the responsibility of the private sector. Concerns of the business community regarding controversial clauses in the Finance Bill will soon be addressed. Proposals from RCCI will be incorporated into policy-making to enhance trade, business development, and exports," he stated. Mr. Sardar Yasir Ilyas highlighted the vast potential of tourism in Pakistan, particularly medical tourism, which can significantly contribute to economic growth. The primary objective of the Health Expo is to assess the export potential of Pakistan's healthcare and pharmaceutical sectors while addressing key challenges faced by the industry. Over 25 stalls related to pharmaceuticals and medical products have been set up, attracting visits from ambassa-

dors, high commissioners, and trade attaches from countries including Ethiopia, Syria, Azerbaijan, USA, Czech Republic and Morocco, who praised the quality of Pakistani products. RCCI President Mr. Usman Shaikat underscored the immense export potential of Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry, citing the country's capability to manufacture advanced medicines, availability of skilled workforce, and the rising global demand for affordable drugs. "Pakistan is recognized for producing high-quality generic medicines at competitive prices, making them attractive to international markets," he said. However, he also noted that regulatory barriers, lack of research and development, and stiff global competition hinder the sector from realizing its full potential.

Cotton growers urged to drain rainwater to save crop

MULTAN: Director, Central Cotton Research Institute (CCRI) Multan, Ms. Sabahat Hussain, issued a vital advisory to cotton farmers following recent monsoon rains, warning that stagnant water in fields poses a serious threat to the cotton crop, and must be drained out. In her statement released Tuesday, Ms. Hussain emphasized that rainwater should not be allowed to stand in cotton fields for more than 24 hours. "When water remains stagnant for extended periods, the roots of the cotton plant cannot absorb oxygen or nutrients effectively, causing the plants to wilt and eventually die," she cautioned. She urged growers to act swiftly to ensure proper drainage to prevent significant damage to the crop. Highlighting the symptoms of post-rain stress in cotton plants, she noted that yellowing of the crop can occur in such conditions.—APP

KP Governor, Iranian envoy discuss bilateral ties, Pilgrim facilitation

PESHAWAR: Iranian Consul General Ali Banafshekhan met with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor House here on Tuesday. During the meeting, both sides held detailed discussions on Iran-Pakistan bilateral relations, regional developments, issues faced by pilgrims, and enhancing mutual cooperation. The Iranian Consul General also spoke about the expected visit of the Iranian President to Pakistan, describing it as a milestone that would further strengthen relations between the two brotherly countries.—APP

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Hyderabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry having its office District Head Quarter propose to register the Trade Organization under the Trade Organizations ACT 2013 to represent the Trade & Industry of District Hyderabad. Application for grant of licence de novo is been submitted, Trade Organizations, Ministry of Commerce, Islamabad.

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Nursing students seek UHS reconsider passing percentage

RAWALPINDI: Protest by the nursing students against change in passing percentage has convinced the authorities to review the decision enhanced 60% passing marks. Nursing students at the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital Nursing College in Rawalpindi lodged a protest against a new policy implemented by the University of Health Sciences (UHS) in which the passing percentage of each semester was enhanced to 60%, putting tens of hundreds students in failed category. The majority of the students were granted a probationary period for improvement, according to new policy, which raised the passing marks for the BS Nursing exams from the previously announced 50% to 60%, and has led to significant unrest among the nursing students. UHS has held comprehensive meetings regarding the impact of new policy, after seeing students' protests held at multiple nursing colleges. Yasir Sultan, Public Affair head at the university informed APP that a notification has been issued by the university saying that all students would follow the rules which were in exercise at the time of their admission. "The curriculum and assessment policy for all undergraduate semester-based degree programs of the University of Health Sciences Lahore, including BS Nursing, shall remain aligned with the 'Policy Guidelines for Implementation of Uniform Semester System in HEIs of Pakistan' of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), as approved by the UHS Syndicate in its 77th meeting, held on 29th December 2023", says the notification. The notification further clarifies that the BS Nursing Batch of 2023-2024 has been enrolled under the new semester-based curriculum and assessment framework, in line with the HEC guidelines, as was notified vide letter No. UHS/REG-24/139 dated 07-01-2024. These students shall continue to be governed by the same rules and regulations for the assessment throughout the duration of their degree program. According to the notification, 'the 'Statutes and Regulations for Semester-Based Undergraduate Degree Programs (Allied Health Sciences, BS Nursing and Pharm D)', as notified vide letter No. UHS/REG-25/1230 dated 05-06-2025, shall be applicable to the students to be admitted from the academic session 2025-2026 and onwards'. The Principal Rawalpindi DHQ Nursing College confirmed the APP that UHS was reconsidering the policy after the protest by the students. "We have to follow the HEC policies, however a comprehensive meeting was called to deal with issues in favourable manners", she said denying any confirmed decision. Yasir Sultan further informed that another comprehensive meeting was still underway to address the issue, saying "the decision of the meeting will be notified". On the other side, students reps are confident about the reversion of passing marks to 50%. Earlier during the protest, students strongly rejected an abrupt change in passing marks claiming more than 4,000 students across the province were declared failed, while many others were placed on probation or to face the risk of dropping out.—DNA

Massive irregularities exposed in Sindh Food depts during five year

Wheat was distributed beyond authorized quotas, violating government procurement policy and causing losses. Total financial irregularities and losses have exceeded Rs 70 billion, raising serious concerns over governance, accountability, and food security in Sindh


NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: A shocking audit of the Sindh Food Department has revealed widespread corruption, mismanagement, and financial fraud amounting to more than Rs 70 billion in four years alone. The audit, covering multiple districts of Sindh province and financial years, has highlighted systemic failures in wheat procurement, storage, taxation, and transparency, leaving public funds at risk and contributing to wheat shortages and price hikes across the province. A hundred billions of wheat Rotted in Open air despite Government Warehouses.

It is to mention here that over 20,000 wheat bags were stored on privately rented open plots, despite the presence of an official government warehouse. The exposed bags were left vulnerable to

rain and intense heat for nearly 18 months, resulting in large-scale spoilage. The private plot's owner, Muhammad Amin Jamali in Dadu district has taken the matter to court, alleging that the department owes him 15 months' rent. also accused officials of deliberately delaying the removal of spoiled wheat to hide the extent of the corruption. This scribe has investigated numerous key Audit Findings, including records Withheld Rs 13 Million Unverified, while essential documents worth Rs 13.05 million were not provided for audit despite repeated official requests, raising suspicions of concealment. Confirmed theft of wheat and bardana of Rs 2.07 billion Loss have been observed. Twelve districts reported confirmed shortages of government wheat and bardana (gunny bags) with no efforts made for recovery or investigation. A procurement fraud of Rs 138 Million Paid to Single Seller not








only a single wheat supplier was paid Rs 138 million without any agreement, tax filings, or production, verifications. Wheat also issued to Non-Operational Mills Rs 42.71 Million a heavy loss to the food department said sources. Several flour mills that were not operational received wheat illegally, suggesting ghost mills were used to divert government stocks. Several times inquiry delays, while Rs 30.85 million wheat still unrecovered. According to an inquiry, missing 12,340 wheat bags remains unresolved with no recovery initiated. Also Quota Violations of Rs 2.72 million in excess wheat released Wheat was distributed beyond authorized quotas, violating government procurement policy and causing losses. Total financial irregularities and losses have exceeded Rs 70 billion, raising serious concerns over governance, accountability, and food security in Sindh.



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

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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
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Reputation fundamental asset for any business, institution: Minister

Book on “Reputation Management and Crisis Communication” by Imran Ghaznavi Launched at National Skills University Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A prestigious book launch ceremony was held at the National Skills University (NSU) Islamabad to unveil “Reputation Management and Crisis Communication: A Study of the Corporate Sector”, authored by renowned communication strategist and media expert Mr. Imran Ghaznavi.

The groundbreaking publication, which delves into the increasingly vital field of reputation and crisis management in the corporate world, drew a distinguished audience that included senior bureaucrats, ambassadors, corporate leaders, regulators, academics, and media professionals. The event began with a warm welcome address by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar, who praised the timeliness and scholarly merit of the book. He emphasized the need for integrating such critical topics into mainstream education to equip future professionals with the tools to navigate today’s communication challenges. Delivering the book review, prominent economist and public policy analyst Dr. Vaqar Ahmed highlighted the practical relevance of the publication for C-suite executives, board members, and communication professionals. He described the book as a valuable guide for organizations grappling with the fast-paced and often volatile media and digital environment. Joining the ceremony via Zoom from the United States,



Prof. Dr. Zafar Uddin Ahmed, President of the Academy for Global Business Advancement (AGBA), termed the book a landmark contribution from a Pakistani author to the global discourse on corporate reputation. Similarly, Dr. Javid Laghari, former Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, called it a “must-have” academic resource, particularly relevant for South Asian business schools and communication programs. Mr. Mohammad Ali, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Privatisation and the chief guest on the occasion, emphasized the strategic significance of reputation in today’s hyper-connected, information-driven world. “Reputation is a fundamental asset for any business, institution, or individual. It must be nurtured and protected from the top level of leadership,” he remarked. He advocated the creation of board-level committees dedicated to reputational risk and called for leadership training modules specifically focused on crisis communication. Adding to the discourse, Mr. Shahzad Ahmed Malik, President of the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan (ICMAP), stressed the necessity of incorporating corporate reputation management into board governance frameworks. He strongly recommended including the subject in directors’ training programs to ensure leadership is equipped with the knowledge to anticipate and respond to reputational threats. Prof. Dr. Syed Hafeez Ahmed of NSU delivered the concluding

remarks and offered a heartfelt vote of thanks to the participants and contributors, emphasizing the value of such academic engagements for strengthening Pakistan’s thought leadership on global corporate practices. In his closing reflections, author Mr. Imran Ghaznavi expressed gratitude to all attendees and contributors. He shared that the book is the culmination of years of professional experience, extensive research, and firsthand engagement in regulatory and corporate communication. “In today’s digital era, where a single tweet or misstep can jeopardize the credibility of an organization or even a nation, reputation management is no longer optional—it is strategic,” he asserted. The ceremony concluded with the official un-

veiling of the book, followed by a group photograph. The publication is expected to serve as an essential resource for business leaders, regulators, academics, and policy professionals who aim to understand and address the complex dynamics of reputation and crisis communication in the modern age. ISSI holds Bilateral Dialogue with Iranian think-tank IRAS The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) held bilateral dialogue with Iran’s Institute for Iran and Eurasia Studies (IRAS) on “Iran-Pakistan Relations in the Context of New Regional Developments.” Moderated by Ms. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA, the dialogue speakers included Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI; Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG, ISSI; Dr. Seyyed Rasoul Moosavi, former Director General of Southern Asia, Iran’s Foreign Ministry; Ambassador Riffat Masood, Pakistan’s former Ambassador to Iran; and Dr. Somaye Morovati, Senior Researcher and Head of South Asian Group, Scientific Research and Middle East Strategic Studies Center (CMESS), Tehran. DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood shared an in-depth assessment of shifting global and regional dynamics and their implications for Pakistan-Iran relations. He highlighted rising global instability, erosion of international legal and humanitarian norms, the urgent need to safeguard multilateralism,

