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Tragedy in Quetta

At least 14 martyred in train blast

Media reports said the shuttle train was heading from Quetta Cantonment to the railway station when it was targeted near Chaman Phatak shortly after 8am

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: A blast targeting a train martyred at least 14 people on Sunday in province of Balochistan, according to foreign media. Media reports said the shuttle train was heading from Quetta Cantonment to the railway station when it was targeted near Chaman Phatak shortly after 8am. The nature of the explosion could not be immediately ascertained. In a statement, Shahid Rind, an aide to the chief minister on media and political affairs, said the "number of martyrs" in the blast has reached 24. These included three personnel of the Frontier Corps, he added. "Multiple people" were injured in the blast, including women and children, who were taken to a hospital, Rind said. Pakistan Railways said rescue trucks and a relief train were dispatched to the site to assist in emergency operations. The explosion derailed three coaches, including the locomotive, while two coaches overturned. Security forces immediately cordoned off

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27 outlaws killed in Bannu, Waziristan Ops

BUREAU REPORT

BANNU: A joint operation conducted by the Pakistan Army, police and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in the Miryan area of Bannu resulted in the killing of 16 militants, including two key commanders linked to Fitna al-Khawarij, security sources said on Sunday. According to security officials, the operation was launched on intelligence reports regarding the presence of terrorists in the area. During the intense operation carried out a day earlier, security forces successfully eliminated 16 militants and destroyed several hideouts used by the terrorists. Among those killed were key militant commanders identified as Zamri Noor, accused of spreading fear and terror in the region, and Afghan mil-

itant commander Abdullah Saeed, security sources added.

The operation involved personnel from the Pakistan Army, CTD and police, who carried out coordinated action against the militants' strongholds. Two police personnel embraced martyrdom during the exchange of fire, officials confirmed.

Security sources stated that operations against terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Khawarij are continuing with full intensity across the region, with security agencies determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism. Meanwhile, In continuation of series of intelligence based operations, in last forty eight hours Security Forces engaged multiple Khwarijs' locations in general area Datta Khel, North Waziristan District. Following intense and fierce

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Opening of Somaliland embassy in Jerusalem condemned

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Arab Republic of Egypt, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Lebanese Republic, the Republic of Türkiye, the Republic of Indonesia, the Republic of Djibouti, the Federal Republic of Somalia, the State of Palestine, the Sultanate of Oman, the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of Yemen condemn in the strongest terms the illegal and unacceptable step taken by the so-called

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Greece to buy two Italian frigates

DNA

ATHENS: Greece will buy two Italian Bergamini frigates "to reinforce its naval capabilities," Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said on Sunday, as the NATO member ramps up defense spending. Besides the two new ships, Greece's foreign affairs and defense council has approved the modernization of the country's existing German-made ThyssenKrupp MEKO frigates and an update to the armed forces' encryption software, Mitsotakis added. The purchases have to be rubber-stamped by the Greek parliament, where the conservative

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India voices concern over US visas

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: India voiced concern on Sunday over a US visa crackdown, striking a rare critical note even as it expressed broad alignment with Secretary of State Marco Rubio on other fractious issues. Paying his first visit to India, Rubio said the two democracies were on the same page on all major issues, brushing aside recent unease in New Delhi over trade, China and the Iran war. India's foreign minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar agreed that the two countries had a "convergence of national interests in many areas" but publicly took Rubio to

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BEIJING Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif being received by Mr. Huang Runqiu, Minister of Environment & Ecology of China at Beijing Capital International Airport on 24 May 2026. - DNA

PM invites Chinese firms to relocate industries to Pak

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif says Pakistan seeks investment, expertise instead of loans and aid

DNA

BEIJING: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday invited Chinese companies and entrepreneurs to relocate their industries and businesses to Pakistan, enter into joint ventures with the local firms, and benefit from the country's investor-friendly policies, describing the initiative as a "win-win model" for both nations. Addressing the Pakistan-China B2B Investment Conference on IT and Telecom, battery energy storage systems (BESS) and agriculture in Hangzhou, China, the prime minister said that labour in China today had become pretty expensive and that China was obviously moving towards a very high level of industrialisation. He observed that the industry where China was no longer competitive because of expensive labour could come to Pakistan, bring in plant and machinery, enter into joint ventures with Pakistani entrepreneurs,

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Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif arrives in Beijing

DNA

BEIJING: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif arrived in Beijing today after concluding his official programme in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. Mr. Huang Runqiu, Minister of Environment & Ecology of China received the Prime Minister at the Beijing Capital International Airport. In Hangzhou, the Prime Minister chaired the opening ceremony of the third Pakistan-China B2B Investment Conference, focused on charging infrastructure, battery energy storage and solar technologies, and pharmaceuticals.

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Briefs

Gaza hospital says child among three killed strike

DNA

PRE-DAWN Israeli air-strike killed three members of a Palestinian family, including a one-year-old child, in central Gaza on Sunday, a hospital said. Gaza remains gripped with daily violence despite a formal ceasefire in place since October, with both the Israeli military and Hamas accusing one another of violating the truce. Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in Deir el-Balah said it had received the bodies of a couple and their infant after an Israeli strike hit a residential apartment in the Al-Nuseirat camp before dawn. The hospital said around 10 people were wounded. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military about the three deaths, though it said it had struck three Hamas weapons storage facilities in central Gaza over the preceding 24 hours.

Heatstroke kills 16 in India

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: At least 16 people have died of heatstroke in southern India so far this summer, officials said on Sunday, as a heat-wave grips swathes of the country following official health warnings. India is no stranger to scorching summers but years of scientific research have found climate change is causing heatwaves to become longer, more frequent and more intense. Temperatures in several cities across the country of 1.4 billion people have recently hovered well above 45 degrees Celsius. The deaths were reported in the southern state of Telangana, with revenue minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy calling for "statewide vigilance" to safeguard public health.

Tehran shoots down Israeli drone

Iran denies agreeing to hand over enriched Uranium stockpile

However, Iranian officials reportedly acknowledged that talks with Washington had made significant progress and that a broader deal was "almost done," amid ongoing diplomatic efforts to ease tensions in the region

NEWS DESK / DNA

TEHRAN: Iran has not agreed to hand over its stockpile of highly enriched uranium despite reports suggesting progress in negotiations with the United States, a senior Iranian source told Reuters on Sunday. According to the source, Tehran's nuclear programme was not included in the preliminary understanding currently being discussed between Iran and the United States. The official said issues related to uranium enrichment and stockpiles would be addressed in future negotiations aimed at reaching a final agreement. "The nuclear issue will be addressed in negotiations for a final agreement and is

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American blockage to continue, says Trump

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has said the American blockade on Iran will remain "in full force" until a final agreement is reached, while signaling optimism that ongoing negotiations could eventually lead to a broader regional settlement, including the possible inclusion of Iran in

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Donald Trump fires Tulsi over Pakistan ICBM remarks

OPINION

QAMAR BASHIR

NEW YORK: The resignation of Tulsi Gabbard as Director of National Intelligence has triggered far more than a domestic political debate in Washington. What initially appeared to be a personnel change linked to family circumstances rapidly evolved into a geopolitical controversy involving Pakistan, Iran, Israel, India, and the future of Middle Eastern diplomacy. The international media, intelligence circles, and diplomatic observers increasingly point toward deeper tensions connected to Pakistan's growing strategic role in global mediation and controversy surrounding statements attributed to Gabbard regarding Pakistan's missile capabilities. The controversy erupted after narratives began circulating that Pakistan's missile development could potentially evolve into a broader intercontinental threat. Pakistani strategic experts immediately rejected the suggestion, arguing that Pakistan's missile doctrine has remained India-centric since its inception. Unlike global military powers that pursue worldwide force projection, Pakistan's nuclear and missile architecture was built as a deterrent against India's conventional and nuclear superiority. For decades, Pakistan has deliberately calibrated its missile ranges to avoid threatening the continental United States or distant Western interests. Islamabad's doctrine of "minimum credible deterrence" has consistently em-

phasized strategic balance in South Asia rather than global confrontation. Pakistani analysts argue that any attempt to portray Islamabad as a danger to the United States, Israel, or the Middle East deliberately distorts both historical facts and Pakistan's declared policy framework. This controversy, however, did not emerge in isolation. Over the last several years, Israeli leadership and influential pro-Israel voices in Washington have increasingly portrayed Pakistan and Turkey as long-term strategic threats to Israel's regional dominance. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and several members of Israel's strategic establishment have repeatedly warned about the emergence of powerful Muslim states capable of challenging Israeli military superiority and political influence in the region. Pakistan, as the only Muslim nuclear power, naturally occupies a central place in these calculations. Recent remarks by Senator Lindsey Graham intensified these suspicions. Graham publicly questioned Pakistan's neutrality during the ongoing U.S.-Iran mediation process and raised concerns regarding reports that Iranian military aircraft may have received logistical or emergency support inside Pakistani territory during periods of regional escalation. Though no verified evidence publicly confirmed such claims, the remarks contributed to a growing narrative within sections of the American political establishment that Pakistan was tilting toward Iran rather than serving as a fair mediator. Pakistani officials and independent observers strongly rejected those allegations.

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CM Murad orders expediting projects

Shah ordered the immediate activation of the e-challan system, strict implementation of the 100 km per hour speed limit and seat-belt laws, and warned that wrong-way driving would not be tolerated

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, during his fifth consecutive field visit to key infrastructure projects in the city, inspected the BRT Red Line mixed-traffic corridor, the under-construction Azeempura Flyover, and the newly inaugurated Shahrah-e-Bhutto. After Shahrah-e-Bhutto, he said, "We are going to inaugurate the Azeempura Flyover on June 15," expressed satisfaction with the visible progress on the Red Line works, set a June 15 deadline to open the Azeempura Flyover to traffic, and ordered round-the-clock police patrolling, a ban on motorcycles, and the activation of an e-challan system on Shahrah-e-Bhutto to ensure safety and discipline. Senior Minister Sharjeel Memon and Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab accompanied the chief minister. At the sites, Commissioner Karachi Hassan Naqvi, Additional IG Karachi Azad Khan, Secretary Transport Asad Zamin, Commander FWO Karachi Brigadier Adnan, CEO TransKarachi Zubair Channa, CEO Water Board Ahmad Siddiqui, and other concerned officers and engineers were present. At the Azeempura Flyover site, Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah was briefed by Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab on the ongoing work and overall progress of the project. The

CM directed the mayor to complete the flyover within 100 days and open it for traffic by June 15. During the visit, Mayor Murtaza Wahab drove the chief minister across the under-construction structure for an on-site inspection. "We will inaugurate the Azeempura Flyover on June 15 and open it for the public," the chief minister said. He instructed the project director to further accelerate work while ensuring high construction standards and minimum inconvenience to citizens. The Azeempura Flyover is expected to significantly ease traffic congestion and improve connectivity from Azeempura to the Malir Halt-Korangi Road corridor, reducing pressure on Shahrah-e-Faisal and adjoining roads. CM Murad Shah also visited Shahrah-e-Bhutto to review security and traffic management arrangements on the newly inaugurated corridor. He held a meeting with senior police officers led by Additional IG Karachi Azad Khan at Shah Faisal Toll Plaza, where the Adl IG briefed him on security measures and ongoing operations. The chief minister directed the Additional IG Karachi to ensure 24/7 effective police patrolling, establish police check posts at every interchange, and strictly enforce the ban on motorcycles entering Shahrah-e-Bhutto. Shah further ordered the immediate activation of the e-challan system, strict implementation of the 100 km per hour speed limit and seat-belt laws, and warned that wrong-way driving would

not be tolerated. "Public safety and traffic discipline remain our top priority," said CM Murad Ali Shah. Earlier, the Sindh chief minister conducted his fifth consecutive visit to the KBRT Red Line project and expressed satisfaction over the visible progress achieved on the mixed traffic corridor and drainage works, noting that continuous monitoring by the government was producing tangible on-ground results. The chief minister started his inspection from Dawood University Globe Roundabout and travelled up to Safooran Chowangi, reviewing ongoing construction activities, traffic management arrangements, utility relocation and drainage infrastructure being executed under different sections of the project. During the visit, Transport Minister Sharjeel Memon and CEO TransKarachi Zubair Channa briefed the chief minister in detail on the progress achieved on Lot-2 of the KBRT Red Line project from Numaish to Mosamiyat. Transport Minister Sharjeel Memon told the chief minister that major works were underway simultaneously on mixed traffic lanes, delineator walls, drainage systems and utility relocation. So far, 1,950 metres of mixed traffic lane asphalt binder, 2,320 metres of subgrade and aggregate base, 1,024 metres of 600mm pipe drain, and substantial delineator and box drain works have been completed.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance & Revenue, Bilal Azhar Kayani met with a delegation of the Central Organization of All Pakistan Traders, led by Kashif Chaudhry, to discuss trader-friendly budget proposals and tax reforms.

