



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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Israel wants to bring this war to Pakistan

Detailed News On Page-08

Schools being Hit by Israel, says UN chief

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ASEAN an Important organization

Detailed News On Page-04



Briefs

Pakistan airspace fully open

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) on Tuesday categorically denied reports that commercial flights had been restricted, clarifying that the country's airspace remains fully open and safe for all civil aviation traffic. The clarification followed media reports suggesting that Pakistan had partially closed its airspace to commercial flights over security concerns linked to the US-Iran conflict, which has disrupted flight operations across parts of the region and beyond. In a statement, the authority stressed: "Pakistan's airspace as a whole remains fully open, safe, and completely available for all civil aviation traffic, including commercial flights. "Air traffic services continue without hindrance, and alternative routing options are available and routinely used for all affected flows. "No restrictions have been imposed on commercial operations, arrivals, departures, or overflights across Pakistan. Our air traffic controllers and airport teams are fully operational and managing traffic normally."

China tells Israel to stop Iran attack

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: China opposes the military strikes launched by Israel and the US against Iran and demands an immediate cessation of hostilities, Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his Israeli counterpart Gideon Saar on Tuesday, according to his ministry. "Force cannot truly solve problems; instead, it often creates new ones and leaves serious long-term consequences. The real value of military power lies not on the battlefield but in preventing war," it quoted Wang as telling Saar in a call. Wang told Saar that China believes in resolving international and regional issues through dialogue and negotiation and will continue to play a constructive role in easing the situation. Tuesday's call follows three calls the top Chinese diplomat held on Monday with the foreign ministers of Iran, Oman and France, in which he urged Gulf countries to unite to oppose external interference.

Army foils infiltration bid in Thal Sector

Ground and aerial operations are continuing under Operation Ghazab lil-Haq

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Army troops thwarted an infiltration attempt by Afghan Taliban fighters and Fitna al-Khawarij militants in the Thal sector along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border late last night, security sources told Geo News on Tuesday. Ground and aerial operations are continuing under Operation Ghazab lil-Haq, targeting Afghan Taliban elements and Fitna al-Khawarij militants involved in the cross-border incursion. In a swift counter-action, Pakistani forces reportedly seized control of an Afghan Taliban post in Afghanistan's Paktika province and hoisted the national flag at the site.

Karachi Consulate storming

US Marines fired on protesters

At least 10 people were killed on Sunday when protesters breached compound's outer wall

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US Marines opened fire on demonstrators during the storming of the Karachi consulate over the weekend, two US officials said on Monday – a rare use of force at a diplomatic post that could sharply escalate tensions in the country amid widespread protests over the martyrdom of Iran's top leader. Ten people were killed on Sunday when protesters breached the compound's outer wall after Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was assassinated in the US-Israel strikes on Iran. Citing initial information, the two US officials said it was unclear whether rounds fired by Marines struck or killed anyone. They also did not know whether shots were also fired by others protecting the mission, including private security guards and local police. This would mark the first confirmation by US officials that Marines were involved in firing at the protesters. A provincial government spokesman, Sukhdev Assardas Hemnani, said "security" personnel had opened fire, without specifying their affiliation. Daily security operations at US diplomatic missions are often carried out by private contractors and local forces, and the involvement of Marines in the

incident underscores how seriously the consulate viewed the threat. On Monday, Pakistan banned large gatherings nationwide after the protests over the strikes on Iran spread, with 26 people reported dead across the country. Protesters on Sunday chanted "Death to America! Death to Israel!" outside the consulate, where Reuters reporters heard gunfire and saw tear gas fired in surrounding streets. A video on social media appeared to show at least one protester firing a weapon toward the consulate and bloodied demonstrators fleeing as shots rang out. A Karachi police official told Reuters that the shots were fired from inside the consulate premises. The US Marines referred questions to the US military, which in turn referred questions to the State Department. The State Department did not respond to a request for comment. Calls have been made for more protests in Lahore and Karachi despite the nationwide ban on public gatherings. The US embassy in Pakistan is in the capital, Islamabad, and there are two additional consulates in Peshawar and Lahore. Roads leading to the US consulate in Karachi were blocked off with a heavy police presence in the area. Similar measures were in place around US missions in Lahore and Islamabad.

Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi granted bail in Toshakhana case

Islamabad court also approves PTI founder's bail pleas in five other cases

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad court has granted bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the Toshakhana fake receipt case. Imran Khan was also granted bail in five other cases, including those related to attempted murder and defaming the army. According to the FIR, Imran and Bushra have been accused of committing fraud by presenting a fake receipt that falsely indicated the sale of gifts – such as watches and cufflinks – allegedly obtained from Toshakhana using forged signatures. Additional District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Afzal Majuka observed that the

IHC to hear Imran's plea seeking hospital transfer on March 10

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday directed the registrar's office to fix PTI founder Imran Khan's plea – seeking permission to undergo medical treatment at Shifa International Hospital – for hearing on March 10. The IHC also fixed the main appeal in the Toshakhana criminal case

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ISLAMABAD: A delegation of PPPP calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on 3 March 2026. – DNA

PM talks to Erdogan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a telephone conversation with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of the Republic of Türkiye. Expressing his deep concern over the escalating crisis in the Middle East, the Prime Minister condemned the Israeli attack on Iran, and subsequent regrettable attacks on other brotherly Gulf countries. The Prime Minister apprised President Erdogan of his recent outreach to the leadership of the brotherly Gulf countries, reaffirming Pakistan's full solidarity with them, and conveying its readiness to play a constructive role in efforts aimed at resolving the crisis. Both leaders underscored the importance of maximum restraint by all parties, to prevent further escalation.

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67 Taliban killed as Pak repulses attacks

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar said on Tuesday that security forces repulsed coordinated Afghan Taliban assaults on border posts in Northern Balochistan's Qilla Saifullah, Noshki and Chaman districts under Operation Ghazanfar lil Haq. Sharing updates till 10:00 am Tuesday, the spokesperson said Taliban Khawarij militants mounted 16 ground

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PTI undecided

PM invites MPs, party chiefs for in-camera briefing

Will respond by tomorrow morning after consulting with colleagues, says NA opposition leader; PTI says instead of in-camera it should be an open session

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has invited parliamentary leaders and heads of political parties for a briefing on the regional situation, the PM's adviser Rana Sanaullah said on Tuesday. Speaking to the media in Islamabad, he said the meeting will be held tomorrow at 11:30am to discuss domestic and regional security amid Pakistan's response to the Afghan Taliban regime's provocative actions along the border and the conflict in the Middle East. "We have come to invite opposition leaders and party heads on the instructions of the prime minister," Sanaullah said. He said that opposition leaders have been asked to offer views beyond partisan considerations.

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'Iran agreed not to acquire nuclear weapons', DPM Dar tells MPs

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday said that Iran had agreed not to acquire nuclear weapons, while the United States was seeking the complete dismantling of Tehran's nuclear programme. He also lauded role of Azerbaijan for helping in evacuation of

Continued on Page 06

New Israeli offensive US embassy in Riyadh hit by two drones

Iran's retaliation continued across the region. The US Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, was struck by two drones—attributed to Iran—causing a limited fire and minor damage, according to Saudi authorities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Middle East war intensified on March 3, 2026, as Israeli forces launched fresh airstrikes on military targets in Iran's capital, Tehran, and Lebanon's capital, Beirut. The Israeli military described the simultaneous attacks as targeting Iranian military installations and Iran-backed Hezbollah positions in southern Beirut suburbs. Smoke rose over Beirut's southern districts, with reports

of mass civilian displacement following evacuation orders. Israel also announced that ground troops would advance further into southern Lebanon to seize additional strategic areas, aiming to prevent rocket and drone fire on Israeli border communities. This follows Hezbollah's claims of launching drones and missiles at Israeli targets in response to the broader conflict. Iran's retaliation continued across the region. The US Embassy in Riyadh,

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Iran's decapitation myth and Pakistan's tightrope

OPINION

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

THE specter of a widening regional war has brought the world perilously close to fears of a third world war, as declared by the Russian administration on March 3, 2026. The reported elimination of much of Iran's senior military leadership and the claimed assassination of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei have triggered urgent geopolitical recalculations from Tehran to Islamabad, and from Washington to Moscow and Beijing. This moment starkly reveals a core misreading in many regime-change fantasies: the assumption that systems rooted in ideology, institutional continuity, and deep social foundations can be toppled by decapitation strikes and external coercion. A central miscalculation is the belief that Iran's leadership can be reduced to one individual. The idea that assassinating the supreme leader would trigger spontaneous collapse misunderstands the Islamic Republic's design after more than four decades. Its political theology, parallel institutions, layered clerical and security bureaucracies, and Revolutionary Guard networks form a resilient lattice built to withstand shocks. Khamenei embodies not just a person but a mindset, a socialized ideology that has become a lived identity for millions of Iranians across classes, regions, and generations. During periods of acute strain economic sanctions, protest waves, elite rivalries this architecture holds firm by design. The



Assembly of Experts, Guardian Council, and overlapping security organs are structured to prevent fissures at existential moments. Western expectations of immediate public fury erupting against the regime after a leadership strike have repeatedly proven naïve in historical context. Beyond Iran's internal resilience, the broader region shows limited appetite for a US- or Israel-engineered power transition in Tehran. Pakistan, sharing a long border and intertwined religious, commercial, and energy ties, perceives any externally imposed shift as a direct threat to its internal stability and strategic autonomy. A pro-US or pro-Israel government in Tehran could reorder regional alignments, endangering Pakistan's security, energy corridors, and delicate sectarian balance. China and Russia harbor parallel concerns. For Beijing, Iran is a key node in Belt and Road energy logistics and a hedge against maritime chokepoints. For Moscow, it is a partner in Syria, a sanctions-busting collaborator, and a counterweight to NATO influence. Neither has incentive to accept a Western-aligned Tehran that could disrupt energy markets, undermine Eurasian integration, or fracture carefully cultivated power balances. If widespread protests in Pakistan followed the reported assassination including deadly clashes and an attack on the US Consulate in Karachi these events raise serious questions about security preparedness and the political economy of unrest. How did crowds breach the cordon around one of Karachi's most fortified sites? Was it an operational failure, or did certain elements, state-linked or otherwise allow the anger to escalate for tactical messaging, domestically or regionally? Tehran's reported strikes on US bases in the Gulf, calibrated to impose disruption without inviting uncontrolled escalation, reflect strategic calculation

rather than emotional reaction. By spreading economic and operational costs to host states, Iran signals that any prolonged confrontation will not remain confined to its territory. On Pakistan's western flank, Afghanistan remains a flashpoint where shifts reverberate directly into Pakistani security and politics. If the Taliban have denied US basing rights, history suggests pressure for political re-engineering may follow, a transactional logic of building a more accommodating government if one cannot be rented. Renewed American presence would clash with objections from China, Russia, Iran, and cautious Central Asian states, who see US basing as an entry point for broader influence. For Pakistan, this is an existential issue. Recognition debates, sanctions, and counterterrorism pressures echo in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, fueling militancy and straining border control. Perceived complicity in regime-change efforts in Kabul would invite cross-border violence, refugee flows, and diplomatic isolation from neighbors. Yet outright refusal carries costs while Pakistan's economy remains externally dependent. This captures Islamabad's strategic bind: navigating cascading crises while defending core red lines. Pakistan's nuclear capability, professionally managed under tight command-and-control remains a focal point of US anxiety whenever domestic unrest or external entanglements rise. A retired US Navy officer in a his recenter interview categorically declared Pakistan a most dangerous country as compared with Iran. US political volatility heightens the danger. An administration may align with Pakistan's choices one day, only to pivot under congressional or domestic pressure the next, leaving Pakistan exposed and bearing reputational costs with neighbors. Basing strategy on assumed

US consistency is wishful thinking, not prudence. The surest path to reduced vulnerability lies in economic empowerment. Dependence on IMF financing and politically conditioned market access constrains diplomatic freedom. Credible, sustained domestic reforms rebuilding fiscal capacity and resilience would diminish foreign leverage. This is not isolationism but a call for self-strengthening. In today's escalatory climate, Pakistan would benefit from publicly stating clear guiding principles for crisis staccato: reject participation in externally driven regime change in neighboring states; ensure inviolable protection of diplomatic premises to avoid Karachi-style breaches; contain sectarian spillover through community engagement, early warning, and rights-respecting crowd management; and strategically hedge with all major powers while maintaining clear transactional boundaries on alignment. For Washington and Tel Aviv, the temptation to exploit perceived Iranian weakness is strong, yet regional realities persist. Energy markets, global supply chains, and Gulf investor confidence punish prolonged uncertainty, taxing allies whose stability supports American power projection. Extended crises shrink coalitions and inflate costs, undermining the leverage escalation seeks. Pakistan occupies the hinge of these forces, close enough to feel tremors from Tehran and Kabul, yet with narrow room for error. Its strategic thinkers recognize that alignment with a superpower can quickly become a liability when policies shift with electoral cycles. Prudence here is not passivity; it is strategy. Iran's ideological durability and institutional depth make forced regime change unlikely to succeed and far more likely to ignite cycles of violence the region and global economy cannot sustain. Pakistan, for its part, must resist the seduction of tactical wins in Afghanistan or symbolic gestures in Gaza.

KP CM orders bipartisan committee to resolve LG term expiry by March 15

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister, Muhammad Sohail Afridi Tuesday held a meeting with a delegation of local government representatives and discussed issues pertaining to expiration of their current terms.

Led by Mardan Mayor Hi-mayatullah Mayar, the delegation expressed concerns regarding continuity of local government system. The minister local government, Meena Khan Afridi was also present.

The meeting focused on finding a legislative path to prevent a vacuum in governance before the next elections.