ISSI holds bilateral dialogue with Iranian think-tank IRAS

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) on Tuesday held a bilateral dialogue with Iran’s Institute for Iran and Eurasia Studies (IRAS) on “Iran-Pakistan Relations in the Context of New Regional Developments.” Moderated by Amina Khan, Director Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA), the dialogue speakers included Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI; Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG, ISSI; Dr. Seyyed Rasoul Moosavi, former Director General of Southern Asia, Iran’s Foreign Ministry; Ambassador Riffat Masood, Pakistan’s former Ambassador to Iran; and Dr. Somaye Morovati, Senior Researcher and Head of South Asian Group, Scientific Research and Middle East Strategic Studies Center (CMESS), Tehran, said a press release. DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood shared an in-depth assessment of shifting global and regional dynamics and their implications for Pakistan-Iran relations. He highlighted rising global instability, erosion of international legal and humanitarian norms, the urgent need to safeguard multilateralism, and the imperative of peaceful resolution of disputes in a world rife with armed conflicts and increasing resort to the use of force. He described the shift toward multipolarity as an opportunity for Pakistan and Iran to play a role in building a fair, just, and equitable global order. He noted the impact of Iran-Israel military standoff, the Gaza genocide, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict – highlighting their impact on global stability and an international order based on international law and the UN Charter. Underscoring the importance of strengthening Pakistan-Iran relations, he welcomed the forthcoming visit of the President of Iran to Pakistan as part of the process of solidifying mutual collaboration. He called for enhanced cooperation on bilateral economic cooperation, trade, and energy; stressed closer coordination on Afghanistan, particularly on issues relating to security and connectivity; and emphasized that closer bilateral cooperation remains vital for peace, stability, and regional prosperity. During the discussion, participants highlighted the salience of Pakistan-Iran relations, rooted in shared history, geography, and convergence on a range of regional and international issues. They emphasized the need for joint endeavours for regional stability, counter-terrorism, and intelligence-sharing. The revival of trilateral mechanisms and stronger political will were seen as essential for addressing cross-border threats and evolving regional challenges. Speakers called for continued support for legitimate causes such as Palestine. With the Iranian President’s upcoming visit to Pakistan, the discussion highlighted the importance of strategic dialogue, regional coordination, and renewed commitment to strengthening bilateral ties in a shifting geopolitical landscape. —DNA

DIG reaffirms commitment to public safety

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Islamabad Police Muhammad Jawad Tariq, accompanied by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Muhammad Shoaib Khan, held a detailed briefing session with the officers and personnel of the Sherdil Squad to reinforce the force’s resolve for maintaining peace and protecting lives in the federal capital. An official told APP on Tuesday that the session focused on strengthening operational preparedness, ensuring professional conduct, and promoting a citizen-friendly policing approach. Addressing the squad, DIG Muhammad Jawad Tariq emphasized that the protection of citizens’ lives

and property remains the foremost priority of Islamabad Police. He directed all officers and personnel to treat the public with respect and uphold the values of honesty and integrity in the performance of their duties. “Maintain a professional appearance, respond swiftly to any law and order situation, and be ready at all times to act within the framework of the law,” he said. DIG Tariq reiterated that all possible measures will be taken to ensure peace and security in Islamabad. He affirmed that Islamabad Police is committed to transforming the federal capital into a haven of peace and will leave no stone unturned in this mission.—APP

PM’s Youth Programme deepens global education ties: Rana

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister’s Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, on Tuesday emphasized the government’s continued efforts to improve education in Pakistan through close partnerships with international organizations like the British Council and the Scottish Government. Speaking at the launch event of a 10-year impact report of the Scotland-Pakistan Scholarship for Young Women and Girls, he said the British Council has played a vital role in supporting education, particularly for girls. “Thousands of young women from across Pakistan have benefited from this scholarship. We are thankful to the Scottish Government for their continued support,” he added. He praised the Zewar-e-Taleem Program, which was introduced when Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was the Chief Minister of Punjab. The program provided educational stipends to girls in 16 underprivileged districts of Punjab where female education was previously neglected. “In those districts, the girls’ enrollment rate increased from 16–21% to over 51%,” Rana Mashhood noted. “These girls are now topping board exams. We are proud of them. They are the future of Pakistan.” He also recalled the creation of the Punjab Educational Endowment

Fund (PEEF) in 2008, an initiative that has now expanded nationwide as the Pakistan Education Endowment Fund. So far, over 500,000 deserving students across Pakistan have received scholarships based on merit. He shared that the provincial government had earlier launched the ‘Women on Wheels’ programme to empower young women through mobility. “We carried out research in various universities and colleges, and based on that, introduced a program to provide motorbikes and scooters to female students,” he said. “Today, more than 26,000 girls in Punjab are benefiting from this initiative. Women on Wheels is now a powerful tool for the empowerment and independence of young women across the province,” he added. Rana Mashhood also highlighted the development of Pakistan’s first-ever National Adolescent and Youth Policy. He shared that over 300,000 young people have taken part in the policy consultation process, making it the largest youth-focused survey in the country’s history. “This policy will address the needs of young people between ages 10 and 29 and will be announced very soon,” he said. The Chairman further spoke about the launch of the Digital Youth Hub, a one-stop online platform offering scholarships, training, and employ-

ment information under the Prime Minister’s Youth Programme’s 4Es – Education, Engagement, Environment, and Employment. Since its launch on March 26, over 500,000 youth have registered and 1.6 million have downloaded the app, with thousands joining daily. “Youth can now access global and local opportunities directly through this platform, without needing to visit any office,” he said, encouraging all young people to register. Earlier in the ceremony, the British Council presented the 10-year performance report of the Scotland-Pakistan Scholarship Program. According to the report, 20,000 girls benefited, including 18,000 school-level students, among whom were 3,527 minority students and 93 students with disabilities. At the university level, 2,000 female students received scholarships, including 283 from minority groups and 43 with disabilities. Rana Mashhood also handed over certificates to several scholarship recipients during the event. “We are committed to creating opportunities and providing all possible support to our youth,” said Rana Mashhood, concluding his remarks. “These young girls are full of potential. Their confidence and commitment show that Pakistan’s future is in safe hands.”

SECP road-map for reducing settlement cycle to one day

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has announced February 9, 2026 as the implementation date for the transition from T+2 to T+1 settlement cycle for securities traded at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX). The announcement was made at a ceremony held in Karachi where several key market participants including PSX, NCCPL, CDC, PMEX, securities brokers, banks, and industry associations were present, said a press release issued here on Tuesday. This transition marks a major milestone while abiding by SECP’s broader agenda to protect investor interests through greater speed, transparency, and increased market efficiency. It also benefits market participants by significantly reducing the credit and market risk. Furthermore, this shift is expected to significantly improve market liquidity as trades will now be settled faster, lowering the likelihood of default due to market volatility or operational issues. The Chairman SECP highlighted Pakistan’s early adoption of the T+1 settlement cycle by following in the footsteps of developed and emerging markets such as USA, China, Canada, Mexico, and Argentina. He further emphasized that Pakistan’s alignment with global best practices reflects the increasing maturity, readiness, and resilience of its capital markets. Under SECP’s guidance, NCCPL has actively led the transition through close coordination with key market stakeholders. To support this process, an implementation committee was formed comprising of representatives from SECP, CMIs, custodian banks and securities brokers to ensure a smooth, well-coordinated shift to the T+1 settlement cycle. Detailed consultations were also held with foreign investors in this regard. In the lead-up to the implementation, the Chairman advised all market participants to begin reviewing their operational readiness for them to identify and address any potential challenges well in time. Further, to facilitate this process, NCCPL has prepared a roadmap outlining the proposed T+1 settlement mechanism and detailed procedural guidance to enable a smooth transition while minimizing operational risk. This market development initiative is a significant step toward modernization. It is expected to deliver substantial operational efficiency while reinforcing SECP’s commitment to strengthening Pakistan’s capital market ecosystem and aligning with evolving global standards.—APP

Students given certificates for their calligraphy work

ISLAMABAD: The National Language Promotion Department (NLPPD) organized a Certificate Distribution Ceremony for Calligraphy, where 35 students were recognized for their outstanding work, said a press release here on Tuesday. The chief guest of the ceremony, Director General NLPPD, Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, congratulated all the successful students and appreciated their passion for calligraphy. He said, “Calligraphy is not only a representative art of our culture but also reflects our religious and cultural heritage.” In his welcome address, the Executive Director of the department, Dr. Rashid Hameed, said that the teachers of the department, Azhar Hussain and Nasir Khan Seemab, have played a vital role in the promotion of calligraphy, which has brought liveliness to the institution. He added that they expect even greater student participation in the future. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the participants expressed their views, saying that the awarding of certificates has not only encouraged the students but will also serve as a milestone in the promotion of the art of calligraphy. The participants highly appreciated the tireless efforts and guidance of the teachers and expressed hope that the department will continue to take such initiatives for the promotion of calligraphy in the future as well.—APP

PBM, OPF join forces to uplift marginalised communities

ISLAMABAD: In a historic step toward fostering social equity and humanitarian support, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) and Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) inks a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on initiatives aimed at serving the deserving and economically disadvantaged segments of society. In a glorious ceremony, Managing Director PBM Senator Capt. Shaheen Khalid Butt and Managing Director OPF Muhammad Afzaal Bhatti validated the MoU with their signatures. The ceremony was held here at PBM’s Head Office, attended by Director General PBM Prof. Dr. Zeeshan Danish, Member OPF Muhammad Kamran Khan and other key representatives from both organizations. The agreement outlines a shared vision to implement sustainable projects focused on healthcare, education, food security, and livelihood development for the underprivileged. Speaking at the occasion, Managing Director PBM Senator Capt. Shaheen Khalid Butt, while expressing his long-standing relationship with OPF, stated that “This partnership marks a new chapter in our ongoing mission to bring hope and tangible support to those who need it most. Together, we will create a more inclusive and compassionate society.” Capt. Shaheen also reaffirmed his commitment to implement the vision of the federal government for mitigating the sufferings of poor populace in the country. On the occasion, Managing Director OPF, Afzaal Bhatti remarked that by combining our resources, networks, and passion for service, we are confident this collaboration will make a meaningful impact in the lives of many beneficiaries of PBM. Terming it a memorable agreement, he anticipated for the accelerated efforts by the concerned officials of both organizations making it fruitful for the needy persons. Managing Director OPF also explained his passion for taking every possible.

Briefs

CDNS sets annual target of Rs 55b

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has set an annual target of Rs 55 billion investment in Islamic finance in Fiscal Year 2025-26. The CDNS has attained the annual collection target investment in Islamic finance during the FY 2024-25 from July 1st to June 30th, 2024-25.

The CDNS has revived the annual collection target and set Rs 40 billion in investment in Islamic finance for the Current Fiscal Year 2024-25, which will lead to growth in the country's Islamic economy. "The National Savings had issued the Islamic bonds to promote the Islamic finance system, which will help the development of the Islamic economy in the country," The Senior official said that "We had achieved the target of Rs 75 billion during the last fiscal year (2023-24) from the Islamic bonds, and that was why it aimed to introduce new dimensions in the Islamic finance sector."