2 suspects for harassment held

LAHORE: The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) Punjab has arrested two suspects allegedly involved in harassing women, blackmailing them and spreading explicit content during separate operations in Lahore and Gujranwala. The operations were conducted on the directions of NCCIA Punjab Director Muhammad Ali Waseem, who said strict action against individuals involved in cyber harassment and blackmail targeting women would continue without discrimination. According to a spokesperson, NCCIA Lahore registered FIR No. 113/2026 and arrested suspect Syed Hamza Iqbal, a resident of Urdu Bazaar, Lahore. The accused allegedly used WhatsApp to send objectionable material related to the victim to her relatives and misused social media platforms to harass her. During the raid, officials recovered two mobile phones, a WhatsApp account and objectionable material. The case was registered under Sections 20 and 21 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016, amended in 2025. Investigation Officer Najam Ashraf Bajwa is conducting further inquiry. In another operation, NCCIA Gujranwala arrested suspect Ejaz Malik in connection with FIR No. 36/2026. Investigators said the accused allegedly lured the victim with a promise of marriage, obtained her private photos and videos and later blackmailed her while pressuring her to separate from her husband.—APP

Rapid population growth devouring fruits of development

LAHORE: Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Coordinator Saif ur Rehman has cautioned that Pakistan's unchecked population growth is rapidly devouring the fruits of development and posing a serious threat to the country's economic and social stability. Talking to a delegation of entrepreneurs led by Ms Sitara Arif, President Pakistan-Japan Socio Economic Association (PJSEA) here on Sunday, he said that with limited resources and rising demands, the ever increasing pressure on food supplies, healthcare, education, housing, and employment opportunities. Despite various

development initiatives, he cited, the benefits fail to reach the common man because the population is expanding at a much faster pace than national resources and infrastructure. He warned that if immediate and effective measures are not taken, the population explosion may emerge as a dangerous social bomb in the near future. Poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and scarcity of basic facilities are already creating frustration among the youth, which may lead to social unrest and rising crime rates. Rapid urbanization without planning is also causing environmental degradation and burdening major cities, he added. Leader of the delegation Ms Sitara Arif said Pakistan urgently needs a comprehensive population control strategy based on public awareness, education, and easy access to family planning services. On this occasion, Murasaki Japanese Languages School's CEO Usman Akhtar said that religious scholars, civil society and media must play a collective role in promoting responsible parenthood. He added, controlling population growth is essential not only for sustainable development but also for ensuring a prosperous, peaceful and stable future for coming generations.—APP

26 criminals put behind bars, drugs seized

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police arrested 26 accused involved in various criminal activities during ongoing crackdown operations in different areas of the federal capital. An official told on Sunday that police teams recovered 530 grams of hashish, 1,590 grams of heroin, 341 grams of Ice, 10 bottles of liquor, one gun and five pistols along with ammunition from the possession of the arrested accused. He said cases had been registered against the accused while further investigations were underway. The official said police teams also arrested 14 proclaimed offenders and absconders during a special campaign launched against wanted criminals. SSP Operations Qazi Ali Raza said Islamabad Police remained fully committed to protecting the lives and property of citizens and no criminal element would be allowed to disturb public peace. He said ensuring peace and security of residents remained the top priority of Islamabad Police. Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) checked over 11,500 motorcyclists, impounded 4,181 motorcycles and took legal action against more than 8,000 riders during a city-wide enforcement campaign against traffic violations in the federal capital. An ITP official told on Sunday that cases were also registered against 269 riders involved in serious violations during the special drive launched at the directions of Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Islamabad Muhammad Sarfraz Virk. The official said the campaign mainly targeted lane violations, one-wheeling, riding without helmets and reckless driving to improve road safety and traffic discipline in the city. CTO Virk said such violations not only caused accidents but also posed serious threats to the lives and property of citizens.—APP

Pakistan weather radar to bring all areas under coverage

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is expanding and upgrading its weather radar network to bring almost the entire country under radar coverage. Speaking to Wealth Pakistan, a spokesman for the Pakistan Meteorological Department said the PMD is adopting modern radar technology to monitor severe weather events, including floods, thunderstorms, heavy rainfall and sea storms, enabling forecasters to issue timely alerts and help protect lives and property, said a press release. The spokesman said the department currently operates advanced radar systems in Islamabad, Karachi, Mardan and Sialkot, while a new radar is being installed in Multan with support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency. He said that once the upcoming projects are completed, nearly all major regions of Pakistan would fall within radar coverage, significantly enhancing the country's numerical weather prediction models and disaster preparedness capacity. Explaining the sys-

tem, he said the 13-storey radar towers at the PMD headquarters in Islamabad and Karachi have already been built with Japanese financial assistance. The S-band solid-state radars installed there can monitor weather activity within a radius of around 450 kilometres. According to him, the radars provide real-time information on rainfall intensity, cloud formation, wind speed, wind direction and storm movement. He said the radar system updates weather data every 10 minutes, allowing forecasters to closely track developing weather systems and issue alerts every few hours. "A radar acts as a nowcasting tool," he said, adding that it is widely used for flood forecasting, rainfall estimation and monitoring runoff in dams and river catchments. The PMD spokesman said Pakistan's radar network includes S-band, C-band and X-band systems, each selected according to topography and weather requirements. For example, the Islamabad and Karachi radars are S-band

systems with coverage of up to 450 kilometres, while the X-band radar in Mardan covers around 120 kilometres and is used mainly for valley observations. The C-band radar in Sialkot, which covers about 350 kilometres, plays a key role in tracking monsoon systems entering from the Indian catchment areas. He said that the Karachi radar is particularly important for monitoring sea-based weather activity and tropical storm systems over the Arabian Sea. The spokesman said the department earlier had only five radar systems, many of which had become outdated. The old Islamabad radar had completed its 30-year operational life before being replaced with the latest Japanese-supported system. Highlighting the importance of radar technology, he said rain gauges alone cannot provide widespread real-time weather information across vast regions, whereas modern radar systems can monitor weather activity over hundreds of kilometres instantly.—APP

India faces diplomatic setback after Int'l Court ruling on IWT

PESHAWAR: India has suffered a major diplomatic and legal setback following a historic ruling by the International Court of Arbitration in The Hague on the historic Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) and the stance of Pakistan. The International Court of Arbitration, in its award on the interpretation of the treaty, ruled that India must "let flow" the waters of the western rivers for Pakistan's unrestricted use and cannot suspend or hold the treaty in abeyance unilaterally. Professor Dr. A.H. Hilali, former Chairman, Political Science Department at University of Peshawar, told APP on Sunday that India has lost all grounds after the landmark ruling of the court of arbitration. He said that no justification was left with New Delhi after the International Court of Arbitration award. He said the court ruled that any exceptions related to hydroelectric power generation must strictly comply with the provisions of the treaty rather than India's preferred best practices approach. "The ruling endorsed Pakistan's interpretation regarding low-level outlets, gated spillways, turbine intakes, and free-board requirements. It also restricted India from maximizing pondage volume in hydroelectric projects on the western rivers." Importantly, the court observed that awards issued by the Court of Arbitration are final and binding on both Pakistan and India, carrying legal authority over future proceedings involving neutral experts or arbitration mechanisms under the historic treaty signed by President Ayub Khan and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1960 guaranteed by World Bank. Recognizing Pakistan's status as the downstream riparian state, he said the court emphasized that the treaty's objective is to clearly define the rights and obligations of both countries while promoting cooperation and effective dispute resolution. The ruling assumes added significance after India's recent announcement to hold the treaty in abeyance and its earlier decision to boycott arbitration proceedings. Analysts described the judgment as a strong endorsement of Pakistan's longstanding legal position and termed the ruling a turning point that will reshape future regional negotiations and international perceptions regarding the water dispute between the two nuclear-armed neighbors. They argued that the key judgment exposed weaknesses in India's legal arguments and diplomatic strategy while reinforcing the importance of international law and treaty obligations in resolving sensitive disputes. Dr Hilali said the verdict has increased pressure on New Delhi to reconsider its illogical approach and engage constructively with Pakistan through dialogue and legal mechanisms. International affairs experts also pointed out broader geopolitical implications of the ruling, saying it will affect India's credibility in future international forums, particularly on issues involving legal commitments and bilateral agreements.—DNA

Ram Pyari Mahal museum reopened

RIMSHA FIAZ

On 18 May, I had the opportunity to visit the historic Ram Pyari Mahal Museum in Gujrat. The museum had recently reopened after remaining closed for almost a year. During this period, restoration, renovation, and beautification work had been carried out to preserve the historical building and revive its old charm. During the visit, Punjab Auqaf Secretary Dr. Ehsan Bhutta, Gujrat Additional Deputy Commissioner Waqas Saifdar, Assistant Commissioner Gujrat Abdul Qadeer Zarkoon, and Founder of Farooq Riaz Museum also visit. They reviewed the restoration and preservation work being carried out at Ram Pyari Mahal Museum and appreciated the efforts made to conserve this important historical and cultural heritage site. As I entered the museum, I observed a peaceful and graceful atmosphere in its galleries. The curator, Ms. Shah Bano, warmly welcomed the visitors and shared valuable information about the museum. Some staff members were arranging historical records and artifacts, while others were guiding visitors and explaining the significance of the collections. On the other hand, Mr. Farooq Riaz, unconcerned with reward or praise, appeared as a true artist and passionate preserver of history. He further enhanced the beauty of

the day by bringing valuable antiques and artifacts from his personal museum collection. His contribution added a unique charm to the environment, making the atmosphere lively and culturally rich. Many sections of the museum, decorated with Farooq Riaz's antiques, appeared like silent windows into the past. Each artifact seemed to tell a story of history, culture, and heritage, allowing visitors to connect deeply with the traditions and civilization of earlier times. The museum building itself reflects the rich cultural and architectural heritage of Gujrat. The galleries, rooms, and historical objects displayed inside the museum present an important

picture of the region's history and civilization. The restoration work has helped preserve the historical beauty of the site in a remarkable way. During my visit, I appreciated the efforts of the museum administration, especially the dedication of the curator and staff, who worked sincerely to restore and maintain this historical place. Their commitment has made the museum more attractive and informative for visitors, students, and researchers. In conclusion, my visit to Ram Pyari Mahal Museum was both informative and memorable. The museum stands as an important symbol of Gujrat's cultural heritage and historical identity.