In response to these concerns, Chief Minister Afridi announced development of a consensus-based plan of action. He directed Speaker of KP Assembly to form a bipartisan committee, featuring members from both government and opposition, to deliberate on the matter. This committee is scheduled to convene this week with the goal of reaching a final decision by March 15. The primary objective is to determine a formal method for maintaining current system's operations until new local government elections can be successfully conducted. To ensure a comprehensive solution, the meeting also resolved that the committee would consult with nominated members of the Local Council Board, incorporating diverse viewpoints into the final strategy. Following these firm assurances from Chief Minister, Local Council Association agreed to postpone their planned strike. Both police and administrative officials have characterized the meeting as a vital step in safeguarding stability of public service delivery and ensuring that local government institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remain functional during this transitional period.—APP

Sindh vows to religious freedom, minority rights on Holi

KARACHI: Sindh Government Spokesperson Sukhdev Hemmani has extended heartfelt greetings to the Hindu community of Sindh on the auspicious occasion of Holi, describing the festival as a celebration of harmony and Sindh's shared cultural heritage.

He underscored the Sindh Government's firm commitment to protecting religious freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution. Upon his recommendation in an early communique, the Inspector General of Sindh Police has issued instructions to ensure foolproof security, including preventive and special measures, at all places of worship and communal spaces of the Hindu community during Holi. Hemmani further shared that, on the appeal of President Asif Ali Zardari and in view of the prevailing situation, the Hindu community of Sindh has decided to cancel Holi celebrations this year, in solidarity with Muslim brethren and in respect of the sanctity of Ramadan. The Sindh Government has also declared official holidays for the Hindu community on 3rd and 4th March. He stated that "Sindh is home to the majority of the Hindu population of Pakistan.—APP

IRS convenes Pre-COP 31 dialogue on Pakistan's climate agenda

Dr. Zarqa emphasized that meaningful climate justice cannot be achieved without robust district-level governance. Drawing on recent flood experiences, she underscored the consequences of unregulated urban expansion along riverbeds and its disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities, particularly women and persons with disabilities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) convened an Eminent Talk with Senator Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur as an inaugural Pre-COP31 dialogue on "Strengthening Climate Governance in Pakistan." The event brought together policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to deliberate on institutional reforms, legislative priorities, and implementation gaps within the country's climate governance framework. In his opening remarks, Amb Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, noted that global temperatures are now as warm as at any point in the last 125,000 years, underscoring the unprecedented scale of current warming. He cautioned that if this trajectory continues, severe risks to ecosystems, food security, and global stability will become inevitable. Delivering the address, Dr. Zarqa reflected on Pakistan's fragmented policy landscape, observing that contradictory decisions often undermine progress in long-term carbon markets and climate adaptation initiatives. She highlighted that although Pakistan actively participates in international climate negotiations and receives climate finance, structural weaknesses and limited empowerment of local governments continue to hinder effective implementation at the grassroots level. Dr. Zarqa emphasized that meaningful climate justice cannot be achieved without robust district-level governance. Drawing on recent flood experiences, she underscored the consequences of unregulated urban expansion along riverbeds and its disproportionate



impact on vulnerable communities, particularly women and persons with disabilities. She also stressed the urgency of rethinking agricultural and water-use practices in an increasingly water-stressed country. Mr. Talha Tufail Bhatti, Lead, Climate Governance & Policy Program at IRS, remarked that at a time of

political polarization and declining trust in institutions, climate governance must transcend electoral cycles and short-term policy horizons. A shift in mindset from unintended environmental degradation to intentional planetary stewardship is essential to ensuring sustainable and equitable climate action.

CM stresses role of wildlife in tourism

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that wildlife is a vital national asset and protecting it is a shared responsibility. In her special message on World Wildlife Day, she said Punjab introduced innovative reforms to curb illegal hunting and unlawful possession of wild animals through amendments to the Punjab Wildlife Act 1974 and the Protected Areas Act. She noted that the Wildlife Helpline 1107 had been made fully operational, with online services now available for shooting licences, import and export permits, hunting permits, and registration of breeding farms. For the first time in the province, an artificial intelligence-based animal census system has been implemented, complemented by GPS and collar tracker systems to monitor

rescued animals. At Lahore Safari Zoo, modern facilities including a 3D screen, animal sculptures, and a 7D wildlife cinema were being introduced. Construction of Punjab's first wildlife hospital had reached 80 per cent completion, where specialist veterinary doctors would be appointed for each species. Plans were also underway for a 360-degree virtual zoo to allow citizens to observe wildlife from home. Development and renovation projects were ongoing at Changa Manga, Uchhali Wetlands, Chashma Barrage, Bansra Gali Wildlife Park, and Murree Biodiversity Park. The chief minister highlighted that residential standards for captive animals and birds have been set, while 544 wildlife rangers equipped with modern weapons, IT tools, drones, body cam-

eras, and night-vision equipment have been deployed. A special bike squad has also been formed to protect wildlife in desert areas. She underlined that a dedicated wildlife force had been established to ensure effective protection across the province, with strict enforcement of the Animal Rights and Protection Act against illegal hunting, unlawful captivity, and cruelty to animals and birds. CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif said respecting animal rights aligns with Islamic teachings and legal obligations, noting that protecting rare species also promotes tourism and creates employment opportunities. "Wildlife is our future asset; protecting it is our responsibility," she said, urging the public to support government initiatives for wildlife conservation.—DNA

Commissioner reviews campaign against profiteering

KARACHI: Commissioner Karachi Syed Hassan Naqvi chaired a daily review meeting on Monday at his office. He directed Deputy Commissioners and assistant commissioners to take strict action against profiteers ensuring prices are controlled to provide citizens get relief during holy month of Ramadan. The meeting was attended among others by Additional Commissioner I Ghulam Mehdi Shah, Additional Commissioner II Asadullah Khoso, Deputy Commissioner Keamari Amir Fazal Khoso, Assistant Commissioner HQ Rabia Syed, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Sajjad Abro, and Assistant Commissioner General Waqas Abbasi. Deputy Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners presented their district and sub-division performance reports. The Commissioner office monitoring team reviewed implementation of official rates and reported on visits to complaint centers and supermarkets under the "Commissioner Ramadan Wintry" initiative.—APP

Security plan for Youm-e-Shahadat Hazrat Ali (RA)

LAHORE: The Punjab Home Department has issued comprehensive security guidelines for Youm-e-Shahadat Hazrat Ali (RA), to be observed on 21st of Ramadan, March 11, 2026, with due reverence and respect across the country. According to the directives, special security arrangements will be ensured for processions, Majalis and other religious gatherings to be held on the occasion. Scholars will highlight the life and teachings of Hazrat Ali (RA) during the events. The Home Department directed that foolproof security arrangements be made for mosques, seminaries, Imambargahs, shrines and other places of worship, with additional police personnel deployed where required. Strict security measures have been ordered for mourning processions, religious congregations and public gatherings. The department emphasized that no objectionable or provocative speeches against any sect would be tolerated. A complete ban on carrying and displaying firearms across Punjab

has been enforced, while strict action has been ordered against violations of the Punjab Sound System (Regulation) Act, 2015. To maintain religious harmony, miscreant elements will be closely monitored. Aerial surveillance of all major processions will be conducted through quadcopters to effectively monitor security arrangements and deployment of personnel. Security of transmission lines of WAPDA and gas pipelines of SNGPL along procession routes will also be ensured. The authorities have been directed to strengthen checking at entry and exit points of all cities across the province. Special security measures will be taken for prominent religious and political leaders. Rescue 1122, Civil Defence and the Health Department have been placed on high alert, while all law enforcement and intelligence agencies have been directed to maintain close coordination and ensure timely information sharing with relevant stakeholders. District Emergency Boards have been instructed to convene im-

mediate meetings and activate district rescue plans. Availability of fire brigades, bomb disposal squads, ambulances, uninterrupted electricity supply and medical staff has been ensured. Authorities have also been directed to maintain heightened security even during Iftar hours. The 21st Ramadan Zuljanah procession in Lahore, considered among the three major religious processions of the city, will be provided special security cover. Law enforcement agencies will utilize quadcopters for effective monitoring of security arrangements and personnel deployment, and security officials will remain on duty until the complete dispersal of processions and gatherings. The Home Department directed commissioners, deputy commissioners, CCPO Lahore, RPOs, CPOs and DPOs across Punjab to ensure strict implementation of the comprehensive security plan to maintain law and order on Youm-e-Shahadat Hazrat Ali (RA).—DNA



ISLAMABAD: PMYP Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, presenting an award to a participant during Overseas Visa Award Ceremony for the holding travel documents to trainees under the Prime Minister's Overseas Employment Program (PMOEP), in the Federal Capital.

Tahir for improved markets infrastructure for smooth business

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Sardar Tahir Mehmood has emphasized the urgent need for improving markets infrastructure to facilitate smooth business activities and promote sustainable economic growth in the federal capital. He expressed these views while talking to visiting trade leaders from various markets of Islamabad who called on him at the Chamber House. On the occasion, Senior Vice President and Vice President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry were also present. President Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that Islamabad, being the capital city of Pakistan, enjoys a unique

significance as its markets and commercial centers are frequently visited by diplomats, foreign delegations and international visitors. He said that it is therefore essential that the city's commercial infrastructure reflects the standards of a modern capital.

He noted that Islamabad has emerged as a major commercial hub where a large number of traders, entrepreneurs and investors are actively engaged in economic activities. However, he pointed out that several infrastructure-related challenges including shortage of parking facilities, inadequate logistics arrangements and traffic congestion are creating difficulties for traders as well as customers. He stressed that modern and efficient infrastructure is vital for sustainable economic

development and urged the concerned authorities to take practical measures for improving

road networks, developing multi-storey parking plazas in busy markets and introducing better

traffic management systems to ensure ease of doing business in the capital. He highlighted the importance of developing new commercial and industrial zones in and around Islamabad to accommodate the increasing number of businesses and investors. He said that expansion of organized commercial areas would help strengthen economic activity, attract investment and create new employment opportunities. Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub said that the Capital Development Authority and other relevant departments should work in close coordination with the business community to address infrastructure-related challenges faced by traders. He said that Islamabad's commercial centers are expanding rapidly.



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MARCH

- March 01/Bosnia National Day
- March 03/Bulgaria National Day
- March 06/ Ghana Independence Day
- March 12 /Mauritius National Day
- March 17/Ireland St. Patrick's Day
- March 20/Tunisia Independence Day
- March 21/Namibia National Day
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- RGH.....9290301-7
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- PIMS.....9261170-79
- Polyclinic.....9218300-09
- Shifa International 4603666



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- Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan

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- Potohar Town.....9209224
- Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Regional conference on 'ASEAN-to-Pakistan Pathways'

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman, Pakistan-China Institute, in his keynote, underscored that Pakistan's solar growth is increasingly tied to China's industrial power, citing imports of around 17 GW of solar panels in 2024 and about 17.9 GW in FY25, taking total imports beyond 50 GW by September 2025, while Pakistan's share of China's solar exports rose to about 12 percent in 2025 from 2 percent in 2022

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan-China Institute hosted a regional conference titled "ASEAN-to-Pakistan Pathways: Attracting Chinese Investment for Solar PV Value-Chain Manufacturing" under the Green CPEC Alliance, bringing together policymakers and regional experts to translate ASEAN's solar manufacturing experience into actionable lessons for Pakistan. Mustafa Hyder Sayed, Executive Director, Pakistan-China Institute, delivered the welcome remarks by placing the conference within the broader strategic shifts reshaping solar manufacturing and investment flows, including global and regional solar manufacturing rebalancing, post-tariff adjustments in ASEAN, and China's overseas cleantech push. His remarks framed why the Green CPEC Alliance is convening this dialogue now, as countries compete to attract mobile solar PV value-chain investment through a combination of industrial policy and credible delivery capacity. He set the direction for the day's discussion around translating ASEAN's practical experience into actionable lessons for Pakistan, with a focus on what makes manufacturing decisions bankable in real terms, such as clarity of the policy and execution package, readiness of SEZ offerings, and alignment between investment facilitation and on-ground implementation. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman, Pakistan-China Institute, in his keynote, underscored that Pakistan's solar growth is increasingly tied to China's industrial power, citing imports of around 17 GW of solar panels in 2024 and about 17.9 GW in FY25, taking total imports beyond 50 GW by September 2025, while Pakistan's share of China's solar exports rose to about 12 percent in 2025 from 2 percent in 2022. He highlighted solar's impact on energy security, noting solar provided about 25.3 percent of Pakistan's utility electricity between January and April 2025, and framed cheap Chinese solar as a one-time strategic window as global solar installations reached around 597 GW in 2024 and module prices fell to \$0.07 to \$0.09 per watt in 2024 and early 2025, while cautioning that production cuts and policy shifts could raise prices by around 9 percent by late 2025. He further emphasized China's dominance of more



than 80 percent of global solar manufacturing capacity supported by over \$50 billion in investment and roughly 300,000 jobs, and linked solar geopolitics to water and resource pressures, citing about 283,000 net-metering consumers by December 2024, around 2.8 to 4.1 GW net-metered capacity, around 650,000 solar-powered tube wells, and a 30 percent expansion in rice cultivation since 2023, with implications for water security and future dependence on batteries and critical minerals. Dr. Shezra Mansab Ali Kharal, Minister of State for Climate Change, in her keynote on "Pakistan's Solar Demand Shock: Why Manufacturing is the Next Frontier," highlighted that Pakistan's solar demand is import-driven, citing approximately 51.5 GW of solar modules imported from China by November 2025, following about 16.6 GW in 2024 and just over 10 GW more in the first four months of 2025. She noted deployment is now largely behind-the-meter with estimates of about 27 to 33 GW deployed across

segments, while official net-metering reached 6.8 GW (September 2025), up from more than 2.2 GW and 156,372+ prosumer facilities as of June 2024, and reinforced that solar supplied 25.3 percent of Pakistan's utility electricity in January to April 2025, with emerging "negative daytime demand" signals in Lahore, Faisalabad and Sialkot driving tariff and market reform pressures. She pointed to economics flipping fast as module prices fell to around \$0.08 per watt by 2025 and customs valuation reset to \$0.08 to \$0.09 per watt, and framed manufacturing as an FX and value-retention imperative, noting import costs exceeded \$2 billion by June 2025. Muhammad Umar Farooq, Senior Research Associate, Pakistan-China Institute, noted that the global solar value chain has entered a phase where trade policy, industrial policy, and geopolitics shape investment decisions as much as technology and cost, and that major markets are pushing manufacturing rebalancing away from single-country concentration due to trade measures and

supply-chain security concerns. Dr. Christoph Nedopil, Director, Griffith Asia Institute, contributed to Session I by focusing on the conditions that made ASEAN a preferred destination for Chinese solar manufacturing, emphasizing the role of credible investment facilitation, execution readiness, and the broader logic of China's overseas cleantech push, while guiding discussion on what Pakistan must prioritize first to compete for the next wave of manufacturing investment, including closing gaps related to policy stability, SEZ execution, logistics, and investor risk protection. N. A. Zuberi, Senior Advisor, CSAIL, highlighted that while incentives matter, investors ultimately require speed, certainty, and enforceability, emphasizing that Pakistan's competitiveness will depend on defining a minimum "investor-ready" package that converts interest into committed capital and avoiding common policy promises that later backfire when implementation realities, approvals, or infrastructure delivery do not match advertised timelines.