"Islamic finance now has a significant role in the global financial sector. A large part of the economy of many major countries currently includes Islamic finance," he added. The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in the CDNS. Given the current market trend in the country, an ambitious target had been set to improve the savings culture further, he added. Replying to a question, he said that the CDNS has set a savings inflows target of Rs 1.3 trillion for the current Fiscal Year, 2025-26. Similarly, the CDNS has set a target of Rs 50 billion in investments in Islamic Investment for the Current Fiscal Year 2025-26, which will lead to the growth of the Islamic economy in the country.—APP

AIOU science faculty board approves key educational reforms

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) held the 29th meeting of its Faculty Board of Sciences, chaired by the Dean of the Faculty of Sciences, Professor Dr. Sher Muhammad. The meeting was attended by senior faculty members, heads of relevant departments, and external academic experts. The primary objective of the meeting was to review the ongoing and proposed academic programs of the Faculty of Sciences and align them with modern scientific standards, said a press release issued on Tuesday. During the session, extensive discussions were held on key matters such as research projects, teaching quality, and curriculum development. Addressing the meeting, Professor Dr. Sher Muhammad emphasized the urgent need to adopt international standards in teaching and research to effectively align with modern technology and global trends. The board approved the schemes of studies for short-term courses, associate degrees, BS, MPHil, PhD, and postgraduate programs. On this occasion, Dr. Zahid Majid, Director Academic Planning.—DNA



RAWALPINDI: Heavy machinery being used during construction work of Rawalpindi Ring Road project.

Pak produces over 14m mobile phones in first half of 2025

This trend has been gaining momentum since 2021, when local production, boosted significantly by Chinese companies establishing assembly plants in the country, first surpassed mobile phone imports

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has locally manufactured and assembled 14.24 million mobile phones during the first half of 2025, while importing only 0.86 million units, reflecting a strong shift toward domestic production and growing self-reliance in the mobile phone sector. Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday quoting the latest data released by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). This trend has been gaining momentum since 2021, when local production, boosted significantly by Chinese companies establishing assembly plants in the country, first surpassed mobile phone imports. Of the 14.24 million locally produced units in the first six months of 2025, 7.63 million were second-generation (2G) GSM phones, commonly referred to as keypad phones, while the rest were smartphones. Despite the increasing availability of smartphones,

basic keypad devices remain in steady demand due to affordability and practicality. In response, manufacturers have enhanced feature phones with longer battery life, dual SIM support, LED flashlights, wireless FM radio, and limited internet connectivity, making them more relevant for cost-conscious consumers, especially in rural and semi-urban areas. Until 2020, Pakistan was heavily dependent on imports to meet domestic mobile phone demand. That year, 24.51 million phones were imported compared to only 13.05 million locally produced. However, the introduction of a Mobile Manufacturing Policy in 2020 and subsequent Mobile Device Manufacturing (MDM) Regulations issued by PTA in 2021 led to a dramatic turnaround in the industry by incentivizing companies to establish local manufacturing and assembly facilities. In 2021, Pakistan produced 24.66 million mobile phones locally, while imports

dropped to 10.26 million. In 2022, local production stood at 21.94 million, with imports falling further to 1.53 million. The year 2023 saw 21.28 million phones produced locally and 1.58 million imported. In 2024, local manufacturing hit a record high of 31.38 million units, while imports declined to just 1.71 million. Meanwhile, Pakistan has solidified its position as China's leading supplier of boiled beef, recording a striking 139% year-on-year increase in export value during the first half of 2025. It was reported by China Economic Net on Tuesday quoting data released by China's General Administration of Customs (GACC). From January to June 2025, Pakistan exported \$5.24 million worth of boiled beef to China, a significant jump from \$2.36 million during the same period in 2024. Export volumes also rose sharply, reaching 1,030,606 kilograms, with the average price climbing to \$5.47 per kilogram - reflecting both high-

er quality standards and growing Chinese demand for Pakistani meat products. This performance positioned Pakistan ahead of regional competitors, including Mongolia, which exported \$3 million worth of boiled beef to China in the same timeframe. Analysts attribute Pakistan's success to its adherence to China's stringent food safety and quarantine regulations, particularly for heat-treated meat products like boiled beef. The surge also underscores the benefits of bilateral trade frameworks, which have expanded market access for Pakistani goods, as well as the rising popularity of Pakistani halal beef among Chinese consumers. Looking ahead, experts suggest that sustained technical support, capacity-building initiatives, and logistics improvements - aligned with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)'s "shared development" goals - could further unlock Pakistan's agricultural export potential.

Mobile phone imports decreases 21.31% to \$1494b

ISLAMABAD: The import of mobile phones into the country has witnessed a decrease of 21.31 percent during the fiscal year 2024-25 as compared to the last year 2023-24. Pakistan imported mobile phones worth US \$ 1.494 billion during July-June (2024-25) as compared to the imports of US \$ 1.898 billion during July-June (2023-24), according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Meanwhile, on a year-to-year basis, the import of mobile phones also dipped by 49.95 percent during the month of June 2025 when compared to the same month of last year. The import of mobiles into the country during June 2025 was recorded at \$ 139.425 million against the exports of \$278.574 million in June 2024. On a month-on-month basis, the imports of mobile phones went up by 39.60 percent during June 2025, as compared to the imports of US \$99.875 million during May 2025, according to the data. It is pertinent to mention here that the overall exports from the country increased by 4.67 percent during the fiscal year 2024-25 as compared to previous year, the data revealed. Exports during July-June (2024-25) were recorded at \$32.106 billion against \$30.675 billion during July-June (2023-24). On the other hand, imports into the country also went up by 6.57 percent by growing from \$54.779 billion last year to \$58.380 billion during the fiscal year 2024-25.—APP

IRSA releases 366,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 366,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 411,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1537.00 feet which was 135.00 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 285,800 cusecs and 257,700 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1198.75 feet, which was 148.75 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 23,600 cusecs and 7,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 292,500, 320,400, 387,100 and 300,900 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 33,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 42,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

QAU students arrested for 'refusing to vacate' hostel

Varsity admin claims students directed to vacate hostel by July 13 for maintenance work to be carried out

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The police in the federal capital on Tuesday arrested dozens of students at Quaid-i-Azam University in an early morning raid at hostel on the complaint of varsity's administration. The university administration completely vacated hostels number 6, 8, 9 and 11 with the police arresting 55 to 60 students who have been shifted to the Secretariat Police Station. Providing details of the action, the administration claimed that the students had been directed to vacate the hostels by July 13 for the maintenance work set to be carried out

during the summer vacations. Noting that a large number of students had already vacated the hostels, others were given multiple deadlines to comply with the directives and were eventually evicted after the expiry of the final deadline. Expanding on the matter, the Islamabad police said that "legal assistance was provided at the request of the university administration". Notification concerning hostels eviction. — Reporter Notification concerning hostel's eviction. — Reporter Students had vacated 11 hostels; however, four hostels were not being vacated and the varsity had complained of students illegally residing in these buildings. Students who re-

sisted this peaceful process have been shifted from the hostel, and legal action will be taken at the written request of the university administration, the police added. Meanwhile, human rights lawyer Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir has claimed that as many as 72 students had been taken into custody from the varsity. "We are going to meet the vice chancellor so that the issues can be resolved," Mazari said while speaking to Geo News outside the police station. Furthermore, the Vice Chancellor's Office has been locked in view of the student protest. "The VC Secretariat has been closed due to the student protest," said the university's administration.

Tarar extends condolences with PML-N activist

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar on Tuesday visited the residence of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz senior and active worker Hafiz Nouman and extended his condolences on the death of his father. Prime Minister's Media Coordinator Badr Shahbaz Warraich was also present on the occasion. The Federal Minister for Information offered Fateha for the departed soul and expressed his heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved family. He termed the death of Hafiz Nouman's father a great tragedy for his family and stated that the vacuum created by the death of the deceased will not be filled for a long time. He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude. Party leaders and workers were also present on the occasion, who prayed for the departed soul and expressed their sympathy to the family.—DNA

Orange Line Train gets Rs 7b subsidy

ISLAMABAD: To promote inclusive and affordable public transportation, the Orange Line Metro Train (OLMT) continues to serve as a reliable and economical mode of urban travel. The Punjab Finance Department has released Rs. 7 billion in subsidies to support the train's operational costs and sustain current ticket prices. A senior OLMT official told Gwadar Pro that the decision reflects the government's commitment to accessible mobility for all segments of society. "In a time of rising inflation and increasing transport expenses, this subsidy ensures that the service remains within reach for working individuals, students, and families who depend on it daily," the official added. Launched on October 25, 2020, and built with Chinese technology, the OLMT is South Asia's first electric metro train. Serving a city of over 13 million people, it has become a vital transportation link, providing a fast, safe, and affordable commute across Lahore. The train line stretches 27 kilometers with 26 stations and runs through key residential and commercial areas, particularly benefiting middle- and lower-income neighborhoods. With operations beginning daily at 6 a.m., it offers a practical solution for students and office-goers alike. For Ghazal Usman, a working mother of two, the OLMT has been life-changing. She used to spend over Rs. 35,000 (\$158) per month on transportation. Now, thanks to the metro, her monthly commute costs have dropped to around Rs. 10,000, saving both time and money.—APP

CDA acts on student calls after tragedies near COMSATS varsity

A pedestrian bridge is not just needed, it's critical. In response to the growing public demand, the Capital Development Authority has acknowledged that the issue is being taken seriously

ISLAMABAD: Following the tragic deaths of an MS student, a woman, and a harrowing incident involving a family in a carry van trying to avoid a pedestrian on Park Road near COMSATS University, public pressure has intensified for immediate safety measures. Amid growing student demand and mounting community concern, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has confirmed that a proposal for the construction of a pedestrian bridge is now officially under consideration. What was once a standard crossing route for students and residents has now turned into a dangerous stretch of road. Park Road, after its recent expansion, has become a major, high-speed artery linking key areas such as

Taramri Chowk, Chak Shahzad, Bani Gala, and Rawal Dam. With educational institutions like COMSATS University on one side and over 70 private hostels and residential colonies on the other, hundreds of pedestrians must cross the road daily, without the aid of a footbridge, traffic signals, or zebra crossings. The situation took a deadly turn recently when two pedestrians, a COMSATS postgraduate student and a local woman, lost their lives while attempting to cross the road. In another devastating incident, two women were crossing the road when a speeding car struck them and overturned. Both the women and the car's driver sustained severe injuries and were rushed to the hospital, where they


later succumbed to their injuries. These back-to-back tragedies have triggered widespread concern and public outcry, particularly among the student community and local residents who rely on this route daily. "It feels like you're risking your life every time you step onto that road," said Khawar Zaman, a student of Media and Communication at COMSATS talking to APP. "Cars move at dangerously high speeds, and without any pedestrian bridge or crossing system, we're forced to play a waiting game with traffic. Crossing this road has become a daily struggle, and now, a deadly one." His concerns are echoed by many other students and hostel residents, who argue that Park Road has become increasingly unsafe

due to unchecked traffic flow and the absence of pedestrian safety infrastructure. Tasmia Gull, a BBA student and a hostel resident, who has to cross this dangerous road daily stressed the urgency, "Park Road connects several densely populated academic and residential areas, but no planning was done to accommodate pedestrians. There are no traffic lights, no zebra crossings, just speeding vehicles. It's terrifying, especially for students who walk to and from class. A pedestrian bridge is not just needed, it's critical." In response to the growing public demand, the Capital Development Authority has acknowledged that the issue is being taken seriously.—APP


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The bitter truth about Pakistan's sugar crisis

PAKISTAN is an agricultural country with vast fertile lands, a favorable climate, and a hardworking farming community. Yet, it is a national shame that despite being capable of producing enough sugar to meet domestic demand, the country repeatedly faces sugar shortages and is forced to import the commodity at exorbitant prices. The recent sugar crisis is not an isolated incident but part of a vicious cycle orchestrated by the powerful sugar mafia, which has long exploited both the system and the people. What is more alarming is that despite media exposés and public outcry, no meaningful action has been taken to hold the culprits accountable. This is not the first time Pakistan has faced such a crisis. In the past, sugar mill owners—many of whom are influential politicians—first exported sugar to create an artificial shortage in the local market and then imported it back at higher rates, making windfall profits at the expense of the common man. Investigations and media reports have exposed these manipulations, yet no punitive measures were taken. The sugar inquiry report of 2020 revealed shocking details of corruption, tax evasion, and exploitation by mill owners, but the powerful lobby ensured that the findings were swept under the rug. Now, it seems the same playbook is being used again.