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MAY

May 03/Poland National Day
May 06/Bulgaria Armed Forces Day
May 06/UAE Armed Forces Day
May 07/Kazakhstan Armed Forces Day
May 08/Czech Republic National Day
May 09/European Union National Day
May 17/Norway Constitution Day
May 21/Hungary Armed Forces Day
May 22/Yemen Republic Re-unification Day(National Day)
May 24/Eritrea National Day
May 25/Lebanon Liberation and Resistance Day
May 25/Argentina National Day
May 25/Jordan Independence Day
May 28/Azerbaijan Republic Day
May 28/Ethiopia National Day
May 31/Brunei Armed Forces Day

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Bomb Disposal.....15
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RDA.....5555864
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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

Pakistan, Uzbekistan strengthen cultural ties

Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, H.E. Alisher Tukhtaev, emphasized that the two nations are bound by enduring religious, civilizational, and cultural connections

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The deep-rooted, centuries-old bilateral ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan reached a new milestone on Thursday with the official launch of two significant literary works: the Urdu-Uzbek Dictionary of Common Words and 20th Century Fictions. The prestigious launch event, held at the National Language Promotion Authority (NLPA), was organized in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan. It drew a large gathering of prominent academic, literary, and cultural figures. A Foundation Built on Shared Heritage In his welcome address, the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, H.E. Alisher Tukhtaev, emphasized that the two nations are bound by enduring religious, civilizational, and cultural connections. He noted that literary and cultural initiatives of this nature play a pivotal role in fostering mutual affection, brotherhood, and academic collaboration between the peoples of both countries. Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Division, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, commended the authors for their constructive contribution toward strengthening bilateral relations. Expressing hope for the continuity of such academic endeavors, the Minister proposed making the newly launched Uzbek dictionary available online to maximize public accessibility and convenience. Echoing these sentiments, Federal Secretary for National Heritage and Culture Division, Asad Rehman Gilani, remarked that the event was a practical manifestation of a lasting friend-



ship. He highlighted that the relationship extends beyond culture into shared historical, scientific, and civilizational foundations. Gilani also noted that the Urdu language's incorporation of diverse global words is a testament to its universality and breadth, before extending his congratulations to the authors and the NLPA. Speaking at the event, Professor Mahiya Abdul Rahmanova expressed her gratitude to Ambassador Tukhtaev and lauded the monumental effort behind the project, comparing the

rigorous process of compiling a dictionary to "digging a well with a needle." She offered her heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Tash Mirza on the completion of the work. Representing her father, author Dr. Tash Mirza Khalmirzayev, Adil Mirza expressed gratitude to the attendees. She highlighted that physical and cultural proximity have grown hand-in-hand, pointing out that the newly launched flight service from Lahore to Tashkent has significantly boosted people-to-people contacts. "It is now possible

to reach historic Samarkand and Bukhara in just two hours," she added. A Vibrant Cultural Showcase The cultural flavor of Uzbekistan was on full display throughout the venue. The hall was beautifully adorned with traditional paintings, caps, and diverse styles of Uzbek gowns. The event's moderator, Tourism Ambassador Hamid Mehbub, caught the attention of attendees by donning a striking, traditional black Uzbek gown embellished with intricate golden embroidery.

75 years of Pak-China diplomatic ties

ISLAMABAD: The Department of Pakistan Studies at the University of Mansehra organized a ceremony to commemorate the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China, highlighting the enduring friendship and growing cooperation between the two countries. Talking to Gwadar Pro, Ayesha Alam, Chairperson of the department said the students from the 6th, 7th, and 8th semesters of the department played an active role in organizing the event. Currently enrolled in a special course on Pakistan-China relations, the students showcased their enthusiasm and commitment through their participation in the ceremony. She said that the event focused on the historical significance of Pakistan-China ties and the expanding collaboration in education, research, and cultural exchanges. Speakers at the event noted that bilateral relations have grown stronger in recent years, creating new opportunities for academic and people-to-people engagement. The ceremony featured a variety of cultural performances, including national songs, speeches, and presentations celebrating the Pakistan-China friendship. The audience warmly received the students' performances and participation. At the conclusion of the event, the Department of Pakistan Studies reaffirmed its commitment to promoting academic and cultural initiatives to strengthen Pakistan-China relations.—APP

Minister urges pilgrims to maintain discipline

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousaf on Sunday urged Pakistani pilgrims to act as ambassadors of the country by maintaining exemplary conduct during Hajj and strictly adhering to the regulations set by the Saudi government. The minister, in a special video message aired on PTV News, called upon Pakistani pilgrims to demonstrate patience, unity, brotherhood, and respect for Saudi laws during Hajj while remembering Pakistan in their prayers. On behalf of the government and people of Pakistan, Yousaf extended heartfelt wishes to the pilgrims and urged them to strictly follow the in-

structions and regulations issued by the Saudi authorities. He further advised pilgrims to remain patient during the extreme heat and rush of Hajj gatherings, urging them to take special care of their health and ensure adequate water intake to avoid dehydration and exhaustion. The minister also asked pilgrims to stay in close coordination with the medical teams deployed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony for timely assistance and healthcare support during the pilgrimage. He also praised the exemplary arrangements made by the Saudi government for Hajj this year, particularly the enhanced facilities and improved services provided for the comfort and convenience of pil-

grims from around the world. The minister appreciated the Saudi authorities for their effective management, better accommodation, transportation, healthcare, and crowd-control measures, saying these efforts would help ensure a smooth and spiritually fulfilling pilgrimage experience for all worshippers. The minister concluded by praying for the smooth and safe return of all Pakistani pilgrims after the completion of Hajj, hoping they would return with a spiritually fulfilling experience and blessings. He also reiterated his expectation that the pilgrims would serve as a positive reflection of Pakistan by maintaining exemplary conduct, discipline and the true spirit of Hajj throughout their journey.

Ex-diplomat Ayaz Wazir's daughter dies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Daughter of former diplomat Ayaz Wazir, died in a traffic accident in Islamabad after her car crashed near Parade Ground Metro Station, police sources said. According to police, the vehicle lost control and crashed onto the footpath. The woman driving the car died on the spot. Police sources said the accident took place near Parade Ground Metro Station in Islamabad. The car reportedly went out of control before hitting the footpath. The deceased was later identified as Rayan Wazir, daughter of former diplomat Ayaz Wazir. According to police sources, the vehicle involved in the accident bore registration number CB 214. Police said the car is registered in the name of Ayaz Khan. Rescue personnel shifted the body to PIMS Hospital after the accident. Police have started an investigation to determine the cause of the crash.

Policy reforms can enhance Pak's global competitiveness

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood, has emphasized that comprehensive and business-friendly policy reforms are essential to improve the ease of doing business, attract investment, and put the national economy on a sustainable path of growth. Talking to a delegation of businessmen at the Chamber House here on Saturday, he stated that Pakistan possesses immense economic potential, but unnecessary regulatory hurdles, complex taxation procedures, inconsistent policies, and bureaucratic delays continue to hamper business activities and discourage investors. Sardar Tahir Mehmood stressed that the government should introduce long-term and consistent economic policies to restore the confidence of the business community. He said that simplifying tax systems, reducing the cost of doing business, digitizing government procedures, and ensuring transparency in regulatory mechanisms are the need of the hour. He particularly emphasized the need for establishing an effective "One-Window Operation" system to facilitate businesses and investors. He said that investors often face difficulties due to the involvement of multiple departments and lengthy approval procedures, which increase the cost and delay business operations. A centralized one-window facility, he added, would significantly improve efficiency, reduce red tape, and encourage both local and foreign investment. The ICCI President further said that the private sector plays a pivotal role in economic development, export enhancement, and job creation; therefore, facilitating businesses must remain a top national priority. He added that policy continuity and investor-friendly reforms would not only strengthen local industries but also help attract foreign direct investment.

Petrol pump owners demand end to weekly fuel price changes

ISLAMABAD: Petrol pump owners across Pakistan have raised concerns over the government's current weekly fuel price adjustment system, calling it financially and operationally disruptive. The issue has now been formally taken to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif through an official letter. The All Pakistan Petrol Pump Owners Association has expressed strong reservations about the existing mechanism for determining petroleum product prices on a weekly basis. According to the association, the frequent adjustments are creating serious business complications, prompting them to demand a return to the earlier 15-day pricing cycle. In this regard, Association Vice Chairman Noman Ali Butt has written a detailed letter to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.—DNA

Zafar Bakhtawri fetes Uzbek scholars

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Under the auspices of the Pakistan Cultural Forum, renowned literary, cultural, social, and business personality Zafar Bakhtawri hosted a dinner at his residence in honor of distinguished Uzbek scholars and writers Professor Tash Mirza and Professor Mukhaya Abdul Rahman. A large number of eminent personalities from literary, academic, diplomatic, cultural, and social circles attended the gathering, including Professor Fateh Muhammad Malik, Professor Dr. Saleem Mazhar, Professor Dr. Najeeba Arif, Professor Qaisra Alvi, Adil Mirza, Farman Ali, Tahir Farooq, Naeem Khan, Shahbaz Chohan, and other distinguished guests. Addressing the occasion, Zafar Bakhtawri said that he respects and admires every person who, while living in any part of the world, plays a role in promoting Pakistan, Pakistani identity, the Urdu language, and Pakistani culture and civilization. He described Professor Tash Mirza and Professor Mukhaya Abdul Rahman as his "heroes" and said that the compilation of an Urdu-Uzbek dictionary consisting of four thousand common words by Tash Mirza is a remarkable scholarly achievement and an excellent means of bringing two civilizations, two societies, and two countries closer together. He also appreciated the services of Professor Mukhaya Abdul Rahman for the promotion of Urdu at Tashkent University and her Urdu translations of Uzbek short stories. He further said that his first meeting with Professor Mukhaya Abdul Rahman took place in 1995 at an event organized by the Pakistan Academy of Letters. Zafar Bakhtawri also expressed his resolve to organize future events highlighting Mughal Emperor Zahir-ud-Din Babur and the great Uzbek national poet Alisher Navoi. In his remarks, Professor Fateh Muhammad Malik said that he now attends very few functions, but he was extremely pleased to participate in this gathering hosted by Zafar Bakhtawri in honor of his distinguished scholar and friend Tash Mirza. He paid tribute to Zafar Bakhtawri for carrying the banner of literature and culture for a long time. Professor Dr. Saleem Mazhar, Director General of the National Language Promotion Department, said that the special sitting arranged by the Pakistan Cultural Forum and Zafar Bakhtawri in honor of Tash Mirza and Mukhaya Abdul Rahman is a clear reflection of his love for Pakistan and culture. He remarked that the work which institutions should be doing is being carried out by Zafar Bakhtawri through his personal efforts. He further said that personalities associated with literature and fine arts play a vital role in bringing nations and cultures closer together. Professor Dr. Najeeba Arif, Chairperson of the Pakistan Academy of Letters, said that her first meeting with

Professor Tash Mirza was also in 1995, and today, thanks to Zafar Bakhtawri, they were able to meet again. She said that Zafar Bakhtawri's love for Urdu and Pakistan is highly commendable, and that such gatherings would further strengthen closeness, brotherhood, and cultural harmony between the two countries in the future. On behalf of the Uzbek guests, Professor Mukhaya Abdul Rahman expressed her gratitude and said that she has always taken pride in the fact that her life and scholarly journey have remained closely linked with the Urdu language. She shared that her mother enrolled her in an Urdu school instead of an English school, for which she

remains grateful to her late mother. She said that everyone in her home knows and speaks Urdu, and that guests coming from abroad are always welcomed with one sentence: "We love you." She paid rich tribute to Professor Tash Mirza for his services to the Urdu language and said that she herself is among the fortunate students who learned Urdu from him. She also described Zafar Bakhtawri as a personality who has devoted his life to the promotion of Pakistani identity and cultural harmony. At the conclusion of the event, the participants expressed their commitment to further strengthening the literary and cultural relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.