Ramzan Sahulat Bazaars offer relief to masses

ISLAMABAD: The initiative of Ramzan Sahulat Bazaars in Islamabad has brought much-needed relief to thousands of underprivileged families grappling with rising food prices. Organized under the supervision of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) in collaboration with the Islamabad Capital Territory Administration, the subsidized markets have been established at multiple locations across the federal capital, including G-6, H-9, G-11, Pakistan Town, Tarnol and Barakahu, to ensure convenient and affordable access for residents from both urban and rural areas during the holy month. The initiative aims to provide essential commodities, including flour, sugar, rice, pulses, cooking oil, fruits, vegetables and dates, at prices significantly lower than those in the open market. The CDA spokesperson told APP that the government has ensured strict price control and quality checks to prevent profiteering and hoarding during Ramzan. He stated that the primary objective of these bazaars is to ease the finan-

cial burden on low-income families at a time when household expenditures typically increase. "This initiative reflects the government's commitment to supporting vulnerable segments of society in these challenging economic times," he added. The spokesperson noted that all essential commodities are being provided at government-fixed rates at the Ramzan Sahulat Bazaars in Islamabad, with continuous daily monitoring to ensure strict compliance with officially notified rates. A digital payment and cashless system has been fully implemented at the bazaars in line with the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, he added.

The spokesperson said Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, has directed Assistant Commissioners and Price Control Magistrates to ensure the uninterrupted supply and availability of all essential items at official rates. He emphasized that relevant officers must remain present at these bazaars and in general

markets to promptly address public complaints. Chairman CDA also instructed all concerned departments to ensure effective coordination for maintaining cleanliness, security arrangements and proper parking facilities at the Ramzan Sahulat Bazaars, facilitating a smooth and convenient shopping experience for citizens. Shoppers visiting the bazaars expressed relief and appreciation over the arrangements. "The skyrocketing prices in regular markets has made very difficult to manage household expenses while these bazaars are a blessing for lower middle income families," said Ali, a daily wage labourer purchasing flour and sugar at subsidized rates. Talking to APP, Tania, a buyer at the G-6 Ramzan Sahulat Bazaar, said the bazaars are operating efficiently throughout Ramzan, from morning until evening, to accommodate the rush of shoppers. She added that adequate security and parking arrangements have been put in place and expressed satisfaction over the prices and overall management of the bazaars.—DNA

Karachi-Rohri rail track up gradation to start by July

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi on Tuesday informed the House that, under the directives of the Prime Minister, a decision has been taken to upgrade the 48-kilometre Karachi-Rohri railway section, with work on laying a new track expected to commence by the end of July. Responding to a question during question hour, the minister said Pakistan Railways has witnessed consistent growth in freight and passenger revenues over the past few years, reflecting gradual financial improvement in the department. He said freight earnings stood at Rs 23 billion in 2020-21, Rs 17 billion in 2022-23, and Rs 28 billion in 2023-24. During the ongoing fiscal year 2024-25, freight revenue has reached approximately Rs 31.73 billion, he added. Sharing passenger revenue figures, he said the department earned Rs 30 billion in 2020-21, which increased to Rs 34 billion in 2022-23 and Rs 49 billion in 2023-24. The upward trend has continued in the current fiscal year, he added. The minister said the improvement indicates that Pakistan Railways is moving in the right direction. He emphasized that the next target is to further strengthen the freight sector, aiming for a turnaround by expanding freight operations relative to passenger services, while passenger operations would continue to be subsidized. Clarifying a figure of Rs 62 billion mentioned during a supplementary question, Abbasi said the amount relates to pension payments covered through government grants. He said if pension liabilities are excluded, Pakistan Railways posted a profit of around Rs 3 billion during the first nine months of fiscal year 2024-25. He said reforms and infrastructure development cannot be achieved overnight, particularly as railway tracks dating back to 1861 and 1871 require replacement.—DNA

IRSA releases 89,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 89,800 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 34,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1468.51 feet which was 66.51 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 13,400 cusecs and 35,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1164.00 feet, which was 114.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 7,900 cusecs and 42,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 35,400, 29,500, 35,700, and 11,200 cusecs, respectively.—APP

Two bills smoothly sail through Senate

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Tuesday passed two bills including the Daanish University Islamabad Bill, 2026 and The Public Private Partnership Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2022 as reported by the standing committees. The bills were moved by Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazeer Tarar and Senator Mohammad Abdul Qadir in the House respectively. The house passed both the bills through clause by clause reading.—APP

CDA, Chinese investors discuss expansion of EV charging network

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A high-level meeting was held on Tuesday at the headquarters of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) between Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa, Additional Secretary Joudat Ayaz, and a delegation of Chinese investors to explore opportunities for electric vehicle infrastructure and modern housing technologies in the Federal Capital. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that there are immense opportunities for investment in electric charging infrastructure in the Federal Capital, Islamabad. He said that the CDA has adopted regulations regarding electric vehicle charging stations, and implementation of these regulations is now being ensured. Member Planning and Design CDA, Dr. Khalid Hafiz, said that according to these regulations, a 3% charging facility has been made mandatory in commercial buildings. Furthermore, as per the regulations it is mandatory to establish charging stations at nearly all 138 filling stations in the

Federal Capital, Islamabad. Similarly, it will be mandatory to install one electric charging point at existing filling stations and two electric charging points at new filling stations. Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, said that planning is underway to establish charging hubs at various locations in the Feder-

al Capital. Chinese delegation said that they are ready to provide all possible cooperation regarding the establishment of electric charging stations in the Federal Capital, Islamabad. They also briefed about 3D printed housing technology. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa directed that a feasibility study be prepared regarding 3D print-

ed housing technology in the Federal Capital, Islamabad. He said that they aim to promote modern and innovative technology as well as low-cost green and eco-friendly housing in the Capital City, Islamabad. He said that work should also be done on technology transfer in this regard in the Federal Capital, Islamabad. Discussions were also held during

the meeting regarding the introduction of electric bikes and electric scooters in Islamabad. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that work is going on various environment-friendly projects, including the introduction of electric trams in the Federal Capital, Islamabad. He further said that they are creating a conducive environment for

investment in this regard in the Federal Capital, Islamabad. The meeting reaffirmed the commitment to promote mutual cooperation regarding electric charging infrastructure, innovative technological solutions, transfer of environment-friendly technology, and related projects.



COURT NOTICE

In the Court of Shama Yasin Civil Judge Family Court Rawalpindi. Petition U/R 25 of the Guardian. Kamran Akbar Versus Mst. Arooj Arif daughter of Muhammad Arif resident of House No P-131 Street No. 1 Mohallah Imam Bara Rawalpindi. At present residing Mohallah Banni Near Aik Minar Wali Masjid Street No 4 Rawalpindi. Whereas respondent cannot be served in ordinary manner so you are inform to attend the Court personal through counsel or attorney on 05-03-2026 at 9 am to avoid ex-parte proceedings.

Briefs

DIG reviews
ADRC
performance

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Islamabad, Muhammad Jawad Tariq on Tuesday chaired an important meeting regarding the performance of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee (ADRC), attended by ADRC Chairman Tayyab Nawaz Malik and other committee members. An official told APP that the meeting conducted a detailed review of the ADRC's performance and discussed measures to make the system more effective, active, and public-friendly through mutual consultation. DIG Tariq emphasis was laid on prioritizing pending cases and ensuring timely redressal of public complaints to provide relief to citizens without delay. DIG Tariq appreciated the committee's performance and directed members to resolve public issues with transparency, fairness, and professionalism. He said effective implementation of the reconciliation mechanism would not only reduce the burden on courts but also strengthen trust between citizens and police. The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to promote community policing and utilize all available resources to ensure speedy and accessible justice for the public. —APP

80,000 ltrs
milk discarded

ISLAMABAD: After a change in the administration of the Islamabad Food Authority, questions are being raised about the on-going action against milk in the federal capital. Sources said that since the change, teams linked to the Punjab Food Authority and a food safety officer, Nafeesa Kiran, have been conducting joint raids in different areas of Islamabad. Some of these raids are being described as genuine, while others are being questioned. According to sources, samples were collected during these operations. However, the process for testing and disposal of the milk has raised concerns. Clear information about where the samples were tested, how results were recorded, and how seized milk was destroyed has not been shared. This lack of clarity has led to doubts about whether the action taken was effective or only for record purposes. A key point of concern is the return of a group involved in the milk trade that was earlier shut down. In the I-10/1 area, 80,000 liters of milk linked to this group were destroyed in the past. Despite this, the same group is now seen operating openly again in the city. This has raised a major question: who allowed them to resume business. People asked whether officials linked to IFA and the Punjab Food Authority have permitted the same milk group, which was sealed earlier, to restart operations. These claims, according to sources, cannot be ignored and need to be examined through a formal process. —APP

Car theft
gang member
arrested

WAH CANTT: Saddar Wah Police have arrested a member of an inter-district car theft gang and recovered five stolen vehicles valued at over Rs10 million during a targeted operation, officials said. Police sources revealed that the arrested suspect was part of an organized gang involved in stealing vehicles from various areas of Rawalpindi and transporting them to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for illegal sale. Acting on intelligence-based leads, authorities conducted a focused raid, which led to the suspect's apprehension and recovery of the stolen cars. Officials added that further operations are underway to arrest other members of the gang. Authorities noted that effective policing strategies and enhanced security measures by Rawalpindi Police have significantly reduced incidents of car theft and vehicle snatching in the district. —APP

Pakistani hospital saves Somali girl
from life-threatening eye tumor

For her family, the surgery marks the first sustained medical breakthrough after years of uncertainty

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Surgeons at Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital have removed a massive congenital eye tumour from a six-year-old Somali girl, preventing the growth from spreading to her brain after years of unsuccessful treatment attempts abroad.

The child, Nimoh, was born with a tumour affecting one eye. According to hospital officials, her family sought medical help in multiple countries but could not access definitive treatment. By the time she reached Rawalpindi, prolonged irritation and repeated rubbing had worsened the condition, and doctors determined that vision in the affected eye had already been permanently lost. Dr Tayyab Afgani, head of the hospital's ophthalmology department, said the tumour had expanded steadily and posed a life-threatening risk. "Removing the mass was essential to prevent further spread and potentially fatal complications," he said.

A multidisciplinary surgical team carried out a complex procedure to remove the tumour, working around delicate nerves and blood vessels. The operation was completed without major complications. Afgani confirmed that the immediate threat to her life has been eliminated, and she remains under post-operative observation.

Dr Tayyab Afgani said cases reflect the consequences of delayed access to specialised care. According to the World Health Organisation, at least 2.2 billion people worldwide live with some form of vision impairment, with the majority residing in low and middle-income countries where specialist services are limited. In South Asia and parts of Africa, untreated childhood eye conditions continue to contribute to preventable blindness. Hospital officials said the family approached Al-Shifa after



learning about its ocular oncology services. The institution, a non-profit network, provides care to a large proportion of patients at no cost through donor funding. About 80 per cent of patients across its facilities receive free treatment.



Nimoh is recovering well, doctors said, and will continue follow-up care in the coming weeks. For her family, the surgery marks the first sustained medical breakthrough after years of uncertainty.

885 Pakistani
agri professionals
trained in China

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: As a significant milestone in Pakistan-China agricultural cooperation, a cohort of 885 agricultural professionals, selected from across Pakistan, has successfully completed an intensive, advanced training at China's leading universities and returned home to serve as master trainers.

Under the Prime Minister's Initiative for Capacity Building of 1000 Agricultural Graduates in China, the cohort was tasked with a critical mission of transferring cutting-edge technology and sustainable practices to revolutionise Pakistan's agriculture sector. As of now, 648 male and 237 female professionals have completed their training in nine specialised areas in five premier Chinese universities and institutions. As these trainees have returned home to implement their learning in local fields, the rest of 115 trainees are likely to proceed for the training in April 2026. The training focused on nine priority areas to ad-

dress specific challenges in Pakistan's agriculture, including Farm Mechanisation; Modern Tools for Efficiency; Crop Speed Breeding: Cotton, Hybrid Rice, Vegetables, Pulses, Wheat, Alfalfa; High-Level Technologies: Drones, IoT, and AI Applications in Farming; Seed Production: Advanced Processing Technologies; Livestock Health: Disease Surveillance Systems; Genomics: Livestock Breeding Improvements; Aquaculture: Shrimp Production and Processing; Water Management: High-efficiency Irrigation Systems; and Value Addition: Fruits & Vegetables Processing.

It is pertinent to mention here that this ambitious programme was initiated by the Prime Minister of Pakistan and is being executed by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan in line with the guidance of Ministry of National Food Security and Research. The programme aims to modernise the nation's agricultural landscape by bridging the knowledge gap through international cooperation. Recognising China's phenome-

nal success in agricultural technology and food security, the government proposed sending professionals to acquire hands-on expertise. The professionals were selected through a rigorous and inclusive process, drawing talent from federal and provincial research institutes, universities, and the private sector. A special quota was allocated to ensure representation from all regions, particularly Balochistan. The primary outcome of this initiative is the creation of a cadre of 'master trainers'. These professionals are now assigned to cascade their knowledge to thousands of local farmers, extension workers, and students. By adopting Chinese techniques in crop breeding, water saving, and mechanisation, Pakistan aims to significantly boost agricultural productivity, enhance food security, and stimulate economic growth in rural areas. This programme also serves to deepen the iron-clad friendship between Pakistan and China, expanding cooperation from infrastructure to the vital agriculture sector.