The root of the problem lies in the fact that many sugar mill owners are also members of parliament or have close ties with those in power. This conflict of interest means that any legislation aimed at regulating the sugar industry or holding the mafia accountable is deliberately stalled. These influential figures ensure that policies remain in their favor, allowing them to manipulate supply, fix prices, and evade taxes with impunity. When those who make the laws are the same ones breaking them, how can justice prevail?

For the poor, sugar is not just a commodity but one of the few affordable luxuries in their meager diet. However, with prices skyrocketing and shortages becoming frequent, even this basic necessity is slipping out of their reach. Inflation has already made life unbearable for low-income families, and the artificial sugar crisis only adds to their misery. The government's failure to protect its citizens from such exploitation reflects a deep-seated malaise in governance, where the interests of a few elites override the welfare of millions.

The government must take bold steps to dismantle the sugar cartel's control. This includes strict regulation of sugar exports and imports, transparent pricing mechanisms, and crackdowns on hoarding. Those involved in artificial shortages and price manipulation must be prosecuted, regardless of their political influence. The sugar inquiry report's recommendations should be implemented without delay. Pakistan must invest in modernizing sugarcane farming, improving yield, and reducing production costs to ensure self-sufficiency. Citizens must hold their representatives accountable and demand an end to this exploitation.

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The United Nations: A toothless tiger

THE United Nations (UN) was founded in 1945 with the noble aim of maintaining international peace and security. Yet, nearly eight decades later, the organization stands as a shadow of its original vision—paralyzed by geopolitical rivalries, held hostage by veto-wielding powers, and rendered increasingly irrelevant in resolving the world's most pressing conflicts. From the Israel-Iran tensions to the Gaza crisis, the Kashmir dispute, and the endless infighting in Africa, the UN has failed to act as an effective mediator. The Secretary-General, instead of being a moral authority, has been reduced to a helpless figurehead whose pleas for peace are ignored by warring nations and powerful Security Council members alike. If the UN can no longer fulfill its primary mandate, then it is time to ask: What is its purpose?

The fundamental problem with the UN lies in its structure. The Security Council's five permanent members (P5)—the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom—hold veto power, allowing any one of them to block resolutions that threaten their interests. This has turned the UN into a battleground for great power politics rather than a platform for conflict resolution. The ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza is a glaring example of the UN's impotence. Despite overwhelming global condemnation of Israel's military actions, the US has repeatedly vetoed ceasefire resolutions, shielding its ally from accountability. The Secretary-General's appeals for restraint are dismissed, and UN agencies like UNRWA are defunded and demonized. If the UN cannot even enforce its own humanitarian principles when a nuclear-armed state flouts international law, then what good is it? The recent exchange of missile strikes between Israel and Iran further exposed the UN's irrelevance. Rather than mediating de-escalation, the Security Council remained deadlocked, with Western powers backing Israel and Russia and China refusing to take a strong stance. The Secretary-General's calls for restraint were ignored, proving that the UN has no real authority when major powers are involved. The Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan has been on the UN agenda since 1948, yet no meaningful progress has been made. India dismisses UN resolutions as outdated, while Pakistan uses them for rhetorical leverage. The UN's failure to enforce its own mandates has left Kashmiris trapped in a cycle of violence and repression. If the organization cannot even facilitate dialogue after 75 years, why does it still pretend to care? From Sudan to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia to the Sahel, Africa remains a hotbed of conflict. The UN's peacekeeping missions (MONUSCO, MINUSMA, etc.) have been criticized for inefficiency, corruption, and even complicity in abuses. The Security Council pays lip service to African crises but refuses to authorize robust interventions when they do not align with Western or Russian interests. The current Secretary-General, António Guterres, has become a symbol of the UN's impotence. His statements on Gaza, Ukraine, and other conflicts are met with indifference. When he invoked Article 99 of the UN Charter to force attention on Gaza, the Security Council barely reacted.

Trump's Turnberry Meltdown

Qamar Bashir



The divergence was not limited to policy but extended to demeanor. In front of cameras, Trump insulted London's Mayor Sadiq Khan, calling him a "nasty man." This wasn't new—Trump has a history of personal attacks on leaders who dare to disagree with him. But the moment underscored how deeply he resents being challenged and how little regard he has for democratic norms. Starmer, visibly composed, did not dignify the insult with a direct rebuttal, but the message was clear: Europe's leaders are tired of Trump's petulance and disrespect.

PRESIDENT Donald Trump's recent visit to Europe, especially his high-profile meeting with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer at Turnberry, Scotland, was supposed to be a show of unity. Instead, it became a theatre of division. What unfolded was a diplomatic spectacle that laid bare the vast chasm between Trump's worldview and that of European leaders. His abrasive tone, patronizing lectures, and blind allegiance to Israeli narratives only deepened the sense that Europe is no longer a junior partner in the transatlantic alliance—but is rapidly distancing itself from a self-absorbed America. From the very outset, the atmosphere at Turnberry was tense. Trump, surrounded by the grandeur of his golf resort, delivered awkward, condescending monologues to European leaders, as if he were addressing subordinates rather than allies. In one of the most uncomfortable moments of the visit, he attempted to lecture the European Union on immigration, painting migrants as invaders and demanding urgent action. "You're being overrun," he declared, as if ordering them to shut their borders, boasting about how America had effectively sealed its own.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, while diplomatic, made it clear that Europe would address immigration "the European way"—balancing border security with humanitarian obligations. Legal immigration, she emphasized, would continue. This assertion, though calmly delivered, infuriated Trump. He cut her off mid-sentence, dismissing her explanation and launching into another tirade about how European leaders were failing their people. The clash did not stop at immigration. In his usual disdainful manner, Trump criticized Europe's commitment to renewable energy. He ridiculed wind turbines, calling them an eyesore, bird killers, and a waste of money. "They're ruining your countryside," he said. But Trump failed to acknowledge that Europe's investment in wind energy has brought down production costs significantly, reduced dependence on fossil fuels, and advanced the global fight against climate change. His remarks exposed not just a lack of environmental awareness but a stubborn ignorance that Europe no longer tolerates.

But the most explosive divergence came when the conversation turned to Gaza. Trump, echoing Netanyahu's rhetoric, focused almost entirely on the Israeli hostages held by Hamas. He praised Israel's efforts to free twenty hostages—ignoring the over 70,000 Palestinians killed and the countless others starving in what has become an open-air slaughterhouse. His selective sympathy was jarring, especially in the face of overwhelming evidence of mass civilian casualties, destroyed infrastructure, and deliberate starvation. Starmer, to his credit, refused to remain silent. "It's a humanitarian catastrophe," he said bluntly. "People in Britain are revolted by what they see." His words echoed not only the sentiment of the British public but of much of Europe. While Trump was busy blaming Hamas for every drop of blood spilled, Starmer and other European leaders were demanding accountability from Israel, aid corridors for Gaza, and an urgent ceasefire. The divergence was not limited to policy but extended to demeanor. In front of cameras, Trump insulted London's Mayor Sadiq Khan, calling him a "nasty man." This wasn't new—Trump has a history of personal attacks on leaders who dare to disagree with him. But the moment underscored how deeply he resents being challenged and how little regard he has for democratic norms. Starmer, visibly composed, did not dignify the insult with a direct rebuttal, but the message was clear: Europe's leaders are tired of Trump's petulance and disrespect. Even in press briefings, Trump interrupted Starmer repeatedly, treating him less like a peer and more like a political amateur. Whether it was Gaza, immigration, or green energy, Trump dominated the conversation with the same old bombast and self-righteous tone that has alienated even America's closest allies.

While Trump views foreign relations as a performance of dominance, Europe is increasingly operating from a place of principle. Ursula von der Leyen, Emmanuel Macron, and now Keir Starmer represent a bloc that no longer sees the U.S. as the default moral compass. They are now charting their own course—one that prioritizes international law, humanitarian protection, and strategic autonomy. This shift has been building for some time. Since

Trump's return to the White House, he has repeatedly undercut NATO, threatened tariffs, and dismissed EU unity. But Europe is no longer in a position of dependence. In fact, Europe is stepping up—taking on more responsibility in NATO, investing more in its own defense, and even offering financial assistance to stabilize global crises where the U.S. now hesitates.

Where the United States under Trump uses aid and weapons as tools of coercion, Europe is focusing on diplomacy and sustainable development. The U.S. might still wield military might, but Europe is winning on legitimacy, credibility, and moral authority.

The differences have become irreconcilable. Trump's alignment with Netanyahu and his inability—or unwillingness—to criticize Israel's disproportionate actions in Gaza has left Europe with no choice but to go its own way. France has committed to recognizing a Palestinian state. Over 200 MPs in Britain have signed a joint letter urging immediate recognition. Spain, Ireland, and Belgium are considering similar steps. This marks a political and ethical rupture from America's blank-check approach to Israeli aggression. The relationship is not just cooling—it is fracturing. Europe has outgrown the need for American validation. The old days, where Washington led and Brussels followed, are over. The so-called honeymoon—rooted in World War alliances and Cold War dynamics—has officially ended. In its place is a cold, transactional relationship marked by mistrust, divergent goals, and public humiliation.

Trump alienated the very allies he once relied upon. And in doing so, it quietly closed a chapter. The transatlantic alliance, once the bedrock of global democracy, now looks like a formality—strained, hollow, and destined for dissolution. What began as an awkward visit ended with a clear verdict: the game is over. The U.S. no longer has the upper hand. The world's balance of power has shifted—and Europe is no longer looking to America for answers.

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

The disappearing line between halal and haram

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



This distinction is not merely theoretical. The four major schools of Islamic jurisprudence—Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali—all agree on the prohibition of domesticated donkey meat and the permissibility of wild donkey meat. The jurists have documented these rulings in their classical texts

I AM proud to be a resident of Lahore, a city whose name evokes warmth, resilience, and hospitality. The people of Lahore, affectionately known as "Zinda Dilan-e-Lahore", are respected not only across Pakistan but around the globe for their generosity, spirited nature as well as foodies. I still recall with vivid clarity the days of my childhood when we, without a second thought, would eat from any stall or cart in the bazaar. There was an unspoken trust that the food we were consuming was not only delicious but halal, clean, and safe.

But with the passing of time, a slow erosion began. Faith weakened, and moral lines blurred. The distinction between halal and haram, once so firmly embedded in the collective conscience, started to fade. Driven by material gain and heedless of divine and moral boundaries, some among us began to feed the masses without informing them of what was being served. Most disturbing is the recurring news of donkey meat being sold as beef or mutton in many parts of Pakistan, particularly in urban areas. This issue is not only a matter of health and hygiene—it strikes at the very soul of Islamic ethical teachings and the trust that binds a society.