Briefs

Indian pilgrims to reach Pakistan for Jor Mela

ISLAMABAD: The schedule for the arrival of Indian Sikh pilgrims in Pakistan has been released for the religious celebrations of Jor Mela and the death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. According to the schedule, Sikh pilgrims from India will arrive in Pakistan in separate phases on June 10 and 21 to perform religious rituals at different gurdwaras. Indian Sikh pilgrims will arrive in Pakistan on June 10 to participate in Jor Mela. After their arrival, the pilgrims will travel to Janam Asthan Nankana Sahib, one of the most sacred sites for the Sikh community. The main ceremony of Jor Mela will be held on June 16 at Gurdwara Dera Sahib in Lahore. Pilgrims who arrive for Jor Mela will leave for India on June 19. A separate group of Indian Sikh pilgrims will arrive in Pakistan on June 21 to attend the death anniversary ceremonies of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. During their stay, the pilgrims will visit various gurdwaras, including Nankana Sahib. —DNA

FIA offloads passenger over fake immigration stamps

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Immigration Islamabad offloaded a passenger traveling abroad after detecting allegedly fake immigration stamps on his passport during scrutiny at Islamabad International Airport. An official told APP on Sunday that passenger Haroon ur Rashid was travelling to Malaysia through Etihad Airways flight EY-301 when he was referred for secondary profiling on suspicion. During the detailed examination, the official said allegedly fake immigration stamps of Pakistan, Thailand and Malaysia were found affixed on the passport. Following a preliminary investigation, the passenger was shifted to FIA Anti-Human Trafficking Circle (AHTC) in Islamabad for further legal action and registration of a case. The official said passports, mobile phones, foreign currency, e-visa and other travel documents were also taken into custody from the accused. According to FIA authorities, further investigation into the matter was underway.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Ambassador of Argentina and others cutting cake to celebrate the National Day of Argentina. DNA

Pakistan moves to liberalise GMO regime

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has decided to significantly liberalise its genetically modified organisms (GMO) regulatory regime by approving major amendments to the Pakistan Biosafety Rules 2005, including simplifying licensing procedures, easing imports and facilitating laboratory research in universities and the private sector. The decision was taken during a meeting of the National Biosafety Committee (NBC) held in Islamabad under the chairmanship of the secretary of the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, according to the ministry's spokesperson Mohammad Saleem Shaikh. Senior officials, including the director general of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA), technical experts and members of the biosafety regulatory framework attended the meeting. Shaikh said the amendments had been recommended for cabinet approval

and would have major implications for Pakistan's edible oil and poultry industries, which rely heavily on imported genetically modified soybean and canola for food, feed and processing purposes. One of the key changes is the removal of the "sunset clause" introduced in 2004 that permitted GMO imports only until Jan 17, 2027. Under the proposed amendments, imports of GMO grains such as soybean and canola will continue without any cut-off date. The revised rules also formally recognise new gene-editing technologies and grant greater autonomy to Institutional Biosafety Committees (IBCs) at universities and private research institutions to approve student-based laboratory research projects. According to the ministry's spokesperson, the move is aimed at promoting science-based research and reducing bureaucratic hurdles in biotechnology innova-

tion. Pakistan's biosafety regime currently functions through a multi-tier committee system designed to ensure compliance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. Officials said the amendments seek to streamline the structure and decision-making powers of these committees to ensure faster approvals and minimise delays. Another major reform relates to the licensing process for GMO grain imports. Under the new framework, multinational biotechnology companies will be allowed to directly apply for licences for specific GMO events. Once approved by the NBC, the licences will be published on the Pak-EPA website, enabling private importers to import approved GMO grains without obtaining separate licences. Officials at Pak-EPA said the move would help reduce the cost of doing business and encourage investment in the edible oil extraction and animal feed sectors. "Pakistan's biosafety

regime is precautionary and rigid to some extent. We are trying to make it more open, science-based and business-friendly," said Dr Muhammad Rauf, National Programme Manager of the Pakistan Biosafety Clearing House at Pak-EPA. Saleem Shaikh said the amendments reflected Pakistan's transition towards a modern and innovation-driven biosafety governance system. "These reforms are designed to balance biosafety safeguards with scientific progress, food security and investment facilitation," he said. "In a climate-stressed world facing rising food insecurity, Pakistan needs efficient and science-based regulatory systems that encourage innovation while ensuring safety and transparency," he added. Officials said Pakistan was also examining international models, particularly Canada's biosafety framework, to further modernise its regulatory system. —DNA

Pak targets 70% edible oil self-sufficiency by 2035

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has prepared a strategic plan to reduce its dependence on imported edible oil and achieve 70% self-sufficiency by 2035 through expanded local oilseed production and olive cultivation. According to the Ministry of National Food Security and Research's Year Book 2024-25, the Pakistan Oilseed Department has prepared a Strategic Development Plan to meet 70% of the country's edible oil requirement through domestic production by 2035, said a press release. The plan aims to raise annual edible oil production and import substitution to more than 4,578 million tonnes by 2035. In monetary terms, this could provide import substitution of \$7.017 billion per year. Pakistan remains heavily dependent on imported edible oil. During FY2024-25, the country imported 4,169 million tonnes of edible oil, including 0.542 million tonnes extracted from imported oilseeds. The imports were valued at Rs1,407 billion, or \$4.971 billion. In comparison, local edible oil production stood at 0.474 million tonnes during FY2024-25. Total edible oil availability from imports and local production reached 4.643 million tonnes. The Year Book said two major projects are in progress to support the sector. —APP

ICT Police joins counter-terrorism moot

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police participated in the first "National Counter Terrorism Conference" held in Karachi to discuss coordinated strategies against terrorism and strengthen inter-provincial cooperation among law enforcement agencies. An official told APP on Sunday that SSP Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Islamabad Saud Khan represented ICT Police at the conference. Inspector General of Police Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon attended the conference as chief guest, while senior police officers from Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan also participated in the event. The official said participants exchanged views on joint counterterrorism strategies, intelligence sharing and coordinated efforts to effectively combat terrorism and maintain peace across the country. The conference also reaffirmed the commitment of all law enforcement agencies to strengthen mutual cooperation for ensuring national security and lasting peace, he added. —APP

2,200 madrassah students receive technical training by NAVTTC

ISLAMABAD: The National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) has trained more than 2,200 madrassah students under the Prime Minister's Youth Skills Development Programme (PMYSDP). According to documents available with Wealth Pakistan, a total of 2,480 madrassah students were enrolled in technical and vocational training programmes across different regions of the country, while 2,219 successfully passed after completing their training, said a press release. Punjab recorded the highest number of trainees with 1,315 enrolled students, out of whom 1,255 completed the programme successfully. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stood second with 779 trainees and 610 graduates. In Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 325 students participated in the programme and 293 completed their training. Sindh registered 39 trainees, all of whom passed successfully, while Balochistan enrolled 22 students and achieved a 100 per cent completion rate as all participants graduated. The NAVTTC has significantly expanded its training outreach under the PMYSDP during recent years. The highest number of trainees was recorded in fiscal year 2024-25, when 131,417 individuals received technical training under the programme. In FY2022-23, NAVTTC trained 51,948 individuals, while 37,616 trainees benefited from the programme in FY2023-24. For FY2025-26, the number of trainees so far stands at 76,525, indicating continued progress in vocational education and skills development initiatives. The madrassah training initiative aims to integrate students from religious seminaries into the mainstream economy by providing market-driven technical and vocational education. The programme focuses on enhancing employment opportunities and promoting self-employment among youth. The initiative is part of the government's efforts to strengthen the country's skilled workforce and address unemployment through industry-oriented training programmes across Pakistan.

Eid atmosphere shines with joy

ISLAMABAD: As Eid-ul-Adha approaches, a vibrant wave of festive spirit spreads across the country, with streets, markets and neighborhoods buzzing with activity, while children are seen joyfully caring for sacrificial animals, adding warmth, color and celebration to the atmosphere everywhere. Social media videos and electronic media reports show children holding sacrificial animals, roaming around even in the heat and eagerly taking part in decorating and feeding them. Across cities, this creates a lively and energetic atmosphere, where their excitement, care and involvement bring a strong sense of joy and festive spirit to the surroundings. Fathers often express satisfaction and pride, saying that involving children helps them learn responsibility, compassion and the values behind the tradition. Street elders and community members are also seen appreciating the scene, noting that children's enthusiasm brings life to neighborhoods and strengthens community bonds during the festive days. Many of them remark that such moments remind people of earlier times when cele-

brations were more communal and closely shared among families and neighbors. The children themselves speak excitedly, saying they will not sleep in the afternoon and will continue roaming with the animals, feeding and caring for them throughout the day. Their cheerful voices and energetic involvement reflect pure excitement, as they enjoy every moment of the preparation and bonding with the animals. Ornament sellers also add that children frequently visit their stalls, eagerly buying colorful decorations and accessories to dress up their animals, which further adds to the festive buzz in markets. Youngsters and older teens are also seen sitting along streets and enjoying the lively scenes, watching children with amusement and delight. They describe how the playful energy of kids brings a refreshing atmosphere to the surroundings, making the streets more vibrant and full of life during the festive days. Overall, the situation presents a lively and colorful picture across cities, where activity, enthusiasm and cultural traditions blend together. —DNA

NUML students hold climate-health awareness drive

ISLAMABAD: Students of the Media Studies Department at National University of Modern Languages (NUML) organised an awareness campaign on the theme "Health on a Heating Planet" at Trail 5 in the Margalla Hills on Sunday in collaboration with the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board to highlight the growing impact of climate change on public health. The awareness drive was conducted as part of the BS final year students' practical media campaign project aimed at connecting academic learning with community engagement and environmental advocacy under the supervision of Dr Faiza Khalid. Students carrying banners, placards and informational posters interacted with hikers, families and visitors along the trail and spread awareness about the health risks associated with rising temperatures, heatwaves and environmental degradation. The campaign focused on issues including dehydration, heatstroke, respiratory illnesses, skin diseases, air pollution and mental stress linked to extreme weather conditions. Participants also distributed free plant saplings among visitors to encourage tree planting and promote environmentally responsible behaviour. Director of the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board Sakhawat Ali, Assistant Director Zakir Ali and Trail Supervisor Imran Khan attended the activity and appreciated the students' efforts to educate the public on climate-related health challenges and environmental

conservation. "Public awareness is the first step towards climate resilience and environmental protection. Such youth-led initiatives help educate citizens about the serious health impacts of climate change," said Sakhawat Ali while speaking to participants during the campaign. Known environmental awareness advocate Mansoor Sherwani also joined the students during the activity and encouraged visitors to play an active role in protecting natural ecosystems and promoting sustainable lifestyles. Students, including Sawaira Safeer, Zarmina and Muhammad Shariyar, said the campaign aimed to inform citizens that climate change was no longer only an environmental issue but an emerging public health challenge affecting everyday life. "People often underestimate how rising temperatures directly impact human health. Through this campaign, we wanted to encourage citizens to adopt safer and more environmentally conscious practices," the students said. The organisers said Trail 5 was selected for the campaign due to the large number of daily visitors and hikers who frequent the Margalla Hills, particularly on weekends, making it an effective location for public outreach and awareness activities. Participants noted that Pakistan remained among the countries highly vulnerable to climate change and had experienced increasingly intense summers, erratic weather patterns and frequent heatwaves in recent years. —DNA

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The Chariot of Peace: Pakistan's Noble Mediation Between Washington and Tehran

MUHAMMAD MOHSIN IQBAL

I still recall with vivid clarity the day I first watched the epic film Ben Hur on the silver screen in the 1970s. It was a monumental production that swept away eleven Oscars, yet none of its splendours left a deeper imprint upon my mind than the legendary chariot race. There, Charlton Heston, portraying the resolute hero, guided his team of four or five powerful horses harnessed together in a single chariot. They thundered across the arena in a whirlwind of dust and speed, muscles straining in perfect unison, while the cinematography captured every heart-stopping turn and surge with breathtaking beauty and intensity. It was a stirring vision of coordinated strength, where individual power merged into something far greater, capable of overcoming the most formidable obstacles.