Data-driven governance key
to effective policy-making

ISLAMABAD: Chief Statistical Officer of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) Muhammad Sarfaraz has highlighted the importance of compiling accurate data, saying that data-driven governance was vital for effective policy-making. He stressed that timely and reliable statistics were indispensable for sustainable development. "The 21st century is the century of data", he said adding "sound policy planning cannot be achieved without credible statistical evidence. Without a data lens, we cannot fully understand socio-economic realities. Effective governance today depends on evidence-based decision-making," he said in an interview with APP. Sarfaraz said that PBS, as the national statistical organization, was playing a central role in providing accurate data to support policymaking across key sectors, including agriculture, labour and the social sector. He described Pakistan's first-ever fully digital 7th Population and Housing Census as a landmark exercise and one of the largest digital census operations in the region. "It was the need of the hour. The digital census has strengthened our statistical base and improved the reliability and timeliness of data," he said. Referring to the 7th Agricultural Census, he said it was conducted after a long gap and would help provide comprehensive district-level data on crop patterns, cultivation trends and livestock dynamics. "Pakistan's economy is heavily dependent on agriculture. This census will help policymakers identify which crops are grown in which

districts and how livestock trends are evolving," he said. He added that the data would enable the government to design targeted subsidy schemes and allocate resources more efficiently. "Data allows analysis at district, micro and regional levels, helping policymakers determine where interventions are required to enhance productivity," he remarked. Highlighting changing consumption patterns, Sarfaraz said agricultural dynamics were evolving due to shifting food preferences, particularly among younger generations. "When we talk about Gen Z, those born between 1997 and 2012, their food culture differs significantly from previous generations. As dietary patterns change, demand for raw materials and crop categories will shift as well. These long-term trends can only be assessed through consistent and reliable data," he observed. On the labour market, he said the recently launched Labour Force Survey and Household Integrated Economic Survey were providing insights into participation rates, gender-wise employment trends and household economic conditions. "We have a skilled labour force, and engaging it productively is the government's responsibility," he said adding that managing surplus labour, especially for overseas employment, requires aligning skills with global demand through data-driven planning. "Sustainable development and effective governance are only possible when robust and timely data back policies," he remarked. —DNA

NUML explores academic
collaboration with Maldives

DNA

ISLAMABAD: His Excellency Mohamed Thoha, High Commissioner of the Republic of Maldives to Pakistan, paid a courtesy call on the Rector NUML. During the meeting, the Rector underscored the importance of strengthening academic and cultural ties between Pakistan and the Maldives. He briefed the visiting dignitary on NUML's academic profile, highlighting its strong focus on modern languages alongside expanding programs in computing and other emerging disciplines. The High Commissioner appreciated NUML's contribution to higher education and its role

in promoting linguistic and cultural understanding. The Rector shared that NUML of-



fiers student exchange opportunities, remains among the most affordable public-sector universities in Pakistan, and can design customized aca-

demical programs, including scholarship options for Maldivian students. The High Commissioner welcomed the initiative and noted strong interest from Maldivian students in language and IT-related programs. Given

the Maldives' tourism-driven economy, the Rector emphasized the importance of language proficiency and proposed the launch of synchronized (live interactive) online language programs as an initial step. The proposal was well received by the High Commissioner. The High Commissioner invited the Rector and NUML's senior management to visit the Maldives to further explore institutional partnerships. The meeting concluded on an optimistic note, with mutual interest in advancing cooperation in language education, computing programs, customized academic offerings, and student exchanges. —DNA

Sherry calls for
restraint amid
regional tensions

ISLAMABAD: Central leader of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Senator Sherry Rehman on Tuesday called for a balanced and responsible foreign policy approach, urging national unity and restraint amid escalating regional tensions. Taking part in the debate in the Upper House about the Middle East crisis, she said Pakistan had expressed its condemnation at the highest level over recent aggression in the region, emphasizing that when states issue formal condemnations, they carry diplomatic weight and significance. She said that the President and the Prime Minister had clearly articulated Pakistan's position, reflecting the country's principled stance in line with international law. Pakistan, she added, had not resorted to inflammatory rhetoric or confrontational politics but had instead prioritized safeguarding its own sovereignty while advocating justice and moderation on global forums. She said that foreign policy must primarily serve the interests of Pakistan and its people. "Foreign policy serves the citizens first and last," she said, cautioning against emotional reactions that could endanger national interests or strain relations with friendly countries. Highlighting Pakistan's longstanding ties with regional states, including brotherly relations with neighboring Muslim countries and strong connections with Gulf nations hosting millions of overseas Pakistanis, she stressed the need to maintain diplomatic balance and avoid actions that could jeopardize economic and strategic interests. Sherry Rehman also appreciated the efforts of Pakistan's diplomatic mission in Iran for ensuring the safety and evacuation arrangements of Pakistani nationals amid the prevailing situation. Expressing concern over the growing instability in the region, she warned that prolonged conflict could have devastating consequences. "Wars destroy decades of progress and developments within moments and leave behind only suffering and loss," she remarked, urging all parties to pursue dialogue and diplomatic engagement. She reiterated that Pakistan's foreign policy objective should be to promote negotiations, prevent escalation, and safeguard regional peace, particularly at a time when the country faces internal and external security challenges. Calling for unity, she said political leaders must discourage public incitement and avoid actions that could fuel unrest. —DNA

IGP meets
SWAT Team,
reviews
Red Zone
security

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi met officers of the Islamabad Police SWAT team on the ground and appreciated their dedication and operational readiness. An official told APP on Wednesday that the IGP visited key security points in the Red Zone, where he reviewed deployment and overall preparedness in view of the prevailing security situation. IGP Rizvi interacted with SWAT personnel and other officers performing duties, commending their professionalism and commitment to maintaining law and order. IGP inspected checking procedures and security arrangements at various points and directed officers to remain vigilant and fully prepared to respond to any untoward situation. IGP Rizvi reiterated that safeguarding the federal capital and protecting the lives and property of citizens remain the foremost priorities of Islamabad Police. Islamabad Police continue to maintain heightened security measures across sensitive locations to ensure peace and stability in the capital. —APP

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EXPORTERS OF
MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS
IN
PAKISTAN

WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED

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Iran's own goal: How Tehran lost the Gulf

FAISAL J. ABBAS

A FAMOUS proverb states: "It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubt. This can today be applied to Ali Larijani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran, who on Sunday addressed the countries of the region in a post on X, saying: "We do not believe in, nor do we intend, to attack you. However, when the bases located in your countries are used against us, and when the United States relies on these forces to carry out operations in the region, then we will target those bases." This suggests that Larijani is either detached from the reality of the crimes committed by his government's forces or he is so delusional that he mistook five-star hotels in Dubai — where there are no US bases — for American or Israeli five-star generals when wondering who to retaliate against. Iran has unfortunately lost any sympathy or solidarity it could have garnered through its indiscriminate response to the weekend's attacks carried out by Israel and the US. Even Tehran's closest regional friends, the Omanis, who until a few days ago were negotiating on its behalf and trying to spare it a fatal blow, were attacked by Iran — needless to say, Oman also does not have a US military base. This is a serious escalation that undermines the role of mediators worldwide. The unjustifiable Iranian attack on Oman is no less horrendous than the Israeli attack on Qatar last summer, when Doha was also trying to help as it hosted negotiations with Hamas to try to end the war in Gaza. Tehran's escalation does nothing but confirm the fears of those that see Iran as the main source of danger to the region. As for Saudi Arabia, Tehran seems to not care that Riyadh respected and continues to respect the Beijing Declaration of 2023 — by refusing to allow its ground or airspace to be used to attack Iran. Needless to say, unlike what has been propagated, there are also no American military bases in the Kingdom. Yet all of that seems to fall on deaf ears. As such, it is fully under-

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standable that the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement clearly said the Kingdom will resort to any measure to protect its people, including the option of retaliating against the aggression. A sentiment that has now echoed across many Gulf capitals. It is a shame that it had to come to this, after we all believed that the Kingdom and Iran could have worked together to stabilize the region. All hopes are that Iran will come to its senses and distinguish its friends from its foes. Yet, until now, all that can be said is that this indiscriminate Iranian aggression against Gulf countries is a major own goal, resulting only in the increased isolation of Tehran at a critical moment. Tehran's escalation does nothing but confirm the fears of those that see Iran as the main source of danger to the region and its missile program as a permanent symbol of instability. Even Tehran's closest regional friends, the Omanis, who until a few days ago were negotiating on its behalf and trying to spare it a fatal blow, were attacked by Iran. As for the protests within Iran, while many may fully sympathize with the Iranian people and the dire conditions they live in, Riyadh has made it clear that — unlike what Tehran has done in the past when it came to the internal affairs of neighboring countries — this is a matter that must be resolved among Iranians themselves. Now, was the US correct to attack Iran when the Omanis were very hopeful of the outcomes of the negotiations? Time will tell. Can Israel be trusted as a partner in this war? Well, we all know that this current Israeli government has its own agenda. It has proven, time after time, that it has no issue setting the region on fire. And time after time, Benjamin Netanyahu finds ways to escape accountability and trials in many cases, from corruption accusations to the failure of the Israeli security forces on Oct. 7. What I do know is that war is not in Saudi Arabia's interest — or that of any of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries — and we believe it is not in America's interest or the global interest to allow the destabilization of the flourishing region that is the Gulf. I am not only talking about global aviation or maritime and energy security. I am talking about the peaceful and prosperous model of Riyadh, Dubai, Doha and other Gulf capitals that should be protected and replicated around the region. Needless to say, these are all US allies, some with "major non-NATO ally" status, and Gulf governments have every right to protect themselves, as it remains a government's first duty to do all that it takes to protect its people, especially against any unprovoked aggression.

Operation Epic Fury: America's Strategic Gamble

Qamar Bashir



Israeli officials have described the operation as one of the largest regime-decapitation strikes in modern warfare, claiming dozens of senior security and military figures were eliminated. Among those reported killed were high-ranking officials within the Revolutionary Guard, defense establishment, and intelligence apparatus. Whether every detail withstands independent verification remains to be seen, but the scale of the strike signals a deliberate attempt to dismantle the core of Iran's command structure. The central question is not simply what has happened—but why now. For months, negotiations over Iran's...
The central question is not simply what has happened—but why now. For months, negotiations over Iran's...

THE past twenty-four hours have altered the geopolitical landscape in ways few anticipated, yet many feared. After weeks of military buildup in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea, the United States and Israel launched what officials described as a coordinated offensive targeting Iranian leadership and military infrastructure. The reported confirmation by Iranian state media of the death of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei marks a turning point not only for Iran but for the broader Middle East. Images from inside Iran reflect a nation divided and shaken. Smoke rose above Tehran as airstrikes struck command centers and security compounds. Civilians were seen fleeing neighborhoods, rescuers searching through rubble, and families heading north from the capital amid uncertainty. In contrast, some pockets of the country witnessed celebrations following reports of Khamenei's death—evidence of deep internal fractures that have long existed beneath the surface of the Islamic Republic. Israeli officials have described the operation as one of the largest regime-decapitation strikes in modern warfare, claiming dozens of senior security and military figures were eliminated. Among those reported killed were high-ranking officials within the Revolutionary Guard, defense establishment, and intelligence apparatus. Whether every detail withstands independent verification remains to be seen, but the scale of the strike signals a deliberate attempt to dismantle the core of Iran's command structure. The central question is not simply what has happened—but why now. For months, negotiations over Iran's nuclear program had fluctuated between tension and cautious optimism. Technical discussions were reportedly scheduled to continue in Vienna. Yet amid those diplomatic channels, Washington and Tel Aviv appear to have concluded that the risks of waiting outweighed the risks of acting. Official statements emphasize preventing nuclear weaponization, degrading missile capabilities, and neutralizing what they call imminent threats. Critics, however, argue that the abrupt transition from negotiation to bombardment raises doubts about whether diplomacy was ever given sufficient space to succeed. Beneath the surface of nuclear rhetoric lies a deeper strategic reality: energy leverage and global power competition. Iran sits at the crossroads of one of the most vital arteries of global commerce—the Strait of Hormuz. Roughly one-fifth of the world's oil and gas supply transits this narrow corridor. Any serious disruption there sends immediate shockwaves through global markets. Energy prices spike, supply chains tighten, shipping insurance costs rise, and inflationary pressures intensify worldwide. China, in particular, relies heavily on Gulf energy flows. Even as Beijing invests aggressively in renewable energy and alternative supply chains, oil remains central to industrial continuity and economic growth. If the United States and its allies consolidate influence over major energy producers across the Gulf,

they acquire a powerful instrument of geopolitical leverage. In an era defined by U.S.–China rivalry, control over energy corridors is not merely economic—it is strategic. This broader context helps explain why Iran's position extends beyond its borders. The confrontation is not solely about enrichment levels or centrifuge counts; it intersects with global power balances, trade routes, and long-term strategic containment. At the same time, regime decapitation does not automatically produce stability. History offers multiple examples where eliminating leadership structures created power vacuums that fueled prolonged instability rather than swift transition. Within hours of the reported strike, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) reintroduced its 10-point democratic plan, led by president-elect Maryam Rajavi. The proposal calls for universal suffrage, separation of religion and state, abolition of the death penalty, gender equality, dismantling of the IRGC, and a non-nuclear Iran aligned with international norms. On paper, the plan outlines a comprehensive democratic transformation. In practice, implementing such reforms requires security guarantees, institutional continuity, and broad domestic consensus—conditions rarely present amid aerial bombardment and political shock. International reactions have reflected caution rather than celebration. European leaders have urged restraint and a return to negotiations. Russia condemned the strikes as destabilizing. China expressed concern and called for de-escalation. Gulf states fear maritime disruption and regional spillover. The United Nations has warned that continued escalation risks undermining international peace and security. Perhaps the most immediate economic concern remains the Strait of Hormuz. Iran's parliament reportedly approved a motion to close the corridor, though final authority rests with its Supreme National Security Council. Analysts note that a full blockade would also harm Iran's own economy and risk military confrontation with U.S. naval forces. Nonetheless, even partial interference could disrupt approximately 20 million barrels of oil per day—an amount sufficient to destabilize markets globally. Markets have already responded with volatility. Aviation disruptions across the region have stranded travelers. Shipping routes are being recalculated. Energy futures have fluctuated sharply. For import-dependent nations in Asia, the stakes are profound. Inside Iran, public sentiment appears complex and layered. Years of economic hardship, political repression, and protest crackdowns have eroded confidence in the clerical establishment for many citizens. Yet external military strikes can rapidly transform internal grievances into nationalist solidarity. Civilian casualties, if confirmed and sustained, may intensify anti-foreigner sentiment rather than facilitate internal reform. Israel, for its part, calculates that neutralizing Iran's senior command reduces long-term threats from missile arsenals and proxy networks. The United States frames the action as defensive and preventive. However, military planners