Islam, in its divine wisdom, does not restrict halal and haram merely to spiritual abstractions. Rather, it establishes a holistic system that ensures the physical, spiritual, and social well-being of its followers. The Qur'an commands: "O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and pure..." (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:168). The emphasis on consuming what is tayyib (pure) and avoiding what is khabees (impure) appears throughout the sacred texts. Thus, matters like the consumption of donkey meat must be addressed not only culturally but jurisprudentially.

In Islamic jurisprudence, donkeys are classified into two categories; domesticated (al-imār al-ā li) and wild (al-imār al-wā i). The rulings on both are distinct and grounded in

authentic hadith and scholarly consensus. The consumption of domesticated donkey meat is unequivocally haram. This ruling is based on several sound narrations. Hazrat Anas (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: "The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) ordered the cooking pots to be overturned on the day of Khaybar, saying: 'It is the meat of domesticated donkeys.'" (Sahih al-Bukhari, 5520)

Similarly, Hazrat Jabir (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) forbade the eating of domesticated donkeys on the day of Khaybar but permitted horse meat. Scholars have interpreted this prohibition in several ways: some cite impurity, others the humiliation of the animal, and some emphasize its utilitarian value in transport and labor—arguing that its scarcity during the Prophet's time justified the restriction. On the other hand, the meat of wild donkeys (onager or ghor) is halal. This is affirmed by the hadith of Hazrat Abu Qatadah (May Allah be pleased with him), who once hunted a wild donkey and brought a portion to the Prophet (peace be upon him), who then par-took of it. (Sahih al-Bukhari, 1821)

This distinction is not merely theoretical. The four major schools of Islamic jurisprudence—Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali—all agree on the prohibition of domesticated donkey meat and the permissibility of wild donkey meat. The jurists have documented these rulings in their classical texts. For instance, Allama Kasani of the Hanafi school wrote: "As for the domesticated donkey, its meat is forbidden to us." (Bada'i al-Sana'i, Vol. 5, p. 35)

Some may argue that the Qur'an does not explicitly list donkey meat as forbidden. This is true, but Islamic legal methodology teaches us that the Sunnah of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) elaborates and specifies

the general commands of the Qur'an. As Allah states: "Say, I do not find within that which was revealed to me anything forbidden to one who would eat it unless it be a dead animal, or blood spilled out, or the flesh of swine..." (Surah Al-An'am: 145)

This verse outlines the general prohibitions, but the Sunnah further restricts specific items—like the flesh of domesticated donkeys—through clear hadith.

But beyond legality lies the deeper ethical question: Is it ever permissible to deceive someone about what they are consuming? In Islam, deceit and betrayal are grave sins. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said: "He who deceives us is not one of us." (Sahih Muslim 102)

Feeding people donkey meat under the guise of beef or mutton is not only haram—it is a betrayal of trust, a violation of the consumer's rights, and a mockery of Islamic ethics. This matter also calls into question our collective conscience. When we begin to tolerate or overlook such deceit, we are complicit in the breakdown of our moral fabric. Islam does not merely command ritual purity—it demands integrity in every sphere of life. Breaking a covenant, lying, cheating in trade, and betraying trust are among the most hated actions in the sight of Allah.

Tradition and regional cuisine vary across the world. What is normal in one land may be strange in another. But Islamic law, based on revelation and reason, offers a universal framework. The meat of a wild donkey may be lawful, but feeding people the meat of a domestic donkey without their knowledge—this is both unlawful and unethical.

Let us restore the trust we once cherished in our streets, our bazars, and our hearts. Let us teach our children not only what is halal but also what is honest. Let us be a people who value purity of soul as much as purity of food. For in doing so, we fulfill not only a command of faith but a covenant of humanity.

Briefs

Shehbaz Sharif lauds progress...

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He underscored that translating these agreements into practical outcomes would be key to maximizing mutual benefits. The Kyrgyz delegation appreciated Pakistan's efforts in strengthening bilateral ties and expressed confidence that the outcomes of the IGC would pave the way for deeper, more results-oriented cooperation. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to continued engagement and coordination at all levels to advance shared goals and strengthen the longstanding Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan partnership.

Pakistan business express...

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The Pakistan Air Force. He noted that the Army made decisive use of the Al-Fatah missile, while the Navy remained fully prepared. Shehbaz Sharif said India had assumed Pakistan would be unable to engage in a conventional war, but this conflict shattered all such beliefs. On the economic front, he said Pakistan has achieved macroeconomic stability through teamwork, with both inflation and the policy rate declining.

Palestinians have right to viable...

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“The Palestinian question is the test case for the United Nations and the world,” he said, adding the conference must deliver actionable commitments, including reaffirming the centrality of the two-state solution, which was the only path to sustainable peace. Outlining the aims of the conference, the Deputy Prime Minister said the international community must demand Israel's immediate withdrawal from Gaza. Gaza should be reconstructed as envisaged in resolution 2735 and the OIC Arab plan, he said adding the international community should support the OIC proposal to provide international protection to the Palestinian people through the deployment of a protection mechanism, besides providing a timeline for building Palestinian institutional capacity and sovereignty.

PAC grills FBR, industry...

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provincial governments, with both federal and provincial representatives part of the Sugar Advisory Board, which also includes sugar industry stakeholders. The board monitors current stock and national requirements. The committee was informed that the crushing season runs from November 15 to March 15, and provincial governments supply stock and production estimates. Officials added that this year, the country had a surplus of over 1.3 million metric tonnes of sugar, of which 500,000 metric tonnes were reserved for the next year.

Omar Ayub writes to CJP

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if necessary, reopen trials concluded under manifestly unfair conditions, besides appealing to the top judge to “launch a judicial inquiry into allegations of police and prosecutorial misconduct in relation to these cases”. Terming the trials “rushed and unfair”, Omar wrote: “The integrity of Pakistan's judicial process is under grave threat. These trials, which are supposed to exemplify justice, have instead become a means of political persecution.” He alleged that PTI leaders, workers, supporters have been “wrongfully implicated through a process that appears malafide and politically motivated”.

PM responds to martial artist Shahzaib Rind's complaint

Shahzaib Rind made history by winning the KC-49 Light Heavyweight Championship in Singapore in 2024

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday met Khair Muhammad, the father of mixed martial arts champion Shahzaib Rind, and handed him a cheque of Rs5 million, fulfilling a long-delayed promise made to the athlete. During the meeting held in Islamabad, the prime minister conveyed his best wishes for Rind's upcoming fights and appreciated the fighter's achievements on the global stage. The gesture came days after Shahzaib publicly criticised the federal government over unfulfilled commitments made to him following his international victories.

In a now deleted post shared on X (formerly Twitter), Rind revealed that he was promised Rs5 million in cash and Rs80 million for training support after a major win — promises he said were never honoured. Despite repeated efforts to contact the PM's team over the last 1.5 years, he said he received no response. However, he acknowledged continued support from individuals like Sarfaraz Bugti, Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, and DHA Quetta,



who he said stood by him throughout his journey. Responding to the controversy, Federal Minister for Information Attaullah Tarar issued an official apology on Saturday, acknowledging a miscommunication and calling the delay unjustified.

“Sportsmen like you are our real heroes,” Tarar wrote on X (formerly Twitter), assuring the prime minister had taken serious notice and instructed immediate resolution, adding that such oversights “must never happen in the future.” Shahzaib responded with appreciation, writing: “Thank you for your kind message and acknowledgment. I truly appreciate the prime minister's attention to this matter and his commitment to supporting athletes like myself.”

Shahzaib Rind, a fighter from Balochistan, made history by winning the Karate Combat KC-49 Light Heavyweight Championship in Singapore in 2024, defeating Brazil's Luiz Victor Rocha. He remained unbeaten throughout the tournament and became the first Pakistani to win a major global martial arts title. Earlier, President Asif Ali Zardari, and Balochistan CM Sarfraz Bugti had awarded Shahzaib Rs100 million and praised him for bringing honour to the country.

AI bands signal new era for music business

“There is going to be a lot of music released that we can't really tell who made it or how it was made”

NEW YORK: A rising tide of artificial intelligence (AI) bands is ushering in a new era where work will be scarcer for musicians. Whether it's Velvet Sundown's 1970s-style rock or country music projects “Aventhis” and “The Devil Inside,” bands whose members are pure AI creations are seeing more than a million plays on streaming giant Spotify.

No major streaming service clearly labels tracks that come entirely from AI, except France's Deezer. Meanwhile, the producers of these songs tend to be unreachable. “I feel like we're at a place where nobody is really talking about it, but we are feeling it,” said music producer, composer and performer Leo Sidran.

“There is going to be a lot of music released that we

can't really tell who made it or how it was made.” The Oscar-winning artist sees the rise of AI music as perhaps a sign of how “generic and formulaic” genres have become.

AI highlights the chasm between music people listen to “passively” while doing other things and “active” listening in which fans care about what artists convey, said producer and compos-



er Yung Spielburg on the Imagine AI Live podcast. Spielburg believes musicians will win out over AI with “active” listeners but will be under pressure when it comes to tunes people play in the background while cooking dinner or performing mundane tasks. If listeners can't discern which tunes are AI-made, publishers and labels will likely opt for synthetic

bands that don't earn royalties, Spielburg predicted. “AI is already in the music business and it's not going away because it is cheap and convenient,” said Mathieu Gendreau, associate professor at Rowan University in New Jersey, who is also a music industry executive.

“That will make it even more difficult for musicians to make a living.” Music streaming platforms already fill playlists with mood music attributed to artists about whom no information can be found, according to University of Rochester School of Music professor Dennis DeSantis. Meanwhile, AI-generated soundtracks have become tempting, cost-saving options in movies, television shows, ads, shops, elevators and other venues, DeSantis added. — APP

Poor citizens are bearing the burden of expensive fuel

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President of Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, Chairman of FPCCI's Policy Advisory Board, and former provincial minister, Mian Zahid Hussain has urged the SBP to slash the policy rate to six percent, warning that the current 11 percent rate is highly detrimental to the business community, industry, and trade.

He acknowledged the gradual reduction in the interest rate but said the pace of cuts remains too slow due to the central bank's excessive caution. Speaking to the business community, the veteran business leader noted that traders and industrialists are already grappling with the burden of expensive electricity, heavy taxation, and surging fuel prices. Commercial electricity tariffs range from Rs. 40 to Rs. 52 per unit, while industrial users are paying up to Rs. 40 per unit, significantly raising business costs and undermining competitiveness.

He stressed that further cuts in the policy rate are essential to provide some relief to businesses and the public, reduce unemployment, and boost exports. Bringing the interest rate down to six percent is crucial for economic growth and industrial output. He recalled that in October 2021, when inflation was in single digits, the policy rate stood at 7.25 percent. Therefore, with inflation back in single digits, there is a strong case for reducing the interest rate.

He also warned that under IMF conditions, electricity tariffs are expected to increase annually starting July 2025, with a similar hike in gas prices, further straining the public and private sectors.

Lionel Messi, wife Antonella caught on Coldplay 'kiss cam'

DNA

WASHINGTON: Lionel Messi was among the star-studded crowd at Coldplay's concert held at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami on Sunday night. The Inter Miami captain was spotted enjoying the concert from a private suite with his wife, Antonella Rocuzzo and their three children.