That timeless image returned to me with fresh resonance while contemplating the intricate and high-stakes mediation between the United States and Iran. Much like the ancient charioteer who depended upon the harmonious effort of his steeds, diplomacy in our own era has shown the enduring necessity of teamwork. One may recall how the humble bullock cart of bygone days, once drawn by a single animal, gradually gave way to a pair of bullocks. When one grew weary under the burden of the journey, the other would step forward to share the load, lending fresh power and ensuring the cart moved steadily onward without faltering. In precisely this spirit, Pakistan has played a pivotal role in drawing the contending parties toward common ground, demonstrating that collective resolve can achieve what solitary effort cannot.

From the very beginning of this tense dispute, Pakistan maintained a steadfast commitment to a negotiated and honourable settlement. Under the wise and resolute leadership of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, a comprehensive diplomatic initiative was set in motion. Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir brought the weight of strategic insight and institutional strength, while Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar employed his considerable experience in international affairs to weave delicate threads of dialogue. Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, each in his sphere, worked with quiet determination to support the broader effort, ensuring that both security concerns and domestic stability



were carefully balanced. These senior figures laboured tirelessly, often behind the scenes, meeting with envoys, offering assurances, and patiently addressing grievances that had long poisoned relations. Their endeavours were warmly reinforced by friendly countries across the region, whose own interests in peace and stability aligned with Pakistan's vision. Through quiet counsel and measured encouragement, a framework of trust slowly emerged. The path was seldom easy. Deep-seated suspicions, historical grievances, and conflicting regional ambitions tested the process at every turn. Yet Pakistan's consistent message—that reason and compromise must prevail over confrontation—gradually created space for meaningful engagement. In an age when military posturing can so easily escalate into catastrophe, this persistent advocacy for dialogue stood as a beacon of prudence. God willing, these sincere and sustained efforts will soon bear their full fruit. There is growing hope that a landmark meeting will soon convene in Islamabad, the capital long renowned for its spirit of hospitality and commitment to peace. In that historic setting, representatives of the concerned nations may gather to formalise an agreement, putting an end to uncertainty and opening pathways to renewed cooperation. Such an occasion would not only mark the successful conclusion of delicate negotiations but also serve as a testament to the power of patient statesmanship. Through this mediation, Pakistan has rendered a service of immense value to the wider region and, indeed, to the entire world. By helping to avert what could have become a devastating military conflict—with all its potential for widespread suffering, refugee crises, and long-term instability—the country has acted as a responsible guardian of peace. At the same time, it has helped safeguard the global economy from a perilous blow. Energy supplies, international trade routes, and financial markets, already vulnerable to shocks, have been spared what might have proved a ruinous disruption. The world's economic vessel, buffeted by many tempests, has been steadied at a critical hour. In the grand constellation of nations, Pakistan has thus emerged as a bright and steady star. It has shown that a country facing its own challenges can still extend a hand of constructive leadership, grounded in humanity and foresight. This episode reaffirms an ancient truth: genuine strength often resides not in displays of force, but in the quiet perseverance of those willing to build bridges across divides. As the final chapters of this story unfold, one senses a measured yet genuine optimism. The chariot of peace, drawn by many willing hands, has travelled a difficult road. With continued wisdom and goodwill, it promises to reach a destination that will benefit countless millions who yearn for a more stable and harmonious world. History, it is certain, will remember Pakistan's contribution with respect and gratitude.

Pakistan's Last Push for Peace

Qamar Bashir



What makes this moment extraordinary is not merely the diplomacy itself, but the dramatic shift in geopolitical reality behind it. Only weeks ago, Washington and Tel Aviv appeared determined to continue military escalation against Iran. Today, the same United States that once spoke the language of “maximum pressure” is desperately searching for an exit strategy. Even U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio acknowledged “slight progress”

For the third time in a single week, Pakistan's military and political leadership entered Tehran carrying not weapons, but messages—messages that may determine whether the Middle East steps back from catastrophe or plunges once again into a devastating regional war. On May 22, 2026, Field Marshal Asim Munir, accompanied by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and senior officials, intensified Islamabad's mediation efforts between the United States and Iran, signaling what many now see as the final and perhaps most serious diplomatic push to preserve the fragile ceasefire that halted the U.S.-Iran war on April 8.

What makes this moment extraordinary is not merely the diplomacy itself, but the dramatic shift in geopolitical reality behind it. Only weeks ago, Washington and Tel Aviv appeared determined to continue military escalation against Iran. Today, the same United States that once spoke the language of “maximum pressure” is desperately searching for an exit strategy. Even U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio acknowledged “slight progress” in negotiations while publicly pinning hopes on Pakistani mediation efforts. Meanwhile, President Donald Trump reportedly delayed planned strikes, reflecting mounting political, economic, and strategic fatigue inside the United States itself. Pakistan's role has become indispensable because both Tehran and Washington trust Islamabad more than any other intermediary currently available. China supports the effort quietly from the background, Gulf states fear another wave of destruction, and Europe lacks both leverage and unity. Pakistan alone maintains deep strategic relations with the United States while preserving credible diplomatic and security ties with Iran. That balance has elevated Islamabad from a regional actor into perhaps the single most important mediator in the world's most dangerous crisis.

The atmosphere surrounding the mediation effort has generated cautious optimism across much of the world—especially in oil-importing economies already devastated by soaring energy costs. In Africa, South Asia, and parts of Latin America, inflation has exploded as oil prices surged following the partial closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Fertilizer prices, shipping costs, food supply chains, and industrial production have all suffered severe disruptions. Even in the United States, gasoline prices and inflationary pressures have intensified political pressure on the White House.

The American public increasingly sees the conflict as an unnecessary war that delivered enormous costs but little strategic gain. Billions of dollars were spent, advanced ammunition stockpiles were depleted, global markets were shaken, and yet Iran's political system survived. Instead of regime collapse, Tehran emerged more hardened, more nationalistic, and more determined to

leverage its geographic advantages.

That reality has created visible cracks between Washington and Tel Aviv. Reports emerging from diplomatic circles suggest that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been aggressively lobbying the White House to continue military operations against Iran. However, for the first time in years, there appears to be a serious divergence between American and Israeli strategic objectives. Israel still seeks decisive military confrontation, while Washington increasingly seeks controlled de-escalation.

This shift reflects hard battlefield and economic realities. Iran not only survived the war but also demonstrated its ability to disrupt the global economy through strategic control of maritime and digital chokepoints. Tehran's tightening grip over Hormuz has become the central issue overshadowing all negotiations. Iran has introduced toll systems and expanded maritime enforcement mechanisms, effectively transforming the waterway into a geopolitical pressure point. Roughly one-fifth of global oil and major LNG shipments normally pass through the strait, making prolonged disruption economically unbearable for much of the world.

Even more alarming for Western strategists is Iran's influence over critical undersea fiber-optic infrastructure connecting Asia, the Gulf, and Europe. Any large-scale disruption in those networks could paralyze communications, financial transactions, and global digital systems. The war has therefore transformed from a purely military confrontation into a broader contest over economic arteries, energy flows, and technological infrastructure. Yet amid this dangerous environment, Pakistan continues attempting to bridge the divide. Islamabad reportedly conveyed revised Iranian proposals to Washington while simultaneously narrowing differences over sanctions, nuclear oversight, and maritime security guarantees. Sources close to negotiations indicate that a second round of direct U.S.-Iran talks in Islamabad is increasingly likely. Pakistan's diplomatic effort is not purely altruistic. A destabilized Iran would severely threaten Pakistan's own security. Militancy along Pakistan's western frontier could intensify, sectarian tensions could rise, and regional proxy wars could spill into already fragile border regions. Islamabad also understands that another prolonged Gulf conflict could devastate Pakistan's economy through energy shortages, inflation, and collapsing regional trade.

But beyond national interests, Pakistan also recognizes the historic opportunity before it. If Islamabad successfully brokers a sustainable agreement between Tehran and Washington, it would fundamentally elevate Pakistan's international standing. A country often viewed through the lens of instability would instead emerge as the architect of

one of the most important ceasefires of the modern era. Meanwhile, the scars of war remain deep and painful. Iranian infrastructure suffered severe damage from American and Israeli strikes. Military facilities, industrial centers, and civilian infrastructure were heavily hit. Iranian leadership figures were assassinated. Civilian casualties reportedly included hundreds of innocent children, including students killed during missile strikes that shocked much of the world. Lebanon, Gaza, and parts of the broader Middle East also endured renewed devastation as regional proxy fronts reignited simultaneously.

Israel itself suffered unprecedented pressure from continuous missile, drone, and ballistic attacks that disrupted civilian life and exposed vulnerabilities previously unseen. Lebanese displacement reached catastrophic levels, while Palestinians in Gaza continued facing massive casualties amid ongoing Israeli operations.

Against this backdrop, Trump's recent remarks about war financing triggered fresh controversy. His assertion that Venezuelan resources had effectively covered the cost of military operations fueled accusations that the conflict was driven by resource exploitation rather than genuine security concerns. Critics argue the war achieved little except global instability, rising inflation, diplomatic isolation, and public anger. That public anger now shapes American politics. Ordinary Americans increasingly question why taxpayer money was spent on another Middle Eastern conflict while domestic economic pressures intensify at home. The political appetite for endless war has sharply declined. Washington's current search for a face-saving diplomatic exit reflects not only military realities but also electoral calculations. This is precisely where Pakistan's mediation becomes critical. Islamabad appears to be offering both Tehran and Washington a pathway toward compromise without humiliating either side. Iran can claim strategic resilience and recognition of its regional leverage, while the United States can present diplomacy as a responsible effort to stabilize global markets and prevent wider catastrophe. The coming days may therefore prove decisive. If Pakistan succeeds in bringing both parties back to direct negotiations in Islamabad, the world could witness the beginning of a broader regional reset. If talks fail, however, the consequences could be devastating—not only for the Middle East, but for global trade, energy markets, food security, and international stability itself.

For now, one reality has become undeniable: after months of destruction, threats, sanctions, missile strikes, and global economic pain, diplomacy—led unexpectedly by Pakistan—has become the world's last and best hope.

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

Prime Minister's China Visit in a Changing Global Order

T.M. Awan

The timing itself is geopolitically important. Pakistan is navigating post-2025 tensions with India, economic fragility at home, and a volatile western frontier. China, meanwhile, faces mounting pressure from an increasingly polarized Indo-Pacific environment shaped by US-China rivalry, supply-chain restructuring, and strategic competition over technology and trade corridors. In this context, both countries are recalibrating their partnership from rhetoric toward operational convergence. That shift is perhaps most visible in the expected acceleration..