must now consider retaliation—whether through missile exchanges, cyber operations, or asymmetric tactics targeting U.S. assets in the region. Russia and China, meanwhile, observe carefully. Both powers may seek to avoid direct confrontation while allowing geopolitical dynamics to weaken American influence if escalation becomes prolonged. A drawn-out conflict risks draining U.S. resources, complicating alliances, and eroding soft power credibility. In this environment, the probability of swift resolution appears low. Decapitation strikes often initiate new phases of contestation rather than closure. Leadership succession struggles, regional retaliation, and diplomatic fragmentation can extend instability for months—or longer. The humanitarian dimension must not be overlooked. Images of collapsed buildings and fleeing civilians underscore the human cost. Infrastructure damage, potential refugee flows, and economic paralysis could follow if hostilities persist. Ultimately, this moment represents more than a bilateral confrontation. It is a strategic inflection point involving energy security, nuclear proliferation, regime legitimacy, and global power competition. The intersection of these forces makes the trajectory unpredictable and potentially prolonged. The world must therefore prepare—not for a brief shock—but for sustained volatility. Energy markets, diplomatic channels, and regional security architectures will remain under strain. Whether the coming weeks produce negotiations, containment, or escalation will depend on decisions made in Tehran, Washington, Tel Aviv, Beijing, and Moscow. What is clear is that the consequences of this operation will extend far beyond the initial strike. The Middle East has entered a new phase of uncertainty, and the global community must brace for economic, political, and strategic reverberations that may reshape the region for years to come. When examined through this lens, the United States' decision reflects calculated confidence in its strengths, yet it is shadowed by significant structural risks. Military superiority provides tactical advantage, but the strategic outcome will depend on political evolution inside Iran, the resilience of global markets, and the restraint—or escalation—of regional actors. The war is unlikely to conclude swiftly. Leadership strikes may change faces, but they rarely end confrontations overnight. Economic volatility, diplomatic recalibration, and security tensions will likely persist for an extended period. The world must prepare for sustained turbulence. Whether this moment becomes a gateway to negotiated transformation or a prolonged cycle of retaliation depends not only on battlefield capability but on strategic wisdom in the days ahead.
— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister,
Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former Press Attaché to Malaysia
Former MD, SRBC | Macomb, Michigan

When Words Prevented War

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The cricket match, played between 21 and 25 February and eventually ending in a rain-interrupted draw, seemed almost incidental to the gravity of the hour. What transpired in the quiet of that Delhi evening has since been recounted in journalistic and diplomatic circles. According to Behramnam, a special adviser to Rajiv Gandhi, quoted at the time in India Today, General Zia...

THERE are moments in the life of nations which, though brief in duration, cast shadows long enough to shape both present anxieties and future reckonings. History is not merely a chronicle of bygone days; it is a vigilant sentinel, reminding statesmen and peoples alike that decisions taken in hours of peril may determine the destiny of generations. One such moment arrived in the cold and uneasy February of 1987, when intelligence reports reached Islamabad that India, under the cover of its vast military exercises known as Operation Brasstacks, had positioned formidable forces near Pakistan's borders. The atmosphere grew heavy with apprehension, and the Sub Continent stood poised on the brink of a miscalculation whose consequences could have been irreversible. At that delicate juncture, the President of Pakistan, General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, undertook a step so unexpected that it has since entered diplomatic lore as one of the most striking examples of cricket diplomacy. Without the trappings of a pre-arranged summit, he arrived unannounced in New Delhi on 21 February 1987, ostensibly to watch the India-Pakistan Test match at Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur. It was a gesture outwardly modest, yet inwardly calculated. He was received by the Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, and that evening the two leaders met privately at Hyderabad House for nearly forty minutes of candid discussion. The cricket match, played between 21 and 25 February and eventually ending in a rain-interrupted draw, seemed almost incidental to the gravity of the hour. What transpired in the quiet of that Delhi evening has since been recounted in journalistic and diplomatic circles. According to Behramnam, a special adviser to Rajiv Gandhi, quoted at the time in India Today, General Zia delivered a warning of remarkable bluntness. Addressing the Indian Prime Minister directly, he is reported to have said: "Mr Rajiv, you want to attack Pakistan, do it. But keep in mind that this world will forget Halaku Khan and Changez Khan and will remember only Ziaul Haq

and Rajiv Gandhi, because this will not be a conventional war but a nuclear war. In this situation, Pakistan might be completely destroyed, but Muslims will still be there in the world; but with the destruction of India, Hinduism will vanish from the face of this earth." Behramnam later described Rajiv Gandhi as visibly shaken by the stern delivery of these words. Yet, with the composure of a seasoned soldier-statesman, Zia is said to have immediately resumed a cordial demeanour, smiling and shaking hands warmly with others present, as though the gravity of the exchange had been but a passing remark. Whether one applauds or questions his methods, the effect was unmistakable. The spectre of imminent conflict receded. The troops did not advance. The subcontinent stepped back from a precipice whose depths none could truly fathom. It was a demonstration that deterrence, when articulated with clarity and backed by resolve, can serve the cause of peace more effectively than prolonged rhetoric. Today, once again, murmurs circulate in certain quarters that plots are being hatched against Pakistan. It is suggested that after other regional upheavals, Pakistan may be marked for pressure or provocation; that India and Israel, perturbed by Pakistan's nuclear capability, might contemplate designs under the patronage of powerful allies. Those who indulge in such propaganda, or who imagine that Pakistan can be treated as other vulnerable states have been treated, dwell in a fool's paradise. Pakistan cannot be compared to countries that have been isolated or overwhelmed through calculated stratagems. Its strategic calculus, its societal fabric, and its collective memory are of a different order. In any hour of imposed aggression, the entire nation and the Pakistani armed forces would stand like a leaden wall. Political, linguistic, and provincial differences—so often magnified in times of peace—would dissolve before the imperative of sovereignty. This is a nation whose sons have lain before tanks, whose people have embraced sacrifice with a conviction that transcends material calculation. Pakistan is, by conviction and pol-

icy, a peace-loving country. Yet if war is thrust upon it, it will not measure its response by the comfort of others. Should any attempt be made to encircle or strangle it, the consequences would be of such magnitude that even the memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki would pale before the dread of repetition. The leadership of Pakistan's armed forces combines professional training with spiritual conviction. A commander who is both a Hafiz of the Holy Qur'an and a seasoned soldier understands not only the science of warfare but the moral weight it carries. In his veins runs the inheritance of those who clashed at Khyber, who burned their boats upon distant shores rather than retreat, and who at decisive battles of history left adversaries stunned by their resolve. Such a nation and such forces are not to be taken lightly. In 1987, General Zia spoke pointedly of the only Hindu-majority state in the world, underscoring the catastrophic implications of nuclear war. The warning was not an incitement but a deterrent—a stark reminder that certain thresholds, once crossed, admit no return. If ever again hostile eyes are cast upon Pakistan with malice, those who do so must recognise that deterrence is reciprocal. A Muslim does not fear martyrdom; he regards it as an honour should it be decreed. Yet the aspiration of Pakistan is not destruction but dignity. The world has witnessed how others are terrified at the sight of death on this occasion and have been seen running away screaming. Pakistan, by contrast, sees itself as iron—no morsel to be chewed and discarded, but a force that will break the teeth of aggression. History's verdict is seldom delivered in the language of passion; it is rendered in consequences. The surprise journey to Jaipur was more than a diplomatic curiosity. It was an assertion that peace is best preserved when sovereignty is unmistakably defended. Those who contemplate testing that resolve would do well to remember that nations, like men, reveal their true character not in comfort but in crisis.

Briefs

Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi granted bail in...

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prosecution failed to present evidence against Imran and his wife. The court approved their bail pleas against surety bonds of Rs 50,000 each. Judge Majuka granted bail to the PTI founder in five additional cases, subject to surety bonds of Rs 50,000 each. In the case concerning defamation of the army, the court ruled that no material had been brought on record proving that the petitioner committed the offence. According to the FIR, Manzoor Ahmad, a learned magistrate, along with his officials, was watching TV on a private news channel when Imran levelled allegations against army officers, claiming "they wanted to see him defeated and killed." The petitioner allegedly defamed army officers by using derogatory language, creating unrest in society, and reportedly used filthy language against the top army brass, the complainant in the FIR said. Regarding the attempted murder case linked to protests, the court noted that the prosecution failed to prove that the demonstrations were organised under the direction of the PTI founder, nor could it establish his presence at the scenes of the protests. Imran, who has been in jail since August 2023, faces multiple cases ranging from corruption to terrorism since his ouster from power via the opposition's no-trust motion in April 2022.

IHC to hear Imran's plea seeking hospital...

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in which the PTI founder was first arrested on Aug 5, 2023 – for hearing on March 10. A division bench comprising Justice Arb Muhammad Tahir and Justice Khadim Hussain Soomro heard the matter along with objections raised by the Registrar's Office. Senior counsel Latif Khosa, assisted by Salman Akram Raja and other lawyers, appeared before the court. The bench inquired about the nature of objections raised by the Registrar's Office on the miscellaneous application. Responding to the court, Khosa submitted that one of the objections pertained to the non-provision of a certified copy of the power of attorney. Justice Tahir observed that two of the objections were valid. The court subsequently directed the office to number the application after the removal of objections. At one point, the bench asked the defence why arguments were not being advanced in the main appeal. "Why don't you give arguments on the main appeal?" the court questioned.

PM talks to Erdogan

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The Prime Minister also took President Erdoğan into confidence on the recent developments in the context of Afghanistan. The two leaders agreed to remain in close and frequent contact in this regard while continuing their efforts to bring peace and stability in the region.

67 Taliban killed as Pak repulses attacks

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assaults and 25 fire raids in Balochistan. Each attack was successfully thwarted, leaving 27 Afghan Taliban killed and scores more injured. One Frontier Corps soldier embraced martyrdom while five others sustained injuries in the defence. The minister added that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a physical attack was attempted at one location and fire raids were conducted on 12 others, all repulsed without any loss of life. He said 40 Afghan Taliban were killed in overnight operations. Follow-up actions are continuing, with a detailed update of the operation to be shared in the afternoon.

UAE humanitarian initiative: 3.6 Tons of dates distributed

The dates were presented to H.E. Jam Kamal Khan, Federal Minister for Commerce, for onward distribution among deserving communities across the province

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As part of its humanitarian outreach during the holy month of Ramadhan, H.E. Salem Mohammed Al Zaabi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Pakistan, gifted 3.6 tons of dates as humanitarian aid for the people of Balochistan. The dates were presented to H.E. Jam Kamal Khan, Federal Minister for Commerce, for onward distribution among deserving communities across the province. In continuation of this initiative, the dates were distributed among needy families in Lasbela through the Jam Muhammad Foundation. This humanitarian gesture reflects the enduring brotherly ties between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates and underscores the UAE's continued commitment to supporting communities in need, particularly during the blessed month of Ramadhan. The initiative was warmly welcomed by local communities, who expressed gratitude for the generous support extended by the leadership and people of the UAE. The distribution drive in Lasbela stands as a testament to the strong spirit of solidarity, compassion, and partnership that defines UAE-Pakistan relations.



Pakistan calls for resolving conflicts to save children's future

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has held a historic session of the UN Security Council, presided over by US First Lady Melania Trump, that the most effective way to protect children and their right to education is to resolve festering conflicts in accordance with the 15-member body's resolutions, the UN Charter and international law, while highlighting the grave situation in Palestine and Kashmir. Speaking in the Council's debate on 'Children, Technology and Education in Conflict', Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said, "Across conflict zones around the world, including situations of foreign occupation, notably Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir, millions of children are growing up amid rubble and chaos, rather than classrooms and calm." Schools, he added, have been

destroyed, damaged or militarized, teachers displaced and digital networks disrupted. "Education systems – already fragile – have been pushed to the brink of collapse," the Pakistani envoy said. At the same time, Ambassador Asim Ahmad said while conflicts persist, we have an obligation to ensure that no child's future is extinguished by circumstances beyond their control." Monday's Security Council was convened by the United States, which holds its presidency, for the month of March. It met under extraordinary circumstances: amid US-Israeli air strikes against Iran, and widening instability in the Middle East, with repeated calls from the UN for restraint by all sides, as the Council turned its attention to a long-standing but under-addressed crisis facing children in war zones. Presiding over the meeting, Mrs. Trump, said that the United States "stands with all of the children throughout the world." The first la-

dy's speech marked the first time a first lady from any country has had the gavel. In his remarks, Ambassador Asim Ahmad welcomed the "Fostering the Future Together Initiative" of the U.S. First Lady, aimed at building a global coalition committed to enhancing children's well-being through the promotion of education, innovation and technology, saying, "Pakistan is pleased to join this initiative." "The issue before us is not simply about innovation and technology – it is about safeguarding human dignity and ensuring that conflict does not steal the future of an entire generation," the Pakistani envoy added. The erosion of education in conflict settings is not incidental, he pointed out, adding it was often systematic, compounding trauma and perpetuating cycles of conflict. "When education is interrupted over extended periods, it creates generational consequences that extend far beyond the immediate conflict."