Taking to Instagram, Messi's wife later shared photographs from the evening on Instagram, showing the family smiling and relaxed. The Argentine footballer did not play in Inter Miami's goalless draw against FC Cincinnati, as he was serving a one-match suspension for missing the MLS All-Star Game in Austin, Texas, the previous week. During the concert, Coldplay frontman Chris Martin gave Messi a special mention, calling him “the number one sports person of all time” as the couple appeared on the stadium's giant screen.

The tribute sparked loud cheers, with the crowd erupting into chants of “Messi! Messi!” Messi and Antonella Rocuzzo's Coldplay concert video gained attention online days after Astronomer CEO Andy Byron and HR head Kristin Cabot's kiss-cam moment went viral. Messi, widely regarded as one of the greatest footballers in history, has quickly become a fan favourite in the United States since joining Inter Miami.

IWCCI urges six percent interest rate to revive economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Founder President of the Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI) and United Business Group leader Samina Fazil has called on business organizations to jointly demand a reduction in the policy rate to six percent, warning that the current 11 percent benchmark rate is hampering economic recovery despite a steep decline in inflation. In a statement issued ahead of the State Bank of Pakistan's monetary policy announcement due on July 30, she argued that prevailing economic indicators provide a clear case for aggressive monetary easing. Pakistan's headline inflation dropped to 3.2 percent in June from 3.5 percent in May, while monthly CPI growth slowed to just 0.3 percent—figures that sharply contrast with the SBP's continued tight stance.

Fazil cautioned that maintaining high real interest rates—currently over 7.8 percentage points above inflation—is damaging business confidence, suppressing private investment, and eroding Pakistan's export competitiveness. She stressed that a reduction in the policy rate to six percent would significantly lower borrowing costs, activate idle industrial capacity, and attract fresh investment in both the manufacturing and services sectors. She added that a sharp rate cut could yield substantial fiscal savings for the federal government. Based on current debt structures, a 500 basis point reduction could lower

annual debt servicing costs by as much as Rs 3.5 trillion—equivalent to nearly 8 to 10 percent of total federal spending. Fazil noted that such savings could support public welfare programs, reduce the fiscal deficit, and fund targeted subsidies for low-income households.

She credited the strong and consistent advocacy for economic reforms to the leadership of Patron-in-Chief SM Tanveer, whose growth-oriented vision has shaped the group's stance on monetary and fiscal policy. Fazil emphasized that the unity shown by regional leaders has strengthened the group's influence as a serious platform for pragmatic policy solutions. The previous meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee on June 16 kept the rate unchanged at 11 percent, citing external vulnerabilities and inflation expectations. However, Fazil pointed out that recent data shows a sustained trend of disinflation and urged the SBP to align its stance with evolving ground realities. With the July 30 decision imminent, she urged trade bodies and chambers across Pakistan to adopt a unified position in support of monetary easing. She expressed confidence that consistent and credible pressure from the business community can help steer the central bank toward a more balanced and growth-oriented policy path. She further noted that SM Tanveer has emerged as a respected and visionary voice in Pakistan's business community, advocating reforms rooted in practical economic insight and industrial revival.

Destructive Dwarshuis gives Australia 5-0 sweep of West Indies T20Is

Kangaroos chase down 171-run target to complete series whitewash

DNA

LONDON: Ben Dwarshuis removed both openers and took the crucial wicket of top-scorer Shimron Hetmyer as Australia beat the West Indies in Basseterre, St Kitts and Nevis, to sweep the T20I series 5-0. Chasing a modest 171 to win the fifth T20I, Australia recovered from 25-3 and 60-4 to score 173-7 with three overs to spare. Cameron Green anchored the middle-order recovery with 32, big-hitting Tim David raced to 30 off 12 balls with four sixes and a four, and Mitchell Owen scored 37. When Green departed, Australia were 141-6, still needing 30, and the West Indies sniffed a consolation win. But Aaron Hardie kept his composure to see Australia home by three wickets with an unbeaten 28.

“I didn't expect 5-0 at the start of the series. But we played some great cricket,” said Australia captain Mitchell Marsh. West Indies captain Shai Hope pinpointed the reason for his team's failure to win a



match. “We never put together a proper batting display. We either started well or finished poorly or the other way round,” said Hope. “Against a quality team you can't get away with that.”

The West Indies were in trouble early, having been asked to bat when Marsh won the toss. Dwarshuis removed Brandon King for 11 and Hope for nine to reduce the hosts to 22-2 in the fourth over.

That became 64-4 until Hetmyer led a fight-back, hitting three fours and three sixes on his way to a half-century.

It looked like the left-hander might take the West Indies to a challenging total, but Dwarshuis returned to induce a miscue to Sean Abbott at long-off from a slower bouncer. Hetmyer departed for 52 from 31 balls to leave West Indies 155-7 in the 17th over.

“It was a little bit of a slower wicket so we tried to hit the wicket hard and use the slower balls as well,” said Dwarshuis, who was named player of the match.

Australia also won the three Tests which preceded the T20I series to sweep all eight matches on the tour.

29 Pakistanis detained by Ethiopian police

FROM PAGE 01
on Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs; the Director General of Consular Affairs at Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Director General of Ethiopian Immigration; and Ms. Abibatou Wane-Fall, Chief of Mission for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Ethiopia. These concerted diplomatic efforts culminated in the waiving of fines and enabled the safe and dignified return of the detained Pakistani nationals. Of the 29 individuals, 17 departed from Addis Ababa to Karachi on Friday, 25 July 2025, while the remaining 12 followed on Sunday, 27 July 2025. The Embassy of Pakistan extends its sincere appreciation to the Government of Ethiopia for its cooperation in resolving the matter amicably and for supporting the dignified repatriation of Pakistani citizens.

Court adjourns hearing...

FROM PAGE 01
sufficient evidence and termed the allegations of his involvement in the riots as baseless. It also stated that since he was in NAB custody at the time, it was impossible for him to take part in those riots, besides raising doubts over the case on the basis of “contradictions” in the prosecution statements. Khan also sought further investigation into the case, as he suspected mala fide intent on the part of the police for avoiding his arrest for five months. The petitioner maintained that the evidence against him is inadequate, while other co-accused have already been granted bail.

He also called the delayed police statements unreliable and asserted that he deserves the right to bail. A two-member LHC bench, headed by Justice Shahbaz Ali Rizvi, pronounced the reserved verdict on June 24 after lawyers from the petitioner and the government sides concluded their arguments.

Imran says 'no doubt' his sons...

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coming to Pakistan as part of a movement calling for the ex-premier's release. Imran, imprisoned since August 2023, is serving a sentence at the Adiala Jail in a £190 million corruption case and also faces pending trials under the Anti-Terrorism Act related to the protests of May 9, 2023.

Earlier in the day, media reports said that the incarcerated former prime minister told reporters at Adiala Jail that his sons would not be coming to Pakistan and taking part in or leading any protest. Responding swiftly to the reports, PTI Central Information Secretary Waqas Akram said: “The news circulating in the media regarding Imran Khan Sahib's children is completely false. Imran Khan Sahib has absolutely not stopped his children from coming to Pakistan. I would request those media friends who report from Adiala to only broadcast exactly what Khan Sahib says. It is inappropriate to take things out of context, selectively, or to present conversations according to their own wishes.”

Danish envoy for support...

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the climate action of Pakistan and forwarding Denmark's clean, green vision through Pakistan's energy transition, the ambassador said that strategic frameworks such as Climate Prosperity Plans (CPPs) can help transform climate challenges into pathways of sustainable growth. “By learning from Denmark's State of Green model, we aim to support Pakistan in creating a robust knowledge platform tailored to its unique needs,” he added. Paying tribute to the outgoing envoy, SDPI Executive Director Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri credited Mr Linulf for being a “dedicated friend of Pakistan” who helped transform Denmark's climate diplomacy into real, tangible outcomes.

Briefs

Syrian charged over Berlin Holocaust memorial stabbing

FRANKFURT: A Syrian man who allegedly supports the Daesh group has been charged with attempted murder over the stabbing of a Spanish tourist at Berlin's Holocaust Memorial, prosecutors said Tuesday. The suspect, a refugee partially identified as Wassim Al M., is said to have seriously injured the 30-year-old man at the landmark in the German capital in February.

It was one of a series of attacks blamed on foreign nationals that fueled a bitter debate about immigration in the run-up to Germany's general election. The suspect "shares the ideology of the foreign terrorist organization Islamic State (IS)" and has "radical Islamist and antisemitic views," federal prosecutors said in a statement. He had traveled from the eastern city of Leipzig, where he had been living, to Berlin to target "alleged infidels, whom he regarded as representatives of a Western form of society that he rejected," prosecutors said. Shortly before the stabbing, the suspect, who was 19 at the time, sent a photo of himself to IS members so the group could claim responsibility for the attack, they said. The tourist, from the Basque Country in northern Spain, was wounded in the neck during the attack at Berlin's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, a somber grid of concrete steles located near the Brandenburg Gate and the US embassy.

The suspect, who was arrested shortly after the attack and is in pre-trial detention, has also been charged with causing serious bodily harm and attempted membership of a foreign terrorist organization. —APP

Indonesia introduces innovative earthquake-proof building design

MOSCOW: Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) has introduced a new earthquake-resistant building design featuring state-of-the-art damping technology. The new technology is capable of withstanding tremors up to magnitude 8.8, the design marks a major step forward in the country's disaster-resilient infrastructure, as reported by the Vietnam News Agency (VNA), a partner of TV BRICS. The BMKG highlighted that the technology enables multi-storey buildings to remain stable during powerful earthquakes. The agency noted this is the first time such an innovation will be used in Indonesia and expressed optimism that it would set a new standard for construction in high-risk seismic zones. Although the BMKG does not oversee public building projects, it hopes the initiative will inspire wider adoption. The technology has already been implemented in the BMKG's own headquarters in Jakarta, housing the nation's Multi-hazard Early Warning System. —APP

Kazakhstan, Austria keen on expanding trade ties

ASTANA: Kazakhstan and Austria have discussed the current state of bilateral political and economic cooperation, and the prospects for its further development, Kazinform News Agency reports. The issues were discussed at a meeting between Kazakh Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Arman Issetov with the Ambassador of the Republic of Austria to Kazakhstan Andrea Bacher, the press service of the Kazakh MFA says. The sides also exchanged views on pressing issues of the international and regional agenda. Both sides emphasized the importance of advancing political dialogue, along with the central role of the Kazakh-Austrian Intergovernmental Commission and the Business Council in strengthening priority areas of bilateral cooperation and identifying new promising spheres of interaction. Key attention was given to the expansion of trade, economic, and investment ties. —APP



LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visiting newly inaugurated CIP Lounge, waiting halls and other facilities at Lahore Railway Station.