PRIME Minister Shehbaz Sharif's upcoming visit to China comes at a moment when the global strategic landscape is rapidly shifting and regional uncertainty is deepening across multiple fronts. From rising tensions in the Middle East to intensifying great-power competition in Asia and continued instability in Afghanistan, the geopolitical environment surrounding Pakistan has become increasingly fragile. In such circumstances, Islamabad's engagement with Beijing is no longer merely symbolic diplomacy. It is increasingly about economic survival, strategic positioning, and long-term regional relevance. Geographic Reference

The visit, scheduled as both countries mark 75 years of diplomatic relations, carries significance beyond routine bilateral engagement. For decades, Pakistan-China relations have often been described through familiar phrases such as “all-weather friendship” and “ironclad partnership.” Yet today, both Islamabad and Beijing appear focused on transforming that historic political trust into a more institutionalized economic, technological, and strategic framework capable of adapting to a changing world order. The timing itself is geopolitically important. Pakistan is navigating post-2025 tensions with India, economic fragility at home, and a volatile western frontier. China, meanwhile, faces mounting pressure from an increasingly polarized Indo-Pacific environment shaped by US-China rivalry, supply-chain restructuring, and strategic competition over technology and trade corridors. In this context, both countries are recalibrating their partnership from rhetoric toward operational convergence.

That shift is perhaps most visible in the expected acceleration of CPEC Phase-II. The first phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor fundamentally transformed Pakistan's infrastructure landscape through roads, energy projects, and connectivity initiatives. However, it also exposed critical structural weaknesses within Pakistan's economy. Infrastructure alone could not guarantee industrial growth, export competitiveness, or sustainable economic recovery. Critics repeatedly questioned whether Pakistan had developed the institutional capacity necessary to translate Chinese financing into

long-term productivity.

CPEC Phase-II is therefore being framed as a transition from infrastructure to industrialization. The emphasis is now expected to move toward business-to-business (B2B) investment models, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), export-oriented manufacturing, agricultural modernization, technology transfer, and digital integration. China's growing interest in relocating segments of its manufacturing supply chains into Pakistan reflects broader global economic trends, including rising labor costs within China and the diversification of industrial production networks. Yet the real challenge lies not in announcing industrial cooperation but in creating an environment where Chinese private capital feels secure enough to invest long term.

This is where Pakistan faces uncomfortable realities. Chinese state-backed infrastructure financing and private-sector industrial relocation operate according to very different calculations. Private investors require regulatory consistency, reliable energy supplies, transparent taxation systems, legal predictability, efficient logistics, and above all, security guarantees. Pakistan's long-standing issues—bureaucratic delays, policy inconsistency, currency volatility, and governance inefficiencies—continue to discourage industrial investment despite strong political ties between Islamabad and Beijing.

Unless Pakistan undertakes serious structural reforms, the promise of SEZ-led industrial transformation risks remaining largely aspirational.

The visit is also expected to deepen cooperation under China's broader “Digital Silk Road” initiative. Emerging discussions surrounding artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, cloud infrastructure, digital payments, telecommunications modernization, and e-commerce integration indicate that Pakistan-China cooperation is entering a new technological phase. This reflects a wider global reality: modern strategic competition is increasingly being fought not only through military alliances or trade routes, but through data infrastructure, technological ecosystems, and digital connectivity.

For Pakistan, this creates both opportunity and responsibility. Deeper digital integration with China

could modernize domestic industries and provide Pakistani SMEs access to wider commercial networks. At the same time, it also raises long-term questions regarding technological dependence, cybersecurity governance, and strategic balancing in an era of expanding US-China competition.

Beyond economics, the security dimension of the visit cannot be ignored. China's concerns regarding militant attacks on Chinese nationals and CPEC-linked projects remain significant. Meanwhile, post-May 2025 regional tensions have accelerated strategic coordination between Islamabad and Beijing in areas ranging from deterrence stability to cybersecurity and regional counterterrorism cooperation. Geographic Reference

Afghanistan will also remain central to these discussions. Both countries increasingly view regional instability as a direct threat to long-term Belt and Road connectivity and broader economic integration across Asia.

Still, perhaps the most important aspect of this visit lies in what it symbolizes after seventy-five years of diplomatic relations.

Few bilateral relationships in modern international politics have displayed the continuity that Pakistan-China ties have maintained across wars, sanctions, regime changes, and shifting global alignments. What began as a strategic understanding during the Cold War has gradually evolved into one of the most consequential partnerships in Asia.

However, history alone cannot sustain future relevance.

The true success of this visit will not be measured by ceremonial statements or the number of memorandums signed in Beijing. It will depend on whether both countries can transform strategic trust into practical economic delivery, industrial modernization, technological advancement, and sustainable regional stability.

Because in an increasingly multipolar world, partnerships survive not through slogans, but through implementation.

—The writer is a journalist, strategic communication, and public diplomacy advisor based in Islamabad.

Briefs

At least 14 martyred in train blast

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The area and launched a rescue operation, it added. The blast was loud enough to be heard in various distant areas of the city and caused damage to nearby houses. A fire reported to have sparked in nearby cars was controlled after intense efforts involving multiple fire brigade vehicles. One video showed about 10 vehicles, mostly small cars, charred as fire and black smoke emerged from some of them. Multiple ambulances could be seen arriving at the site in another video. Earlier footage showed huge plumes of smoke rising from a raging fire, with at least one train coach turned over at a short distance. The police, the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) and the bomb disposal squad reached the incident site to conduct investigations. A medical emergency was declared in Quetta's hospitals, with all doctors, paramedical staff, and medical personnel summoned to duty. Rind was quoted as saying by the government on X.Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti was personally monitoring the situation, according to the statement.

27 outlaws killed in Bannu...

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Exchanges of fire, eleven khwarij belonging to Indian-sponsored Fitna-al-Khwarij were effectively neutralized. Weapons and ammunition have also been recovered from killed Indian sponsored Khwarij, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area. Sanitization operations continue to eliminate holed up khwarij from these areas, as relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under vision "Azam e Istehkan" (as approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by Security Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign sponsored and supported terrorism from the country.

Iran denies agreeing to hand over...

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therefore not part of the current deal," the source said, adding that "there has been no agreement over Iran's highly enriched uranium stockpile to be shipped out of the country." However, Iranian officials reportedly acknowledged that talks with Washington had made significant progress and that a broader deal was "almost done," amid ongoing diplomatic efforts to ease tensions in the region. US President Donald Trump had earlier stated that an agreement with Iran was "largely negotiated," with further announcements expected soon. Reports indicate the proposed framework could include reopening the Strait of Hormuz, extending a ceasefire and beginning wider negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme.

PM invites Chinese firms to relocate...

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manufacture goods, and export to third countries. "This model will be a win-win model for Chinese and Pakistani entrepreneurs, and this will be something of a roaring success in times to come, whether it is textile or leather or other areas," the prime minister maintained in his speech broadcast on national TV channels. He also invited Chinese businessmen to come and see the export zone in Karachi, where they would have great opportunities to understand business propositions. Referring to the potential in mines and minerals, he said that it was also a very important area where Pakistan had large deposits of minerals and gemstones.

Lavrov praises Pakistan Peace Diplomacy

Mushahid Hussain says 'Pakistan centre-stage of Global Diplomacy'

Senator Mushahid Hussain, referring to the presence of an Indian Delegation, urged the need for peaceful dialogue and diplomacy to resolve all disputes

DNA

PERM: During meeting with Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed at the Russian-sponsored Eurasian Security Forum, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov praised 'Pakistan's proactive and positive role in promoting peace between Iran and the United States to end this needless War'. Senator Mushahid, who is Co-Chairman of International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP), briefed the Russian Foreign Minister on Pakistan's sustained efforts for Peace Diplomacy which has earned the country the trust, respect and confidence of both protagonists. Lavrov referred to 'new realities' in the wake of the Iran War especially noting the significance of the Quartet of Pakistan, Turkiye, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Senator Mushahid Hussain met Lavrov on the sidelines of the Eurasian Security Forum, along with



colleagues from Korea, Cambodia & Iran, as part of the ICAPP Delegation. During his Keynote Address to the Eurasian Security Forum, Senator Mushahid

Hussain said 'Pakistan is at centre stage of Global Diplomacy enjoying trust, confidence and respect of both protagonists'. He lamented the lack of role of established

organisations like the UN, EU, OIC, and Arab League. He appreciated the principal positions of China and Russia, adding these countries were the harbingers of a new emerging world order in which Eurasia would be the strategic center of gravity, both in Geoeconomics and Geopolitics. Senator Mushahid Hussain, referring to the presence of an Indian Delegation, urged the need for peaceful dialogue and diplomacy to resolve all disputes. He also quoted from the great Poet-Philosopher of the East, Allama Iqbal, who had predicted, nearly a century ago, both the Rise of Asia and Rise of China. The Eurasian Security Forum was attended by 200 international delegates from over 20 Eurasian countries. At the conclusion of the Forum, the Russian hosts requested Senator Mushahid Hussain to read out the Final Declaration which called for establishing a new global order based on justice and equality in accordance with principles of the UN Charter and International Law.

Pakistan, China agree to explore cooperation in battery cell manufacturing

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China on Sunday agreed to form a joint working group to assess potential cooperation in battery cell manufacturing and advanced energy technologies in line with Pakistan's growing demand for electric vehicles and energy storage systems. In this regard, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan, Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, and Federal Secretary for Industries and Production Saif Anjum, visited the headquarters of CALB Group in Changzhou, Jiangsu Province, as part of ongoing engagements aimed at strengthening Pakistan-China industrial and technology cooperation, said a news release. During the visit, the delegation was briefed on CALB's advanced battery technology platforms, manufacturing capabilities, research and development activities,

and global expansion initiatives in the field of lithium battery systems and advanced energy solutions. Discussions focused on Pakistan's growing potential in electric mobility, battery energy storage systems (BESS), industrial electrification, and the long-term development of an integrated new energy ecosystem. Both sides agreed to establish a joint working group to further assess and better understand potential opportunities in Pakistan relating to battery cell manufacturing and associated new energy technologies through a phased and commercially driven approach, taking into consideration Pakistan's evolving market landscape, industrial development objectives, and anticipated future demand for EV and energy storage solutions. The discussions also included potential future technical collaboration,

knowledge exchange, localisation pathways, and broader industrial cooperation opportunities aligned with Pakistan's industrial modernisation and energy transition objectives. It was further agreed that follow-up engagements would continue, including the planning of a future visit by CALB leadership to Pakistan for further discussions and assessment of potential areas of cooperation. CALB is one of China's leading new energy technology companies and among the major global manufacturers of advanced lithium-ion battery systems, supplying battery technologies for electric vehicles, energy storage systems, smart mobility, and industrial energy applications. The company operates large-scale research, development, and manufacturing facilities across China and is listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.

Donald Trump fires Tulsi over Pakistan...