PCB likely to penalise players after underwhelming T20 WC campaign

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is weighing penalties for national players following the team's lacklustre showing at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, sources told. The 2009 champions bowed out of the ongoing 20-team tournament last week after failing to beat Sri Lanka by a substantial margin in their last Super Eights match. Their five-wicket victory over the Lankan Lions was their only against a full-member nation as they suffered defeats at the hands of arch-rivals India and England in the group and Super Eight stages, respectively, while their match against New Zealand was washed out due to persistent rain in Colombo. Pakistan's exit extended their inability to qualify for the semi-finals for the second straight season, with their previous qualification coming in the 2022 edition when they finished as the runners-up.

Sialkot Stallionz officially change name to Multan Sultans

DNA

LAHORE: The Sialkot Stallionz have officially changed their name to the Multan Sultans, Pakistan Super League (PSL) CEO Salman Naseer announced on Tuesday. In a press conference, Naseer said that the group's name change request, put forward by the team's new CEO, Gohar Shah, had been officially accepted. According to him, the name change request was Shah's first act as CEO of the franchise, as the name 'Multan Sultans' had not previously been available. "You saw him (Shah) amongst other bidders at the team auction for the Multan Sultans," the PSL CEO said. "There was a lot of desire, passion, and I think Gohar was the most disappointed when he couldn't get the team." The PSL CEO added that the option to change team names had been kept in all auction processes, including the ability to request a name that was not one of the six provided. "At the time, I think Multan was not available, so he chose Sialkot," Naseer said, adding that as soon as Shah came in as CEO of the franchise, he had applied for a name change, discussing the terms and conditions as well as the one-time licence fee required. Additionally, Naseer announced that the per annum franchise fees for the team had been increased from Rs1.85bn to Rs2bn. Gohar Shah, who was also present at the press conference and invited to speak, expressed his happiness that "south Punjab's representation is back in the league." "We were wondering: how will a stallion defeat the HBL PSL alone?" he quipped. "A stallion needs a sultan." OZ Developers put forward a massive Rs1.85bn bid to win Sialkot at the PSL auction in January, the highest ever bid for a PSL franchise.

PM invites MPs, party chiefs for in-camera briefing

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"Opposition leaders will consult with their colleagues before taking any decisions," Sanaullah said, emphasising that no side should attach any demands to the meeting. However, National Assembly Opposition Leader Mahmood Khan Achakzai suggested the briefing should be expanded to the entire parliament rather than selected members. "Given the dangerous regional developments, Parliament must be kept fully informed. We will provide our response by tomorrow morning after consulting with our colleagues," he said. The scheduling of the briefing comes as tensions in the Middle East spike following joint strikes by the United States and Israel on Iran. The two countries launched an assault on Tehran on February 28, with US officials saying the military campaign aimed to destroy Iran's navy and missile capabilities. Besides the Middle East conflict, Pakistan is also tackling cross-border terrorism originating from Afghanistan. The Pakistan Armed Forces continue ground and aerial operations under Operation Ghazab il-Haq, targeting Afghan Taliban elements and Fitna al-Khawarij militants involved in the cross-border incursion. Security forces launched the operation on February 27 after Afghan Taliban fighters resorted to unprovoked firing along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Since then, security forces have killed 464 Afghan Taliban fighters, while more than 660 have been injured.

Iran agreed not to acquire nuclear...

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Pakistani from Iran. "I held a meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and disclosed that Iran had agreed not to build nuclear weapons, but the US wanted Iran's entire nuclear programme to be completely dismantled," he said while briefing the Senate on Pakistan's diplomatic efforts following the recent attack on Iran. The Middle East conflict expanded with no end in sight, with Israel attacking Iran and Tehran firing missiles and drones at the "US interests and bases" across the Gulf states. During the four-day conflict, a number of Iranian senior leaders, including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, embraced martyrdom in the "unprovoked and unwarranted" airstrikes by Israel and the United States. Iranian officials warned that Khamenei's martyrdom would mark a turning point, with the Revolutionary Guard vowing retaliation and declaring that "this great crime will not go unpunished".

News Israeli offensive US embassy in Riyadh...

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Saudi Arabia, was struck by two drones-attributed to Iran—causing a limited fire and minor damage, according to Saudi authorities. No injuries were reported, but the embassy issued shelter-in-place alerts for Americans in Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dhahran, and canceled consular services. On Monday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned that "the hardest hits" on Iran are "yet to come," defending the US-Israeli strikes as preemptive against imminent threats to American forces. US President Donald Trump reiterated criticisms of UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer for initially denying access to British bases, like Diego Garcia, for operations against Iran, calling it disappointing and straining the special relationship—though Britain later allowed limited defensive use. Energy markets reacted sharply to the disruptions. International natural gas prices surged, rising 30% at one point Tuesday morning after 50% spikes on Monday, driven by attacks on facilities, halted LNG production in Qatar, and threats to the Strait of Hormuz shipping route.

Google releases second beta of Android 17 with new features and security updates

WASHINGTON: Google has released the second beta version of its upcoming Android 17 operating system for eligible Pixel devices as part of the Android Beta program, introducing new features and expanded security enhancements. In a post on the Android Developers blog, the company said the update focuses on improving performance, boosting energy efficiency and strengthening privacy and security tools. Among the new features is the ability to create floating app bubbles by long-pressing an app icon in the taskbar, allowing applications to run in multi-window mode. The update also expands one-time password (OTP) protections to help reduce digital fraud attempts. Google introduced a new application programming interface (API) called "EyeDropper," enabling users to select a color from any pixel displayed on the screen without requiring additional permissions. The company also redesigned the contact picker tool to provide temporary and limited access to user data. In addition, Google added a "Handoff" feature that allows users to resume tasks across multiple Android devices, aiming to improve integration between smartphones, tablets and foldable devices. – DNA

Zemmer fires 7-birdie round to lead Hilton Classic in Morocco

TANGIER: Italy's Aron Zemmer produced a composed and clinical display to card a five-under-par opening round and claim the first-round lead at the Hilton Classic here on Monday. Zemmer's compatriot Matteo Cristoni was just one shot behind, giving the Azzurri a strong early lead at the second event of the MENA Golf Tour's Morocco Series at Al-Houara Golf Club in Tangier. Zemmer, who started from the 10th tee, carded seven birdies against two bogeys in strong, swirling wind that made scoring difficult throughout the field. He birdied three consecutive holes from the third before adding another at the ninth to make the turn four-under, and despite dropping shots at 11 and 12, responded with birdies at 15 and 18 to sign for a 67. Despite a three-putt early in his round, Zemmer was in good spirits, riding the confidence of a strong performance at last week's Al-Houara Classic. "To make seven birdies in those conditions is very pleasing," Zemmer said. "I came into the week feeling confident after playing well last week, and my iron play was solid which allowed me to go to a few pins. I made a small adjustment to my putting setup which definitely helped today." Also starting from the 10th, Cristoni was equally impressive, making birdies at 10 and 13 before picking up further shots at the third, fourth and sixth on the front nine. A sole

bogey at the seventh was the only blemish on a four-under 68. Ireland's Alex Maguire shares second place on four-under par after a round that featured arguably the shot of the day, an eagle at the par-five 15th alongside four birdies. Maguire admitted he had been hard on himself after a disappointing finish at last week's Al-Houara Classic but found inspiration on the morning of his round from a fellow Irishman, Ryder Cup star Shane Lowry. Lowry's widely-reported interview about throwing away a three-shot lead down the stretch at the Cognizant Classic on the PGA Tour struck a chord. "It was very, very gusty and in many ways it felt like it got harder as the round went on," Maguire said. "The front nine was more constant, you could read the wind and commit to a number, but on the back nine it became really unpredictable. It's much more about feel and experience in these conditions." "The first thing I saw this morning was Shane Lowry talking about going through something similar at a much bigger event and saying you've just got to keep teeing it up and not dwell on it. "It helped me stop feeling sorry for myself and just get on with it, and I think that showed today." Four players share fourth place on three-under par: France's Pierre Pineau, Scotland's Sebastian Sandin, England's Curtis Knipes and Pakistan's Aadam Syed. – DNA

Schools closing across Gulf show children bear brunt of wars

DNA

NEW YORK CITY: Closed schools across the Gulf this week are a stark reminder that when conflicts escalate, children are the first to pay the price – with their classrooms, their safety and, too often, their lives – the UN's secretary general told the Security Council on Monday as the war with Iran entered its third day. With military confrontations involving Iranian and US-Israeli forces continuing to escalate, causing widespread disruption in the region and growing concerns over safety, authorities in several Gulf states, including the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman, ordered schools to remain shut and shift to remote learning. The decision reflects the broader toll on daily life as geopolitical tensions cause ripples throughout the region. Reports emerged over the weekend from southern Iran of a strike on an elementary school in the town of Minab that allegedly killed dozens of children. US officials said

they were looking into the claims. During an address to the Security Council on Monday, Rosemary A. DiCarlo delivered remarks on behalf of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warning that the world is witnessing the highest number of armed conflicts since the Second World War, and the highest civilian death tolls in decades. The meeting was presided over by First Lady Melania Trump, as the US holds the rotating presidency of the 15-member Security Council this month. "When conflicts erupt, children are among those most severely affected," DiCarlo said. One in five children worldwide, about 473 million in total, live in or are fleeing from conflict zones, she noted, citing data from UNICEF. Incidents of grave violations against children that have been verified by the UN rose by 25 percent between 2023 and 2024, she added, while cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence increased by 35 percent, according to the secretary-general's annual report on children and armed conflict. "These horrific figures should impel us to do

more to protect children in conflict," DiCarlo said. She also paid tribute to Melania Trump for highlighting the plight of children in war, and for her engagement with efforts to reunite Ukrainian children with their families. Beyond the immediate threats conflicts pose to life and limb, they also deprive children of education and future opportunities, DiCarlo warned. About 234 million youngsters in crisis and conflict settings need educational support, and 85 million are completely out of school, according to UNICEF. "In violent conflicts, schools can be one of the only safe spaces," DiCarlo said, adding that they can help protect children from recruitment by armed groups, trafficking and other exploitation, while also providing healthcare services and psychosocial support. Yet schools, teachers and education infrastructure continue to come under attack in times of conflict. In 2024, she recalled the provisions of Security Council Resolution 2601, adopted in 2021, which calls on all parties in conflicts to immediately cease all attacks against

schools, children and teachers, and to safeguard and promote the right to education, in line with the principles of international humanitarian law. The challenges involved in delivering quality education in war zones are immense, DiCarlo said. Key infrastructure, including classrooms, electricity supplies and digital connectivity, is often damaged or at risk, and there is a shortage of 44 million teachers in conflict settings worldwide. Digital learning can help bridge gaps when schools are closed or inaccessible, she added, highlighting initiatives such as UNICEF's "Learning Passport," which was developed with Microsoft and provides 10 million children in 47 countries with access to mobile-learning platforms. She also cited the Instant Network Schools program, a joint project of the Vodafone Foundation and the UN Refugee Agency, which enables refugee children and teachers in marginalized communities in the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan to access the internet and digital educational content.

Briefs

Drones hit fuel tank at Oman port

MUSCAT, OMAN: Drones targeted an Omani port on Tuesday, hitting a fuel tank, state media said, as Iran presses its campaign against the Gulf in response to US and Israeli strikes. "A security source reported that fuel tanks at the commercial port of Duqm were targeted by a number of drones, one of which hit a fuel tank. The resulting damage was contained without any human casualties," the Oman News Agency said. The attack is the second on the port in three days, as Iran broadens its targets in the Gulf. Oman, which played a mediation role in talks between the US and Iran, has called for a ceasefire in the On Sunday a worker was injured when two drones struck the same port. One hit accommodation for workers, while debris from the other landed near fuel tanks, the Oman News Agency said.

They were the first attacks on the sultanate since war broke out, with Oman facing strikes despite acting as a mediator between Iran and the United States just days prior to the conflict. On Monday one person was killed in an attack on an oil tanker off the coast of the capital Muscat that caused an explosion and fire, authorities said. The blast in the vessel's main engine room killed one crew member, an Indian national.—APP

IAEA confirms entrances to Iran's Natanz enrichment plant were bombed

VIENNA/WASHINGTON: Entrances to Iran's underground and previously bombed uranium-enrichment plant at Natanz have been struck as part of the US-Israeli military attacks on the country, the UN nuclear watchdog confirmed on Tuesday.

The underground Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP) is one of Iran's three uranium-enrichment plants that are known to have been operating when Israel and the United States carried out strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities last June.

"Based on the latest available satellite imagery, IAEA can now confirm some recent damage to entrance buildings of Iran's underground Natanz Fuel Enrichment Plant," the International Atomic Energy Agency said on X. "No radiological consequence expected and no additional impact detected at FEP itself, which was severely damaged in the June conflict," it added.