Indonesia to cut ME oil imports to meet Trump's tariff deal

Jakarta has agreed to increase its imports from the US by more than \$22 billion — including energy products — under the framework trade deal, while US tariffs on Indonesian imports would be set at 19 percent

JAKARTA: Indonesia will reduce oil and gas imports from Middle Eastern and Asian countries, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Bahlil Lahadalia said, as Jakarta moves to implement its \$15 billion energy deal with the US under the latest tariff agreement. Indonesia is among three Southeast Asian countries that have struck deals with Washington so far, following negotiations with US President Donald Trump to lower tariff rates. Jakarta has agreed to increase its imports from the US by more than \$22 billion — including energy products — under the framework trade deal, while US tariffs on Indonesian im-

ports would be set at 19 percent. "We have agreed to buy \$15 billion worth of gasoline, crude oil and LPG (liquefied petroleum gas), which we will do in steps by considering its economic viability. The prices must be competitive, and now we're designing a framework for it," Lahadalia told reporters in Jakarta on Monday. "We will reduce (imports) from other countries (in) the Middle East and Asia." Southeast Asia's biggest economy's oil imports were valued at about \$36 billion last year. While the US is among Indonesia's top oil suppliers, Washington still ranks behind Singapore, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia. The US deal, which is ex-

pected to be finalized in the coming weeks, allows Indonesia to avoid the higher tariff rate of 32 percent threatened earlier by the Trump administration. "We know that 32 percent (tariff rate) means no trade, which basically means a trade embargo, and that means around 1 million workers in labor-intensive sectors can be impacted," Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Airlangga Hartarto said in a statement. "What the government is doing through this cooperation with the US is to keep the internal and external balance so that we can maintain our trade balance, keep our economic momentum and en-

sure job creation." The US is Indonesia's second-largest market after China, with exports valued at over \$26 billion in 2024, according to Indonesia's statistics agency. Indonesia has consistently posted trade surpluses with the US in the past decade, including \$16.8 billion last year. Under the tariff agreement, Jakarta agreed to drop its tariff on nearly all American imports to zero and scrap all non-tariff barriers facing American firms, while also committing to purchase \$4.5 billion worth of agricultural products from the US, including soybeans, wheat and cotton, as well as Boeing aircraft valued at \$3.2 billion. —Agencies

Gold price decreases Rs 1,600 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed a decrease of Rs.1,600 on Tuesday and was sold at Rs.354,700 against its sale at Rs.356,300 on the previous trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs.1,372 to Rs.304,098 from Rs.305,470 whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 Karat decreased to Rs.278,757. The rates of per tola silver and ten gram remained unchanged and closed at Rs.3,963 and Rs.3,397. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$16 to \$3,320 from \$3,336 whereas that of silver remained stagnant at \$38.15, the Association reported. —APP

PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 1,415 points

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index witnessed bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 1,415.24 points, a negative change of 1.02 percent, closing at 137,964.82 points against 139,380.06 points last trading day. A total of 606,334,880 shares were traded during the day as compared to 589,306,106 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 32.685 billion against Rs 34.562 billion on the last trading day. As many as 484 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 108 of them recorded gains and 350 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 26 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Telecard Limited with 38,709,378 shares at Rs 7.84 per share, B.O. Punjab with 31,941,017 shares at Rs13.47 per share and WorldCall Telecom 28,524,007 shares at Rs 1.44 per share. —APP

Rupee gains 16 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 16 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 283.05 against the previous day's closing Rs 283.21. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 285.25 and Rs 286 respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 3.54 to close at Rs 327.19 against the last day's closing of Rs 330.73, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.90, whereas a decline of Rs 2.35 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 377.50 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 379.85. —APP

Romania could see record wheat harvest in 2025: RFA

BUCHAREST: Romania's wheat production could reach a record 14 million tonnes in 2025, the highest since 1997, according to the president of the Romanian Farmers' Association (AFR), Daniel Botaniou. Speaking to AGERPRES, Botaniou said favourable spring weather, including heavy rains in April and May, helped restore soil moisture and boosted crop development. With an estimated average yield of 4.97 tonnes per hectare, the harvest for the 2025/2026 season is expected to rise more than 40% from last year. "This would mark a spectacular increase and a record level of production since 1997," he noted. In 2023, Romania's wheat output fell to just 9.29 million tonnes, the lowest in a decade. This year's wheat crop is not only larger but also of higher quality than harvests in France and Germany, which were hit by excessive rainfall. Despite the expected bumper crop, Botaniou warned that current wheat prices are not favourable for farmers. Wheat is being traded between 857 and 1,017 lei per tonne depending on region, or about 253 dollars per tonne at the port of Constanța — up 45 dollars from March 2024. Romania exported around 5.48 million tonnes of wheat this year, down from 6.4 million tonnes in 2023, with total export value falling to 1.24 billion euros from 1.46 billion euros last year. Corn production is also expected to rise, with over 10 million tonnes forecast for 2025, compared to just 6 million tonnes last year. Sunflower production is estimated at 2.22 million tonnes, keeping Romania among the top producers in Europe. The cereal market remains unstable due to price fluctuations, driven by regional factors and weather uncertainties across Eastern Europe. —DNA

Uber loses UK SC appeal over tax on rival apps

LONDON: Uber's rival taxi operators in England and Wales will not face a 20 percent VAT charge on their profit margins outside of London after the ride-hailing firm lost its appeal on Tuesday against a previous ruling. Uber had sought a declaration that rival private-hire taxi operators enter into a contract with passengers, meaning operators must charge 20 percent value added tax (VAT) outside London as Uber is required to do. It brought the case after a 2021 Supreme Court ruling that Uber drivers were workers, making them eligible for the minimum wage and holiday pay, and making Uber subject to VAT for rides. Uber sought to have the same terms applied to rival operators and the High Court ruled in its favor last year. The ruling applied to rides in England and Wales outside London, which has a different regulatory regime. However, that ruling was reversed by the Court of Appeal in July 2024 following a challenge by private hire operators Delta Taxis and platform Veezu. —APP

Lebanon sentences six in killing of UN peacekeeper

BEIRUT: Lebanon's military court convicted six people accused of killing a UN peacekeeper, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon said Tuesday. Lebanese officials said the chief defendant was sentenced to death. "UNIFIL welcomes the conclusion of the trial process and the Government of Lebanon's commitment to bring the perpetrators to justice," it said in a statement. UNIFIL did not give further details, but three Lebanese judicial officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the case, said the court had issued a death sentence in absentia Monday against Mohammad Ayyad, the main defendant in the case. Ayyad had been arrested in December 2022 in connection with the killing of Pvt. Sean Rooney, 24, an Irish peacekeeper. He was released on bail in November 2023 after his lawyer provided medical documents showing he had cancer. Monday's court ruling, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press, handed down a fine of 100 million Lebanese pounds (about \$1.117) to Ayyad in addition to the death sentence. Three others — Hussein Suleiman, Mustafa Suleiman and Ali Hakim — received only fines, while defendants Ali Khalifeh and Ali Suleiman were sentenced to one and three months in prison, respectively. A sixth defendant, Mohammad Mezher, was acquitted. Ayyad was not present for the session, with his attorney saying he was ill and hospitalized, while the other defendants appeared in court, the Lebanese officials said. On the fatal night, Rooney and several other Irish soldiers from UNIFIL were on their way from their base in southern Lebanon to the Beirut airport. Two UN vehicles apparently took a detour through the town of Al-Aqbiya, which is not part of the area under the peacekeepers' mandate, when a mob opened fire at them. Initial reports said angry residents confronted the peacekeepers, but the indictment concluded that the shooting was a targeted attack and alleged that the defendants were linked to the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. The Lebanese officials said the defendants who appeared in court Monday had testified that some of them were watching a sports match and noticed a vehicle passing suspiciously several times on a narrow residential street, leading a crowd to gather. They claimed that they were unaware the vehicle belonged to UNIFIL. Hezbollah officials did not respond to requests for comment. UNIFIL was created to oversee the withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon after Israel's 1978 invasion. The UN expanded its mission following the 2006 war between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah, allowing peacekeepers to deploy along the Israeli border to help the Lebanese military extend its authority into the country's south for the first time in decades. —DNA

Hundreds of Sudanese refugees in Cairo take up chance to return home for free

CAIRO: On a sweltering Monday morning at Cairo's main railway station, hundreds of Sudanese families stood waiting, with bags piled at their feet and children in tow, to board a train bound for a homeland shattered by two years of war. The war is not yet over, but with the army having regained control of key areas and life in Egypt often hard, many refugees have decided now is the time to head home. "It's an indescribable feeling," said Khadija Mohamed Ali, 45, seated inside one of the train's aging carriages, her five daughters lined beside her. "I'm happy that I'll see my neighbors again — my family, my street," she said ahead of her return to the capital Khartoum, still reeling from a conflict that has killed tens of thousands and displaced more than 14 million. She was among the second group of refugees traveling under Egypt's voluntary return program, which offers free transportation from Cairo to Khartoum, more than 2,000 kilometers away by train and bus. The first convoy left a week earlier. The program is a joint effort between the Egyptian National Railways and Sudan's state-owned arms company Defense Industries System, which is covering the full cost of the journey, including tickets and onward bus travel from Egypt's southern city of Aswan to the Sudanese capital. The Sudanese army is keen for the refugees to return, in part to reinforce its control over recently recaptured areas and as a step toward nor-

malty. Monday, a third-class, air-conditioned train departs Cairo carrying hundreds on a 12-hour journey to Aswan before they continue by bus across the border. At precisely 11:30 am, a battered locomotive rumbled into the station and women broke into spontaneous ululation. But while some Sudanese are returning home, many continue to flee their homeland, which has been ravaged by war and famine. According to a June report from the UN's refugee agency UNHCR, over 65,000 Sudanese crossed into Chad in just over a month. Crossings through Libya, one of the most dangerous routes to Europe, have increased this year, according to the Mixed Migration Center. The war, which began in April 2023, pits army chief Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan against his erstwhile ally Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, who leads the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The fighting first erupted in Khartoum and quickly spread, triggering one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, according to the United Nations. Earlier this year, Sudan's army declared it had fully retaken Khartoum. Since then, a trickle of returnees has begun.

Last week, the country's new prime minister, Kamil Idris, made his first visit to the capital since the conflict began, promising that "national institutions will come back stronger than before." The UN has predicted that more than two million people could return to greater Khartoum by the

end of the year, though that figure depends heavily on improvements in security and public infrastructure. The capital remains a fractured city. Its infrastructure has been decimated, health services remain scarce and electricity is still largely out in many districts. "Slowly things will become better," said Maryam Ahmed Mohamed, 52, who plans to return to her home in Khartoum's twin city of Omdurman with her two daughters. "At least we'll be back at home and with our family and friends," she said. For many, the decision to return home is driven less by hope than by hardship in neighboring countries like Egypt. Egypt now hosts an estimated 1.5 million Sudanese refugees, who have limited access to legal work, health care and education, according to the UNHCR. Hayam Mohamed, 34, fled Khartoum's Soba district with her family to Egypt 10 months ago when the area was liberated, but was in ruins. Though services remain nearly non-existent in Khartoum, Mohamed said she still wanted to leave Egypt and go home. "Life was too expensive here. I couldn't afford rent or school fees," Mohamed said. Elham Khalafallah, a mother of three who spent seven months in Egypt, also said she struggled to cope. She's now returning to the central Al-Jazirah state, which was retaken by the army late last year and is seen as "much safer and having better services than Khartoum." —Agencies

Briefs

Trump,
Starmer voice
concern
over Gaza
humanitarian
crisis

EDINBURGH: US President Donald Trump and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer expressed deep concern over the worsening humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. Speaking during a joint appearance in Scotland, President Trump said, "We want to help. It's a terrible situation. Israel bears significant responsibility for what is happening." He noted that the United States and other nations were providing funds and food to Gaza, adding, "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has to handle this somehow. I want Netanyahu to make sure they get food, and I want to make sure they get food." For his part, Starmer urged President Trump to see that the United States takes on a larger role in de-escalating the deepening food crisis in Gaza, describing the situation as extremely difficult. "The people of Britain are horrified by what they have seen on their screens," the Prime Minister added. — APP