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They argued that Pakistan's role throughout the Iran-U.S. crisis had been one of de-escalation, diplomacy, and crisis management. Indeed, President Trump himself repeatedly acknowledged Pakistan's constructive role in reducing tensions and facilitating communication channels between Tehran and Washington. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and other senior American officials also publicly recognized that Pakistan remained one of the few countries capable of maintaining working relationships with both sides simultaneously. This diplomatic balancing act significantly elevated Pakistan's global standing. While India increasingly aligned itself with Israel and adopted highly confrontational regional postures, Pakistan emerged as a state capable of engaging multiple rival camps simultaneously — Washington, Tehran, Beijing, Riyadh, Ankara, and the Gulf monarchies. The contrast between Pakistan's mediation role and India's increasingly polarized image became increasingly visible during the Iran crisis. Pakistan's strategic importance was further reinforced through defense understandings and security cooperation with Saudi Arabia and several Gulf states. For decades, Pakistan has maintained close military ties with Riyadh, including defense training, intelligence

cooperation, and security coordination. Strategic analysts have long speculated that Pakistan could potentially provide a nuclear umbrella or extended deterrence assurances to Gulf allies if regional security collapsed under existential threats. Though officially undeclared, such assumptions have shaped Middle Eastern strategic thinking for years. Israel's strategic establishment views these developments with considerable concern. A Pakistan capable of mediating between Iran and the United States while simultaneously maintaining influence within the Gulf security architecture creates a geopolitical reality that weakens Israeli attempts to monopolize regional strategic influence. Pakistan's successful diplomacy during one of the most dangerous global crises in recent history significantly enhanced Islamabad's credibility across the Muslim world and beyond. The broader context is critical. The Iran-U.S.-Israel confrontation pushed the world dangerously close to a wider global conflict. The closure and militarization of the Strait of Hormuz disrupted oil supplies, drove energy prices sharply upward, shook stock markets, increased inflation worldwide, and threatened trillions of dollars in global trade. International institutions and economists warned that prolonged escalation could plunge millions into poverty and severely damage the global economy. In this environment, Pakistan's mediation efforts were widely appreciated by countries desperate to avoid catastrophe. Islamabad maintained communication with Tehran, Washington, Beijing, Moscow, Riyadh, and Ankara simultaneously. Its diplomatic

PCB level 1 coaching course concludes in city

DNA

KARACHI: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Coach Education Department has successfully concluded its nationwide Level 1 Coaching Courses for the 2025-26 season, with the final course held in Karachi. The four-day course took place from 19 to 22 May in which 30 participants took part. Prior to the Karachi course, Level 1 Coaching Courses were successfully conducted in Peshawar, Rawalpindi and Multan as part of Pakistan Cricket Board continued efforts to enhance coaching standards across the country. During the course, instructors engaged participants in a comprehensive programme focused on modern coaching methodologies, technical and tactical development, player management and the overall enhancement of coaching practices.

Djokovic seeks record 25th Grand Slam as French Open begins

"I wanted to play more but my body was not allowing me. I was going through rehabilitation process for my injury," says Djokovic

PARIS: The first round of the French Open starts on Sunday, with Novak Djokovic beginning his hunt for a fourth crown and a record-extending 25th Grand Slam title when he takes on home hope Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard, while world number three Alexander Zverev faces Benjamin Bonzi. The claycourt Grand Slam starts under a shadow, with some players deciding to restrict their appearances at Friday's and Saturday's traditional pre-tournament media days amid growing tensions over prize money and player influence. Top men's match: Djokovic vs Mpetshi Perricard Djokovic has played just one match since Indian Wells in March and the 39-year-old will need to quickly shake off any rust when he meets Mpetshi Perricard for the first time in his career in his opening match. The Serbian has spent the last two years trying to capture a 25th major crown that would move him past Margaret Court to take sole possession of the all-time record, but that quest looks in danger of being prolonged. "I wanted to play more but my body was not allowing me. I was going through rehabilitation process for my injury," Djokovic told reporters. "If I'm able to somehow maintain a level of freshness and progress... then I feel like I have always a very good chance. I have proven that in Australia this year where I was close to winning another Slam. I always have that belief in me when I'm on the court." Russian Mira Andreeva has had a strong clay season, winning the Linz Open and reaching her first WTA 1000 final at the Madrid Open, while also making it to the semi-finals in Stuttgart and quarter-finals in Rome. — APP

efforts contributed to temporary pauses, indirect negotiations, and de-escalatory messaging at moments when the risk of direct regional war appeared extremely high. It is within this broader geopolitical framework that critics interpret the campaign surrounding Tulsi Gabbard's remarks and resignation. Pakistani commentators argue that a coordinated media and lobbying effort emerged to undermine Pakistan's image as a fair and impartial mediator. By portraying Pakistan as an unreliable actor, a hidden Iranian ally, or a future missile threat to the West, critics say certain political and media factions sought to erode American trust in Islamabad precisely when Pakistan's diplomatic relevance was reaching unprecedented levels. Tulsi Gabbard's own political history added further controversy. Of partial Indian ancestry and long associated with pro-India political circles, she frequently adopted positions viewed favorably in New Delhi. Pakistani observers argue that deep-rooted India-Pakistan rivalry inevitably shapes perceptions within parts of the Indian diaspora and certain strategic networks in Washington. While there is no evidence directly proving ethnic bias influenced policy decisions, critics believe broader geopolitical sympathies may have shaped strategic narratives regarding Pakistan. Yet despite these efforts, Pakistan's role during the crisis continued receiving acknowledgment from key global actors. President Trump repeatedly defended Islamabad's mediation role. Senior American officials avoided endorsing accusations against Pakistan.

Greece to buy two Italian frigates

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prime minister's New Democracy party enjoys an absolute majority. In response to the security woes besetting the Middle East, across the Mediterranean from Greece, Athens has sought to bolster its armed forces. Historically a significant client of both US and European arms manufacturers, Greece is one of four NATO countries to devote more than three percent of GDP to defense, behind Poland, Estonia and Latvia.

Opening of Somaliland embassy...

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"Somaliland" region in opening a purported "embassy" in occupied Jerusalem. This constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and relevant international resolutions, and represents a direct infringement on the legal and historical status of occupied Jerusalem. The Ministers reaffirm their categorical rejection of any unilateral measures aimed at entrenching an illegal reality in occupied Jerusalem or conferring legitimacy on any entities or arrangements that contravene international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. They reiterate that East Jerusalem has been occupied Palestinian territory since 1967, and that any measures intended to alter its legal and historical status are null and void and without legal effect.

American blockage to continue...

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the Abraham Accords framework. Speaking about the latest round of US-Iran negotiations, Trump said both sides wanted to "take their time" in order to achieve a comprehensive and durable deal rather than rushing into an incomplete arrangement. He described the talks as "constructive" and insisted that "time is on our side." Trump stressed that the blockade linked to the Strait of Hormuz and Iranian shipping would continue until any agreement is "100 percent complete and fully signed." He reiterated that Washington would not permit Iran to acquire nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

Prime Minister Shehbaz...

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He also engaged with provincial leadership, leading Chinese enterprises, including StarCharge, CATL and Xiuzheng Pharmaceutical, to explore practical investment and industrial cooperation. He also visited Alibaba Headquarters, where he was received by Executive Chairman, Joe Tsai.

India voices concern over US visa

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task over President Donald Trump's assault on visas. Jaishankar said he "appreciated Secretary Rubio of challenges that legitimate travellers face in respect of visa issuance". "While we cooperate to deal with illegal and irregular mobility, our expectation is that legal mobility should not be adversely impacted as a consequence," he said, noting that visas were key for US-India tech cooperation. Trump, who has made curbing non-Western immigration a key political priority, has ramped up restrictions and fees for H-1B visas used largely by Indian tech workers, sending applications tumbling. The Trump administration followed up Friday by saying that applicants for permanent residency, even when in the United States legally, must leave for processing, likely splitting up many families for extended periods. Trump has been influenced by nationalist critics who say Indian workers take away skilled jobs from Americans who would have earned more.



RAWALPINDI: Players of Rising Stars Hockey Club posing for a picture before the start of a match, at the Shehnaz Sheikh Hockey Stadium Rawalpindi. — DNA

Briefs

Resilient Saudi economy powers ahead on both oil, non-oil fronts Follow

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's economy is showing clear signs of resilience amid regional tensions, according to an analysis, demonstrating strong growth in the Purchasing Managers' Index, oil activities, the labor market, and equity markets. In its latest report, Al Rajhi Capital highlighted that the Kingdom's PMI returned to expansion territory in April at 51.5, up from 48.8 in March, signaling continued momentum in non-energy private business growth. In March, the Kingdom's PMI dropped below the 50 threshold after Iran's retaliatory strikes across the Gulf triggered the most severe business disruption in the region since the COVID-19 pandemic. The attacks led to widespread airport closures, suspended port operations, and sharp volatility in financial markets. Strengthening a robust non-oil economy is crucial for Saudi Arabia as the Kingdom continues its economic diversification efforts by reducing its decades-long reliance on crude revenues. The rebound in business activity comes as the Kingdom's economy continues to display resilience amid lower oil production and regional geopolitical tensions. Citing flash estimates released by the General Authority for Statistics, the analysis said the Kingdom's real gross domestic product expanded 2.8 percent year on year in the first quarter of 2026, driven by gains across all economic activities.—APP

Oman's development lending falls 9% to \$556m

RIYADH: Oman's development lending fell 9 percent in 2025 as financing activity slowed across several sectors, despite continued support for industries targeted under the sultanate's economic diversification strategy. Total loans granted during the year stood at 213.8 million Omani rials (\$556 million), distributed across 7,106 projects, according to data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information cited by Oman News Agency. The industrial sector attracted the largest share of lending at 71 million rials, accounting for 33.2 percent of the total, highlighting the government's continued push to expand manufacturing and industrial activity beyond hydrocarbons. Tourism, professional and public services received 66.3 million rials, or 31 percent of total lending, while the fisheries sector accounted for 31.6 million rials, representing 14.8 percent. The figures underscore Oman's efforts to advance its Vision 2040 strategy, which aims to reduce dependence on oil revenue by expanding sectors including tourism, logistics, mining, manufacturing and fisheries. "The mining sector recorded a percentage jump from 0.7 percent in 2024 to 4.8 percent during 2025, with a value exceeding 10.3 million Omani rials," ONA reported.—APP

Digital economy growth reflects talent of youth: Tahir

Says ICCI encourages youth empowerment through technology and entrepreneurship

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood, has said that Pakistan's digital economy is rapidly transforming into a powerful force that is shaping the future of business, innovation, entrepreneurship and communication in the country. He expressed these views while addressing the closing ceremony of "Creator's Con Pakistan - Islamabad Chapter 2.0" organized by ICCI in collaboration with Redots Club Pakistan. He appreciated the overwhelming participation of digital creators, entrepreneurs, IT experts, AI professionals, crypto community members, startups and industry leaders.

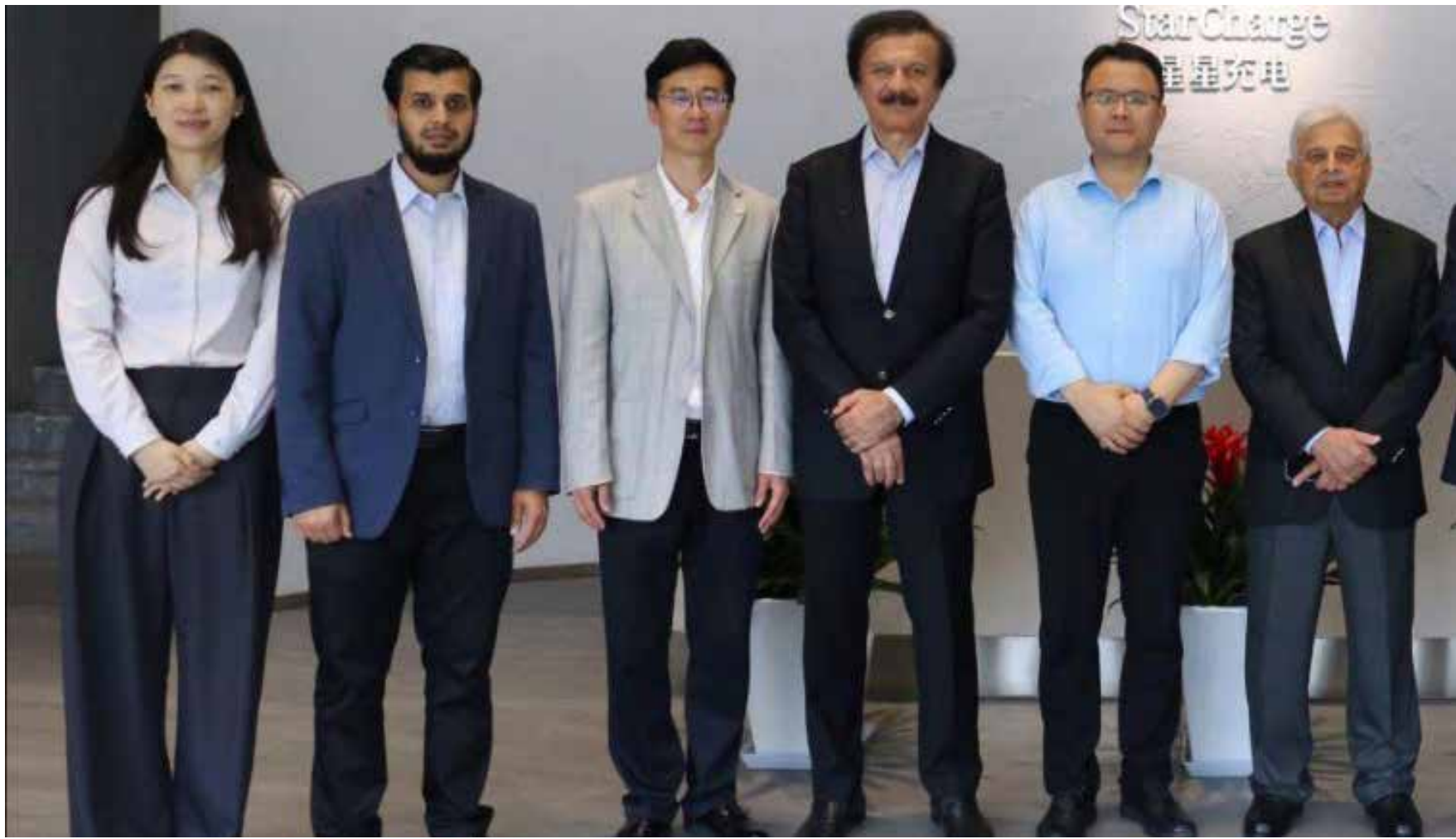
Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that Creator's Con Pakistan has emerged as one of the fastest-growing creator economy con-