The IAEA's finding fits with that of US think-tank the Institute for Science and International Security published on Monday after Iran said Natanz was hit on Sunday and that the IAEA responded that any military strikes were not major.—APP

CCP calls for long-term auto policy, financing reforms

To address affordability constraints and stimulate demand, the CCP has recommended expanding access to auto financing by reviewing restrictive financing limits and introducing targeted, subsidized schemes for first-time buyers in coordination with financial regulators

DNA

ISLAMABAD :The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has released a comprehensive report, "The Road to Fair Competition - A Study of Pakistan's Automobile Industry," highlighting structural and regulatory challenges in the sector and recommending wide-ranging reforms, including a long-term policy road-map, improved vehicle financing, and removal of regulatory distortions to foster competition and efficiency. The automobile industry remains a cornerstone of Pakistan's economy, contributing around 2.8 percent to GDP and employing more than 215,000 people directly. As a key segment of Large-Scale Manufacturing, it plays an important role in industrial growth, technology transfer, and domestic value addition, particularly in the passenger car segment, including emerging electric vehicles, said a

release issued here on Tuesday. The CCP study finds that despite successive policy interventions, the passenger car market remains concentrated in several engine categories due to high entry barriers, capital-intensive requirements, and regulatory complexities. While past protectionist policies helped establish domestic manufacturing, prolonged tariff protections and localization measures have not consistently translated into competitive outcomes or export-led growth. The report also highlights fragmentation in the regulatory framework, with overlapping institutional mandates and policy inconsistencies affecting investment and industry development. Although previous auto policies aimed to increase localization, attract new entrants, and promote exports; structural rigidities, policy reversals, and weak implementation limited their effectiveness. To address affordability constraints and stimulate demand, the CCP has recommended

expanding access to auto financing by reviewing restrictive financing limits and introducing targeted, subsidized schemes for first-time buyers in coordination with financial regulators. The study emphasizes the need for a predictable and coordinated transition toward electric vehicles, noting that inadequate charging infrastructure, limited domestic production capacity, and reliance on fossil fuel-based electricity remain key barriers. It stresses that sustained policy consistency and infrastructure investment will be critical to attract long-term private investment in the EV ecosystem. The report observes the absence of a comprehensive vehicle scrappage and phase-out policy and recommends introducing a structured disposal scheme to address environmental concerns, improve road safety, and stimulate demand through the gradual removal of obsolete and high-emission vehicles. The CCP has also called for strengthening domestic vendor de-

velopment through transparent and non-discriminatory localization policies to enhance industrial linkages and integrate Pakistan's auto sector into global supply chains. To create a level playing field, the Commission recommends a gradual rationalization of distortive protections, the removal of regulatory asymmetries, and the adoption of stable, pro-competition policies to encourage investment, innovation, and efficiency. The CCP noted that a competitive automobile industry can deliver significant benefits to consumers and the economy, including lower prices, improved quality, greater choice, and enhanced export potential. The Commission expressed hope that the study will inform policymakers, regulators, and industry stakeholders and support the development of a modern, competitive, and globally integrated automobile sector in Pakistan. The Study has been uploaded on the CCP's website for public comments and suggestions.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani meeting with president of Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited Tahir Yaqoob Bhatti at Parliament House.

State keen on empowering private sector: Mostafa

Highlighting a significant growth in private investments as a percentage of GDP over the last three years, Farid said this growth testifies to increased business community confidence in the state's reform measures

CAIRO :President Abdel Fattah El Sisi's directives to the government prioritize investment and foreign trade as fundamental pillars for achieving a strong economic leap, Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouli said. Madbouli was speaking during a meeting to review the investment ministry's work plan, in the presence of Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Hussein Eissa and Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade Mohamed Farid. The premier reaffirmed the government's commitment to moving forward with structural reforms and removing any obstacles facing investors. He noted that the state is paying significant attention to paving the way for the private sector, viewing it as a leading development partner. Madbouli said that the government is focusing on maximizing untapped potentials by capitalizing on the diverse and unexplored opportunities all across the country, while leveraging the achievements of recent major investment deals to ensure a sustained pace of economic growth. Briefing the prime minister on his ministry's vision, which aims to position Egypt among the top global investment destinations and as a leading regional hub by 2030, Farid said the ministry's strategy revolves around building a competitive and sustainable economy, creating a stimulating business environment through flexible legislation and effective executive policies, and optimizing digital transformation to streamline procedures for both investors and exporters. The minister outlined nine parallel operational paths designed to achieve measurable results on the short run, which include supporting entrepreneurship, financing growth and building on existing state initiatives; simplifying the entire lifecycle of companies through digital transformation; shifting from "receiving" investment to actively "targeting" high-value-added production based on sectoral and geographical priorities, and enhancing the management and development of state-owned assets. The government operational paths also include advancing the government IPO program and improving market efficiency via legal amendments; launching specialized tools to support priority sectors and the private sector, linking incentives to performance through digital infrastructure, utilizing renewable energy and carbon credit certificates to help Egyptian companies access global markets, and promoting governance and transparency by updating accounting and auditing standards to align with international benchmarks, the minister explained. Highlighting a significant growth in private investments as a percentage of GDP over the last three years, Farid said this growth testifies to increased business community confidence in the state's reform measures. He also touched on a recent rise in Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) relative to GDP, supported by major investment deals, topped by Ras El Hekma project on the North Coast.—

Schools closing across Gulf show kids bear brunt of wars

NEW YORK CITY: Closed schools across the Gulf this week are a stark reminder that when conflicts escalate, children are the first to pay the price — with their classrooms, their safety and, too often, their lives — the UN's secretary general told the Security Council on Monday as the war with Iran entered its third day. With military confrontations involving Iranian and US-Israeli forces continuing to escalate, causing widespread disruption in the region and growing concerns over safety, authorities in several Gulf states, including the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman, ordered schools to remain shut and shift to remote learning. The decision reflects the broader toll on daily life as geopolitical tensions cause ripples throughout the region. Reports emerged over the weekend from southern Iran of a strike on an elementary school in the town of Minab that allegedly killed dozens of children. US officials said they were looking into the claims. During an address to the Security Council on Monday, Rosemary A. DiCarlo delivered remarks on behalf of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warning that the world is witnessing the highest number of armed conflicts since the Second World War, and the highest civilian death tolls in decades. The meeting was presided over by First Lady Melania Trump, as the US holds the rotating presidency of the 15-member Security Council this month. "When conflicts erupt, children are among those most severely affected," DiCarlo said. One in five children worldwide, about 473 million in total, live in or are fleeing from conflict zones, she noted, citing data from UNICEF. Incidents of grave violations against children that have been verified by the UN rose by 25 percent between 2023 and 2024, she added, while cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence increased by 35 percent, according to the secretary-general's annual report on children and armed conflict. "These horrific figures should impel us to do more to protect children in conflict," DiCarlo said. She also paid tribute to Melania Trump for highlighting the plight of children in war, and for her engagement with efforts to reunite Ukrainian children with their families. Beyond the immediate threats conflicts pose to life and limb, they also deprive children of education and future opportunities, DiCarlo warned. About 234 million youngsters in crisis and conflict settings need educational support, and 85 million are completely out of school, according to UNICEF. "In violent conflicts, schools can be one of the only safe spaces," DiCarlo said, adding that they can help protect children from recruitment by armed groups, trafficking and other exploitation, while also providing healthcare services and psychosocial support. Yet schools, teachers and education infrastructure continue to come under attack in times of conflict. In 2024, the UN verified 2,374 attacks against schools and hospitals, most of them in Ukraine, Israel, occupied Palestinian territories, and Haiti. Many more cases go unverified due to lack of access, DiCarlo said. She recalled the provisions of Security Council Resolution 2601, adopted in 2021, which calls on all parties in conflicts to immediately cease all attacks against schools, children and teachers, and to safeguard and promote the right to education, in line with the principles of international humanitarian law. The challenges involved in delivering quality education in war zones are immense, DiCarlo said. Key infrastructure, including classrooms, electricity supplies and digital connectivity, is often damaged or at risk, and there is a shortage of 44 million teachers in conflict settings worldwide. Digital learning can help bridge gaps when schools are closed or inaccessible, she added, highlighting initiatives such as UNICEF's "Learning Passport," which was developed with Microsoft and provides 10 million children in 47 countries with access to mobile-learning platforms.—DNA

Sisi lauds strategic partnership with World Bank Group

CAIRO: President Abdel Fattah El Sisi lauded the existing strategic partnership between Egypt and the World Bank Group (WBG) to achieve sustainable development and implement the economic reform program. President Sisi made the remarks during his meeting with WBG President Ajay Banga, in the presence of Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Egyptian Expatriates Badr Abdelatty, Minister of Planning and Economic Development Ahmed Rostom, WBG Executive Director Abdulaziz Al Mulla, and WBG Alternate Executive Director Hisham Nehad Spiefeldin, said Presidential Spokesman Mohamed El-Shenawy. The spokesman added that President Sisi posted the WBG president on the measures taken by the Egyptian government in the past few years to improve the economic performance and tackle the fallout of regional and international crises. In this regard, the president pointed to the economic reform program executed by Egypt in partnership with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), saying the Egyptian government is working to restore macroeconomic stability and address imbalances resulting from global and regional shocks, including stabilizing the foreign exchange market, reducing inflation and public debt, increasing employment rates.—APP

Uzbekistan's foreign trade turnover reaches \$5.8b in Jan

TASHKENT : According to the National Statistics Committee, Uzbekistan's foreign trade turnover totaled \$5.8 billion in January 2026. The figure represents an increase of \$1.3 billion, or 29.2%, compared with the same period last year. According to the data, Uzbekistan's trade performance included: Exports: \$1.7 billion, up 26.7%; Imports: \$4.1 billion, up 30.3%. In the first month of 2026, Uzbekistan maintained trade relations with more than 145 countries. The largest shares of the country's foreign trade turnover were accounted for by China (27.9%), Russia (18.7%), Kazakhstan (7.1%), Türkiye (3.6%), and Afghanistan (2.4%).—APP

China develops robot for mine emergency rescue

BEIJING: China has successfully created its first exoskeleton robot system specifically designed for complex mine environments, marking a significant step toward "human-machine collaborative" rescue operations. The system is now undergoing industrial testing and has completed three rounds of practical training validation with a national mine rescue team, demonstrating excellent adaptability and stability in underground conditions, China Energy Investment Corporation Co., Ltd. (CHN Energy) said in a press release on Thursday. The project, initiated in July 2025 by Shandong Coal Group of CHN Energy in partnership with the China Coal Research Institute, addresses critical challenges in mine disaster response, including limited equipment intelligence and constrained individual rescue capabilities.—APP

Martyr's blood speaks, rise, Muslim ummah

SADAF NOREEN AWAN

The martyrdom of Syed Ali Khamenei (1939-2026) along with his family including his wife, daughter, grandchildren and Commanders, in the holy month of Ramadan has struck Muslims across the world with profound grief and reflection. His life exemplified courage, resilience, and moral clarity, a living example of bravery akin to Imam Ali as, and a willingness to sacrifice for principles reminiscent of Imam Hussein as. He navigated decades of political, social, and spiritual challenges with unwavering faith, standing firmly against pressure, coercion, and threats to justice. Yet, while he upheld the highest standards of leadership, many of the 56 Muslim countries watched silently, hesitant, or preoccupied with their own interests. His life and martyrdom serve as a powerful reminder: true leadership is measured not by titles or numbers, but by steadfastness, moral courage, and an unyielding commitment to justice and faith. The grief over his loss is not merely political; it is spiritual, historical, and deeply symbolic, a mirror reflecting the moral responsibilities of the entire Muslim Ummah. The story of Karbala remains a timeless moral reflection for every age. When power demands submission and conscience refuses, history repeats its deepest lessons. Hussain ibn Ali was asked to pledge allegiance to Yazid ibne Muawiyah, who had sized power through force and bribe. Hussain ibn Ali refused to bow before a tyrant and chose martyrdom over surrender, embraced Shahadat with his family and his seventy-two companions on the burning sands of Karbala. Their stand was not a political act alone, but a declaration that dignity, faith, and moral truth can never be surrendered, even when survival demands it. Similarly, in the eyes of many observers, the United States and Israel sought compliance from Iran, yet Iran refused to bow. In this narrative, the stance of Ali Khamenei is seen as mirroring the spirit of Karbala, choosing steadfastness over surrender, and sacrifice over submission. In every era, the spirit of Karbala reappears wherever authority demands obedience without justice, and wherever people refuse to bow before anything but the Divine. The enduring lesson is not about loss, but about moral victory, that oppression never truly triumphs, and that faith, courage, and principled resistance continue to revive truth again and again. What Karbala teaches humanity is simple yet eternal:

sacrifice may silence voices for a moment, but it gives life to a legacy that no force on earth can erase. Similarly, in the modern era, innocent lives continue to bear the cost of geopolitical conflicts. Gaza has endured repeated airstrikes, leaving thousands of children and families dead. Most recently, a U.S. and Israeli airstrike struck a girls' school in Minab, Iran, killing 180 young girls, who are mourned as martyrs. These children, entirely innocent, were victims of calculated aggression. This atrocity raises urgent ethical questions: How can the deaths of children ever be justified? What accountability exists for those responsible? Global organizations, humanitarian NGOs, and institutions that advocate for the rights of children must urgently focus on these tragedies. Innocent lives cannot and must not be sacrificed for political or military objectives. The world must recognize that children have no role in war, and protecting them is a moral, legal, and ethical imperative. This is a critical moment in history, and the Muslim Ummah must recognize the seriousness of the time it is living through. The suffering of Muslim countries, the loss of leaders and scientists, and the instability spreading by Israel and America, across regions are not isolated events, they are warnings that demand awareness, unity, and long-term planning. Muslim leaders must come together at one table, set aside internal disputes, and develop a shared strategy before external pressures reach even deeper into their homes and institutions because the enemies are ruling the World economies, going fast in the fields of technology and research. This is not a time for symbolic statements, but for thoughtful dialogue, coordinated policy, and moral clarity. Muslim governments must speak firmly for peace, justice, and the protection of civilian life on World Forums, and they must reject any political framework that rewards war, displacement, or domination. No person whose decisions contribute to the deaths of innocent civilians, especially children, should ever be honored in the name of peace, should not be nominated for Nobel Prize at all. Many observers and critics across the world argue that the policies and strategic positions associated with Donald Trump have actively enabled and strengthened the regional ambitions of Israel, particularly visions often described as the expansionist idea of "Greater Israel." This perception that powerful global actors are politically, diplomatically, and militarily supporting such ambitions is something the Muslim Ummah specially Arabs must examine with seriousness and realism. Whether through military alignment, diplomatic cover, or geo-

political pressure, such developments demand careful thought and a unified response. Muslim nations cannot afford denial, silence, or fragmentation while strategic regional transformations unfold around them such as Modi's alliance and recent alarming visit to Israel. Instead of blaming one another or reacting in isolation, they must develop collective awareness and shared policy grounded in sovereignty, stability, and justice. Recent history provides painful lessons that cannot be ignored. The poor conditions witnessed in Libya, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Afghanistan, Palestine, Somalia, and now Iran reveal what happens when external geopolitical interests reshape the destiny of nations. These experiences should not divide Muslim countries further they should push them toward cooperation, consultation, and mutual protection. Territories must not be used against one another, and rivalries must not weaken collective security. Islam teaches that believers are like one body, when one part suffers, the whole body feels the pain. That teaching is not symbolic; it is a reality. To conclude, the flawed initiatives of global powers, such as the Trump's "Board of Peace" which excluded Gaza's nomination and implicitly fed the agenda of Greater Israel, reveal the urgent need for independent moral clarity and decisive action. The assassination of Syed Ali Khamenei by Israel and the United States, intended to weaken Iran, has instead highlighted the resilience and unity of the Iranian people. Iran, with its deep-rooted civilization and rich history, has demonstrated that courage, faith, and moral principles, not blind adherence to biased international systems must guide action. Far from provoking collapse, this act has strengthened the solidarity of the Iranian community, uniting them more than ever against external interference. The Muslim Ummah must seize this moment to come together, protect its children, honor the sacrifices of its leaders, and ensure that justice, faith, and moral responsibility remain the foundation of collective action. By embracing courage, unity, and unwavering principles, Muslims can rise as a powerful, unified force capable of confronting oppression, safeguarding the innocent, and asserting their rightful place as defenders of justice in the world. The blood of Syed Ali Khamenei will one day surely bear fruit, and Islam will shine across the globe until the arrival of the Imam Mehdi AS and Hazrat Issa AS as said by the last messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad SAW.