Over 30 dead
as northern
China hit by
heavy rain

BEIJING: Heavy rain killed more than 30 people and forced authorities to evacuate tens of thousands as swaths of northern China were lashed by torrential downpours that sparked landslides and flooding, state media said Tuesday. Weather authorities have issued their second-highest rainstorm warning for the capital Beijing, neighbouring Hebei and Tianjin, as well as 10 other provinces, state news agency Xinhua said. The rains are expected to last into Wednesday, it added. As of midnight Monday, the heavy rainstorms had left 30 people dead in Beijing, Xinhua said, citing the city's municipal flood control headquarters. More than 80,000 people have been evacuated in the Chinese capital alone, local state-run outlet Beijing Daily said on social media. The death toll was highest in Miyun, a suburban district northeast of the city centre, it said. Nearby, spillways gushed with torrents of water leading out of the Miyun Reservoir, which authorities said has reached its highest levels since its construction in 1959. — Agencies

Pak, Kuwait
FM's discuss
bilateral
cooperation

NEW YORK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday met Foreign Minister of Kuwait Abdullah Al-Yahya, wherein they discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral relations, with a focus on enhancing cooperation in trade, investment, energy, food security and defense. In the meeting held on the sidelines of the International Conference on Two-State Solution at the United Nations, they also discussed close collaboration at multi-lateral fora, including at the UN and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. Both sides agreed to undertake high-level exchanges in the near future to deepen bilateral engagement. Expressing deep concern at continuing Israeli acts of aggression against Palestinians and worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza, the two ministers underscored the urgent need for a just and lasting resolution. They expressed the hope that outcomes of the conference would meaningfully contribute to the realization of the two-state solution. — APP

Aziz Boolani hosts farewell dinner
for EU, Dutch, and German envoys

ISLAMABAD: CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani presenting souvenirs to the outgoing ambassadors of EU, Germany and the Netherlands. — DNA

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels (Global), hosted an elegant farewell dinner in honour of three outgoing ambassadors — H.E. Dr. Riina Kionka of the European Union, H.E. Henny Fokel de Vries of the Netherlands, and H.E. Alfred Grannas of Germany. The event, held at Serena Hotel Islamabad, was attended by diplomats, government officials, civil society representatives, business leaders, and media professionals. In his welcome address, Mr. Boolani lauded the contributions of the outgoing envoys in strengthening Pakistan's bilateral relations with the EU and their respective countries. He praised their commitment, diplomacy, and people-centric approach that brought visible improvement in mutual under-

standing, cultural exchange, and trade cooperation. "These ambassadors have been true friends of Pakistan. Through their vision and engagement, they have contributed significantly to fostering dialogue and cooperation between Pakistan and the European Union, the Netherlands, and Germany," said Mr. Boolani. He also appreciated their efforts to promote cultural and developmental initiatives, many of which Serena Hotels supported in collaboration with the respective embassies. Ambassador Riina Kionka of the European Union expressed her gratitude to Mr. Boolani for hosting the farewell in such a graceful manner. She acknowledged the hospitality and warmth she experienced during her tenure in Pakistan. Reflecting on her diplomatic mission, Ambassador Kionka said she worked consistently to retain the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) status

for Pakistan, which plays a vital role in supporting Pakistan's exports to the European Union. "I did my best to keep the GSP+ intact for Pakistan," she noted. "I hope the EU-Pakistan relationship continues to thrive in the future." H.E. Henny Fokel de Vries, Ambassador of the Netherlands, shared heartfelt memories of her time in Pakistan. She described her stay as "truly memorable," highlighting her keen interest in sports, especially hockey. "I had the pleasure of attending several hockey matches during my time here. The passion for the game in Pakistan is incredible, and I thoroughly enjoyed engaging with the local sports community," she said, emphasizing the importance of people-to-people ties beyond traditional diplomacy. German Ambassador H.E. Alfred Grannas, in his remarks, also thanked Mr. Boolani and the guests

for their warm wishes. He said he had endeavoured to take Pakistan-Germany ties to new heights during his posting in Islamabad. "Whether it was cooperation in climate action, renewable energy, or academic exchanges, I always believed in deepening our bilateral engagement," he stated. Ambassador Grannas expressed optimism that the strong foundation built during his tenure would continue to grow and strengthen further. The evening featured lively interactions, warm tributes, and reflections on shared achievements, making the farewell not just a diplomatic formality but a celebration of enduring friendships. As the event concluded, Aziz Boolani once again extended his best wishes to the outgoing ambassadors, thanking them for their service and expressing hope that they would remain ambassadors of goodwill for Pakistan wherever they go next.

Audit reveals Rs 354 billion irregularities
in KP local govtsFinancial discrepancies remain unresolved largely
due to absence of any effective system

NEWS DESK

PESHAWAR: The audit record of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) local governments from 2002 to 2024 has uncovered serious financial irregularities of Rs354.126 billion, The News reported on Tuesday. The irregularities, however, remain unresolved to this day, largely due to the absence of any effective system or mechanism to address these audit objections. So far, the office of the Auditor General has managed to recover only Rs3.232 billion, a fraction of the total irregularities identified over two decades. According to experts, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government failed to operationalise the Tehsil Accounts Committees and did not undertake any serious legislative reforms to empower the Public Accounts Committee to exercise oversight over the financial affairs of local governments. The 2019 Amendment Act called for the establishment of Tehsil Accounts Committees and granted them the authority to

scrutinise audit reports, budgets, and financial statements. However, these committees have yet to be formed. In contrast, in provinces like Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan, Public Accounts Committees regularly examine the audit paras related to local governments. A senior government official has warned that unless urgent reforms are introduced in the accountability system, the volume of audit objections will continue to grow, and there will be no effective oversight of public funds. He added that the existing law provides no mechanism to settle audit paras before 2019, which highlights not only prolonged financial mismanagement but also the complete absence of a functional system for audit resolution. A spokesperson for the Local Government Department stated that the provincial government has not received any audit reports of local governments from the Auditor General's office. If any audit report is received, it will be forwarded to the relevant Tehsil Councils. He added that, under the law, the responsibility for reviewing audit reports rests with the Tehsil Accounts Committees.

Gunman kills four, including
police officer, in New YorkGunman believed to have acted alone, and investigators
have yet to determine a possible motive

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: A gunman opened fire on Monday inside a Midtown Manhattan skyscraper housing NFL headquarters and offices of several financial firms, including Blackstone, killing four people before fatally shooting himself, New York City officials said. One of the four victims slain in the gun violence was a 36-year-old New York Police Department officer who had been on the force for about 3 1/2 years. The three others killed by the suspect were civilians. New York Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch said the gunman, who resided in Las Vegas and drove cross-country to New York in recent days, fatally shot himself in the chest at the end of his shooting spree. Tisch said the gunman was believed to have acted alone, and investigators had yet to determine a possible motive for the shooting.

A photo of the suspect that CNN said was shared by police showing a gunman walking into the building carrying a rifle was published by a number of major news media outlets. Preliminary checks of the suspect's background did not show a significant criminal history, the report added, citing officials. The skyscraper at 345 Park Avenue houses offices of a number of financial institutions, including Blackstone and KPMG, along with the NFL headquarters. A large police presence converged on the area around the tower, according to Reuters journalists near the scene. "I just saw a lot of commotion and cops and people screaming," said Russ McGee, a 31-year-old sports bettor who was working out in a gym adjacent to the skyscraper, told Reuters in an interview near the scene. The FBI said agents from its New York field office were also responding to provide support at the scene.

GB govt promises to compensate
flood-affected people

STAFF REPORT

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan government on Tuesday announced that it would compensate people affected by the recent rain-induced floods that damaged houses and other infrastructure, adding that the search for missing tourists has been intensified. The devastating impacts of climate change have become more visible in GB as unprecedented heatwaves, erratic weather patterns, and glacial melting have triggered cloud-bursts and intense floods across the region. On July 21, floods swept across GB, causing landslides and leaving many stranded, and damaging more than 500 houses, roads and other infrastructure. At least 10 people died and four were injured as a result. The Babuser Highway was partially reopened yesterday as the search for missing people continued. In a statement today, GB government spokesperson Faizullah Faraq said those affected by the floods will be compensated for their losses. "The rehabilitation of the affected people is underway in Thak, Niyat village, Batogah, Thor, Kunar, Tangir district and Khanbari," he said. The spokesperson also added that the GB government

has intensified the search operations for missing tourists on Babuser Highway. "A joint search team comprising Diamer police, Rescue 1122, GB Scouts, and army personnel is carrying out the search operation," Faraq said. "Local volunteers and communities are also participating in the efforts." He also recalled that the Babuser Highway had been restored for one-way traffic. The spokesperson further said that the vehicle of a private TV channel anchorperson was found in the flood debris after she, her husband, and their four children reportedly went missing in Babuser Valley on Sunday during the floods. "Steps are being taken to restore the water and electricity supply to the affected areas, and work is also underway to restore irrigation channels across the region," Faraq said. "Relief operations are also underway in Ghanche, Balan village in Astore Valley, Gilgit, Ghizer and other areas." People displaced by flash floods across multiple areas of Gilgit-Baltistan have complained of severe shortages of clean drinking water, electricity, road access and communication services. Survivors in the flood-stricken Babuser and Thore valleys of Diamer said they had been hit by one of the deadliest floods in recent memory, which left many homeless and swept away their belongings.

Swat student death:
Prime suspect
handed over to policeCourt also approves suspect son's
physical remand for further probe

BUREAU REPORT

SWAT: The main suspect, Muhammad Umar, along with his son Ihsan, was on Tuesday presented before the court in murder case of a 14-year-old boy who died due to alleged torture at a madrasa in Chaliyar, Khwazakhela earlier this month. The court handed over both accused to the police on a three-day remand for further investigation. Earlier on Tuesday, authorities shut down an unregistered seminary in Swat following the death of a 14-year-old student who was allegedly tortured by a teacher, according to District Police Officer (DPO) Mohammad Umar. The boy was reportedly beaten by teachers at the madrasa located in Swat's Khwazakhela area. Fellow students and staff rushed him to a nearby hospital, where doctors pronounced him dead on arrival. Reports from the previous day indicated that physical abuse had been a persistent issue at the seminary, with several students reportedly subjected to violence over recent months. DPO Umar confirmed that the teenager died as a result of the teacher's alleged assault. He also stated that two of the four suspects named in the FIR have been arrested, and an additional nine people have been taken into custody in connection with the case. He added that the seminary was not officially registered and has since been sealed by authorities.

India road
crash kills
18 Hindu
pilgrimsLocal lawmaker says
pilgrims were travelling
to Hindu shrine to
celebrate the sacred
month of Shraavan

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: At least 18 people were killed in eastern India on Tuesday after a bus ferrying Hindu pilgrims collided with a truck loaded with cooking gas cylinders, officials said. Visuals from the site in Jharkhand state showed the mangled wreckage of the bus, with its rear portion almost entirely burnt. Local lawmaker Nishikant Dubey said the pilgrims were travelling to a Hindu shrine to celebrate the sacred month of Shraavan, coinciding with the onset of the monsoons in the subcontinent. "18 devotees lost their lives due to a bus and truck accident," Dubey said on social media.