Briefs

'Over 127mln benefiting from digital banking'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on Tuesday, was apprised that the number of individuals benefiting from digital banking in the country exceeded to 127 million. The prime minister commended the economic team and the State Bank of Pakistan for shifting salaries, pensions and vendor payments by the federal and provincial governments to the 'Raast' digital payment system. The prime minister chaired a review meeting on the promotion of cashless economy in the country. During the meeting, it was apprised that from a period of July 2025 to January 2026, payments amounting to worth Rs 1.6 trillion were made through Raast by the federal and provincial governments. The prime minister appreciated the ministry of finance team for the achievement. The meeting was attended by Ministers Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahad Khan Cheema, Attaullah Tarar, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Ali Pervaiz Malik, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, Governor State Bank Jameel Ahmad, provincial chief secretaries and other senior officials, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The prime minister also appreciated Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) team for provision of financial assistance to 71 percent of eligible beneficiaries so far under the PM's Ramazan Relief Package. The meeting was further informed that in last year, 24 percent of beneficiaries had received the amount by the 12th day of Ramazan, whereas this year, due to timely measures taken on the prime minister's special instructions, the distribution ratio has surpassed 71 percent.

UAE, Qatar reject reports of defence capabilities

NEWS DESK

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates and Qatar have rejected media reporting on their defensive capabilities, describing the claims as inaccurate and misleading. In a statement, the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the report did not reflect the country's level of preparedness, technological sophistication or operational readiness. It said the UAE operates diverse, integrated and multi-layered air defense systems capable of countering a full spectrum of aerial threats, including long, medium and short-range systems that provide comprehensive protection of national airspace. The ministry also said the country maintains a robust strategic stockpile of munitions to ensure sustained interception and response capacity over extended periods. It reaffirmed that the UAE's defense capabilities and national security framework remain "steadfast and uncompromised," stressing that the safety of citizens, residents and visitors remains a top priority. In a separate statement, Qatar's International Media Office denied a Bloomberg report claiming the country's stockpile of Patriot interceptor missiles had been depleted.

'Zionist agenda' War on Iran aims to bring Israel's influence to Pak border

Defence minister warns coordinated regional agenda seeks to isolate Pakistan and weaken sovereignty

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Tuesday said the war imposed on Iran, despite Tehran's readiness for an agreement, was part of a wider "Zionist agenda" aimed at extending Israel's influence up to Pakistan's borders and surrounding the country with hostile forces. "It is necessary for all 250 million Pakistanis, regardless of their political or religious affiliations, to understand this conspiracy and the intentions of our eternal enemies," the minister said in a post on X. The Middle East conflict expanded with no end in sight, with Israel attacking Iran and Tehran firing missiles and drones at the "US interests and bases" across the Gulf states. During the four-day conflict, a number of Iranian senior leaders, including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, embraced martyrdom in the "unprovoked and unwarranted" airstrikes by Israel and the United States. Iranian officials warned that Khamenei's martyrdom would mark a turning point, with the Revolutionary Guard vowing retaliation and declaring that "this great crime will not go unpunished." Meanwhile, the defence minister – in today's statement – called Zionism a threat to humanity, saying that from the establishment of Israel on the land of Palestine to the present day, every catastrophe faced by the Islamic world and every war imposed on it carried the direct

or indirect role of Zionist ideology and the Israeli state. He said Zionism had controlled the world's economic system for a century and that major global powers were effectively being held hostage by it. Referring to Pakistan's strategic strength, Asif said the country was a nuclear power and, by the grace and help of Allah, the might of its armed forces was recognised across the world. He said the nation was indebted to its "martyrs and ghazis" for safeguarding Pakistan's sovereignty and prayed for Allah's blessings on all those who contributed to making the country a nuclear power. He paid tribute to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, saying his courage in conducting the nuclear tests had demonstrated to the world that Pakistan was a nuclear-armed state. Asif said that although Iran was prepared for an agreement, war had been imposed on it and that the agenda behind the conflict, orchestrated by the Zionists, included pushing Israel's influence right up to Pakistan's border. He warned that a single, coordinated agenda involving Afghanistan, Iran and India would then be directed against Pakistan, resulting in hostility towards the country, insecure borders, encirclement by enemies on all sides and the risk of Pakistan being reduced to a vassal state. He prayed for unity in the Islamic world and for the ability to recognise its enemies, called for the freedom of Palestine, and said he hoped Pakistan would remain strong and safe until the Day of Judgment. He also prayed that the protectors of the country's soil remain under Allah's protection and that the Almighty be their helper and supporter.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Sindh Kamran Tesori offering fateha for the departed soul of Ali Khamenei, Supreme Leader of Iran, who was assassinated by US. – DNA

IMF expresses satisfaction with Pakistan's progress

Washington-based lender highlights downside risks faced by Pakistan on medium-term basis

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: As uncertainty regarding peace and security unfolds in the region, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) review team returned from the federal capital after expressing satisfaction with Pakistan's progress so far. However, they also highlighted the downside risks that Pakistan faces on a medium-term basis. The review mission convened a plenary session with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and his economic team on Monday morning. It was decided that

further negotiations would proceed online from Turkey. In a meeting with the Pakistani delegation on Friday, it was emphasised that without the continuation of structural reforms, Pakistan's growth trajectory cannot be sustained. This was the essence of the discussions between the two sides before the IMF review team departed from Islamabad for Turkey, where they will continue holding virtual talks. This reporter had contacted the IMF last Saturday to inquire whether the review mission would complete its ongoing discussions in Islamabad on Monday. The IMF officials had responded that, at that stage, the mission would continue as planned.

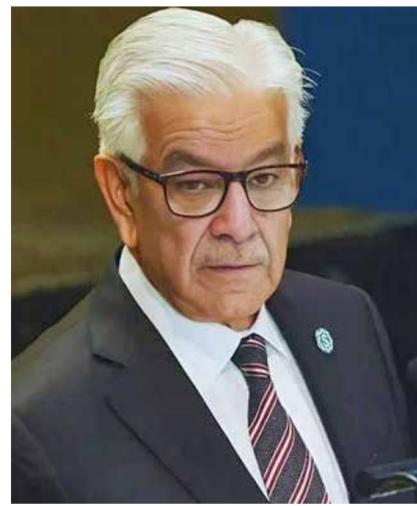
PSX rebounds as market recovers over 5,000 points

"Today's rise reflects a technical rebound, with value hunters stepping in," says analyst

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) rebounded on Tuesday, gaining more than 5,000 points after a sharp correction, following losses exceeding 16,000 points triggered by escalating Middle East tensions. The benchmark KSE-100 Index settled at 157,132.09 points, up 5,159.10 points, or 3.39%. During the session, the index rose to an intraday high

of 158,217.01, gaining 6,244.02 points, or 4.11%, and receded to a low of 151,258.85, down 714.14 points, or -0.47%. The benchmark was trading higher after Monday's historic plunge, when the index closed at 151,972.99, down 16,089.17 points, or -9.57%, in its biggest ever one-day fall. "Market is rebounding as it had declined significantly yesterday [due to a correction]," Samiullah Tariq, Head of Research at Pak-Kuwait Investment Company, told Geo. tv. Topline Securities' Maz Mulla told Geo. tv that after yesterday's panic-driven slide – fueled largely by mutual fund selling and ranking among the worst-performing global indices – a pullback was always on the cards.



Ishaq Dar, Azerbaijan FM talk on phone

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Tuesday spoke with Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov to discuss current regional developments. "Both leaders emphasized the importance of peace and stability in the Middle East and agreed to stay closely engaged on the evolving developments," the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. Massive crowds have gathered in the southern Iranian city of Minab to mourn the deaths of at least 168 children and 14 teachers killed in the US-Israeli attack on a girls' elementary school on Saturday, according to state media.

Thousands gather for school children funeral

DNA

TEHRAN: Some mourners held pictures of the children killed – some as young as 7 – a stark reminder of the human tragedy at the heart of this escalating conflict. While few details have emerged about those killed in the strikes in Iran, at least 780 people have been killed across 153 counties, according to the Iranian Red Crescent. Video and imagery from the funeral showed crowds of mourners reciting prayers around small coffins draped in the Iranian flag. On Monday, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi accused the US and Israel of killing the children in a post to X, which was accompanied by an image of freshly dug graves. "These are graves being dug for more than 160 innocent young girls who were killed in the US-Israeli bombing of a primary school. Their bodies were torn to shreds," Araghchi said. Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Mark Rubio told reporters Monday that the US "would not deliberately target a school." "The Department of War would be investigating that if that was our strike, and I would refer your question to them," he said. It comes as Israel continues to escalate its strikes in Iran, with imagery emerging Tuesday from Tehran of residential blocks turned into rubble.

Govt mulls options to tackle impending gas crisis

Authorities considering turning to Socar Trading Company to source 200–250 MMcf/d of LNG if consumption rises

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's energy authorities are exploring options to manage a potential gas shortfall after QatarEnergy halted LNG production following missile attacks from Iran and disruptions to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. It indicates how deeply Pakistan relies on imported LNG to meet domestic fuel needs, forcing officials to pivot quickly towards alternatives such as restoring curtailed local gas output and seeking new supply channels. The disruption in Qatar's output, combined with tighter tanker movements near Hormuz, has rattled global markets and revealed Pakistan's vulnerability to external shocks in energy supply – with policymakers now racing to prevent shortages, manage pipeline pressures, and secure reliable LNG deliveries for the months ahead. Officials say Pakistan will immediately restore 350 MMcf/d of curtailed local gas, previously reduced to manage line-pack pressure, and may boost domestic oil and gas production to meet demand. Authorities are also considering turning to Socar Trading Company to source 200–250 MMcf/d of LNG if consumption rises. They said that within days, the authorities will work out the plan to this effect. Under normal arrangements, Pakistan imports nine LNG cargoes per month from Qatar under two long-term agreements, plus one cargo per month from ENL. Earlier, Islamabad persuaded Qatar to divert two LNG cargoes per month in 2026, while the ENL cargo was also redirected to the LNG market, as domestic consumption was estimated to drop by about 300 MMcf/d.

NIFTYSPHERE

INSTITUTE OF ARTS & DESIGN



His Excellency Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, visited Niftysphere Institute of Arts & Design. During his visit, he toured various departments of the institute, interacted with students, and appreciated their creative work and dedication.

H.E. Khazar Farhadov encouraged the students to continue pursuing excellence in arts and design and expressed his admiration for the institute's efforts in promoting creative education. He also assured his support for future collaboration and cultural exchange initiatives between Azerbaijan and Pakistan, strengthening bilateral ties through education and the arts.



His Excellency Fred Seneviratne (Rtd.), High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, visited Niftysphere Institute of Arts & Design for an official tour and interaction session.

During his visit, H.E. Rear Admiral Fred Seneviratne toured the institute's key departments, including Fashion Designing, Textile Design, Photography, Interior Designing, and Fine Arts. He met with faculty members and students, observed ongoing projects, and appreciated the creative talent and professional standards maintained by the institute.

A representative from the Embassy of Belarus in Pakistan visited Niftysphere Institute of Arts & Design to conduct a specialized workshop for students of the Textile Department. The visiting expert, who specializes in crochet techniques, delivered an engaging and hands-on crochet workshop, introducing students to a variety of intricate patterns and modern methods. She also shared valuable insights into the rich cultural heritage of Belarus, highlighting traditional crafts and artistic practices. The interactive session greatly enhanced the students' technical skills and broadened their understanding of international textile art traditions. The workshop provided an excellent platform for cultural exchange and creative learning.



France deploys jets over UAE to protect its military bases

NEWS DESK

PARIS: France has deployed Rafale fighter jets over the United Arab Emirates to protect its naval and air bases against Iranian attacks, Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said on Tuesday. France has hundreds of navy, air force and army personnel based in the UAE. Its Rafale aircraft are stationed at Al-Dhafra base near Abu Dhabi. "These Rafales and their pilots are mobilized to ensure the security of our facilities," Barrot told broadcaster BFMTV in response to a question on French action in the UAE over the weekend to neutralize Iranian drones. "They have carried out operations to secure the airspace above our bases." On Sunday, "a hangar at a French base in the United Arab Emirates was hit by a drone," Barrot said. "Exchanges are multiplying to determine both how the

country can defend itself against future attacks and how France can protect its interests there," he added. France's Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier was however in the North Atlantic, as part of a previously planned multinational exercise, Barrot said, after he was asked if it had been sent to the Mediterranean. To the best of his knowledge, it had not changed course, he said. The United States and Israel launched attacks against Iran on Saturday, killing Iranian supreme leader Ali Khamenei. Iran has responded by targeting US allies in the Gulf region. Debris from a drone interception caused a fire that was contained at an oil industry zone in the Fujairah emirate on Tuesday, authorities said. In Abu Dhabi, a drone struck a fuel tank terminal on Monday, causing a fire though operations were not impacted. Tech giant Amazon said late on Monday that two of its data centers in the UAE were "directly struck" by drones, disrupting cloud services in parts of the Middle East.