ference platforms in Pakistan, successfully bringing together the country's most active digital professionals, innovators and entrepreneurs under one roof for meaningful networking, collaboration and knowledge sharing. He stated that such platforms are creating real opportunities for career growth, business expansion, partnerships and future innovation rather than remaining limited to theoretical discussions. Addressing the participants, he said Pakistan is currently passing through a crucial phase of digital transformation and emphasized that if the youth are provided with proper direction, modern technology, professional training and entrepreneurial opportunities, Pakistan can become a strong digital economy in the region. He added that today's young generation is not merely searching for jobs but is actively creating new business models, digital markets and innovative ideas, which is an encouraging sign

for the country's future.

The ICCI President highlighted the importance of collaboration within the creators, AI, crypto, technology and entrepreneurship ecosystem, stating that such cooperation-driven environments are essential for accelerating innovation and enabling Pakistan to compete confidently at the global level. Sardar Tahir Mehmood highly appreciated the efforts of Ismail Blogger, Founder and CEO of Redots Club Pakistan, for conceptualizing and organizing the impactful initiative. He also acknowledged the valuable contributions of Dr. Mohammad Usman, Convener ICCI Software Development Committee, and Aizaz Mohammad, Convener ICCI IT, Telecom and Computer Hardware Committee, for their excellent coordination and dedicated efforts in making the conference successful. Reaffirming ICCI's commitment towards the promotion of Pakistan's IT sector, start-

ups and digital entrepreneurship, Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that the Chamber will continue supporting platforms that empower youth and strengthen the national economy through innovation and technology. He thanked all speakers, guests, sponsors, media representatives and participants for making the conference productive and memorable and expressed confidence that Pakistan's talented youth would continue to illuminate the country's name globally through creativity, innovation and technological excellence. ICCI Vice President Irfan Chaudhry also appreciated the organizers for hosting such an impactful event. He also made the mention of Chamber's milestones on the subject by reaffirming that the Chamber will continue to patronize such significant gatherings. On this occasion ICCI Executive Member Waseem Chaudhry and a large number of ICCI members were also present.



JIANGSU: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain with representatives of Changfa Group during high-level engagements on agricultural machinery cooperation.

Pak, China agree to explore coop in battery manufacturing

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China on Sunday agreed to form a joint working group to assess potential cooperation in battery cell manufacturing and advanced energy technologies in line with Pakistan's growing demand for electric vehicles and energy storage systems. In this regard, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan, Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, and Federal Secretary for Industries and Production Saif Anjum, visited the headquarters of CALB Group in Changzhou, Jiangsu Province, as part of ongoing engagements aimed at strengthening Pakistan-China industrial and technology cooperation, said a news release. During the visit, the delegation was briefed on CALB's advanced battery technology platforms, manufacturing capabilities, research and development activities, and global expansion initiatives in the field of lithium battery systems and advanced energy solutions. Discussions focused on Pakistan's growing potential in electric mobility, battery energy storage systems (BESS), industrial electrification, and the long-term development of an integrated new energy ecosystem. Both sides agreed to establish a joint working group to further assess and better understand potential opportunities in Pakistan relating to battery cell manufacturing and associated new energy technologies through a phased and commercially driven approach, taking into consideration Pakistan's evolving market landscape, industrial development objectives, and anticipated future demand for EV and energy storage solutions. The discussions also included potential future technical collaboration, knowledge exchange, localisation pathways, and broader industrial cooperation opportunities aligned with Pakistan's industrial modernisation and energy transition objectives.—DNA

'Cockroach party' goes viral in India after judge's remarks on youth

NEW DELHI: A new cockroach-themed youth movement has gone viral in India, attracting nearly 23 million followers, after the chief justice's remarks were widely interpreted as comparing unemployed young people to pests. The Cockroach Janata Party identifies as a "satirical political party," and its name bears similarity to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, which has been in power since 2014. The movement started to gain momentum right after Surya Kant, the Supreme Court's chief judge, said in a May 15 hearing that there were "youngsters like cockroaches" who had no employment and turned to social media and activism instead. While on the next day Kant clarified that his "cockroaches" remark referred to fake degree holders, not unemployed youth, the CJP was already live on social media and within days became viral, with its members defining it as a "political movement built for the young, the unemployed, and the chronically online," which "gives a voice to those the system forgot to count." As its Instagram account amassed over two times more followers than the BJP, it has also drawn conspiracy accusations, with Kerala BJP President Rajeev Chandrasekhar telling local media on Saturday that the cockroach movement was a "classic influence operation with an objective to create destabilization." Upholding the same narrative, Education Minister Sukanta Majumdar said that "49 percent followers of the Cockroach Janta Party on social media are from Pakistan" - India's neighbor and historic archrival. The CJP has denied the claims. "Obviously, the BJP is scared because it shows people's anger with the government, and shows that they are not as popular as they claim... It shows frustration with the system," Nandini Sancar, professor of sociology at the Delhi School of Economics, told Arab News. "What this indicates is anger with the system, which no political party has mobilized." The anger and frustration are both about employment concerns and a sense of disenfranchisement. A State of Working India report published by Azim Premji University earlier this year showed that 67 percent of all unemployed youth aged 20-29 are graduates. In 2004, graduates constituted just 32 percent of the unemployed. The youth's frustration over unemployment is coupled with distrust in formal political parties, as well as the arrival of meme-based politics as a form of political expression, according to Prof. Afroze Alam, head of the Department of Political Science at Maulana Azad National Urdu University in Hyderabad. "The CJP moment should not be romanticized as a revolution, nor dismissed as a joke. It is a political warning. When young citizens begin to laugh at power, it often means they have stopped fearing it," Alam said. "The government's anxiety is understandable. A conventional opponent can be attacked through ideology, leadership or corruption charges. But a satirical movement is harder to control because it mocks power without seeking permission from power." The CJP is not yet registered with the Election Commission of India, and while its immediate impact may not be electoral, it has "already disturbed the language of power" and may force political parties to take youth unemployment, examinations, recruitment delays, and representation more seriously, Alam said.—Agencies

Pak, KSA to setup digital corridor for Hajj operations

ISLAMABAD: The National Information Technology Board (NITB) has assumed complete control of the digitalisation of Pakistan's Hajj operations, with a key focus on establishing a historic, world-class "digital corridor" between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The initiative is being launched under the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for a "Digital Pakistan" and on his special directives to modernise Hajj management through advanced technology and integrated digital systems. Confirming the development from Makkah, NITB Program Manager Muhammad Awais said the landmark digital corridor would enable real-time sharing of pilgrims' data with Saudi Arabia's central Hajj systems, including the Nusuk and Masar platforms.

He described the initiative as a major technological breakthrough aimed at seamlessly connecting Pakistan's Hajj management system with Saudi Arabia's digital infrastructure to improve coordination, efficiency, and services for pilgrims.

The corridor will also create an integrated domestic network linking key Pakistani institutions, including the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), the Directorate General of Passports and Immigration, designated banks, and airlines.

Muhammad Awais said that, on the directives of the prime minister, an NITB team is currently present in Saudi Arabia as observers.

Under the guidance of Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja and Secretary IT Zarrar Hasham Khan, the project is being implemented under the leadership of NITB CEO Faisal Iqbal Ratyal to transform all existing Hajj operational procedures into a modern digital framework. As part of the transformation, a comprehensive monitoring system named the "Khadim-ul-Hujaj Performance Management System" (KPMS) has been activated.—APP

Rescuers search for 23 missing at collapsed Philippine building

PAMPANGA, Philippines: Rescuers clawed through the wreckage of a collapsed Philippine building on Sunday which left 23 people missing, with authorities saying that screams were heard from under the rubble. The nine-story building, under construction for more than two years, collapsed on itself Sunday at around 3:00 am (1900 GMT Saturday) in Angeles City, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) north of Manila. The collapse also heavily damaged an adjacent hotel, where two of the 26 people who were rescued had been staying, officials said. Rescuers conducting the initial assessment "heard someone crying out in pain" from under the rubble, Maria Leah Sajili, the Bureau of Fire Protection regional spokesperson, told reporters. The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority General Manager Nicolas Torre told AFP they were sending rescue equipment and police dogs to aid the rescue.—APP

Afghanistan's White Gold

TANVEER HUSSAIN



LITHIUM is a soft, lightweight, and silvery metal that is included among the chemical elements. It is considered one of the lightest metals in the world and possesses an extraordinary ability to store energy. For this reason, lithium has gained immense importance in modern technology, particularly in the energy sector. In today's world, this metal is regarded as a fundamental requirement of the modern economy because the world is rapidly shifting from traditional fuels toward clean and renewable sources of energy. The largest use of lithium is in rechargeable batteries. The batteries used in mobile phones, laptops, tablets, power banks, smartwatches, and electric vehicles are mostly composed of lithium. In addi-

tion, lithium batteries are also used to store electricity generated from solar and wind energy so that power can be supplied whenever needed. The growing trend of electric vehicles around the world has significantly increased the demand for lithium. This is why many countries now consider lithium one of the most important mineral resources of the future economy. Lithium is not limited to batteries alone; its use is also increasing in glass manufacturing, ceramics, aircraft production, the aluminum industry, and the medical field. Certain medicines used to treat mental illnesses also contain lithium compounds. Due to its growing global demand and economic importance, lithium is often referred to as "white gold." Experts believe that the demand for lithium is likely to increase even further in the coming years because environmentally friendly technologies are being promoted worldwide. Lithium is generally extracted from mineral rocks and salt lakes. Chile, Australia, Argentina, and China are considered among the countries with the largest lithium reserves in the world. China not only possesses significant

lithium reserves but is also a global leader in battery manufacturing and lithium refining industries. Afghanistan is also a country rich in natural resources. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) once declared Afghanistan to be a highly important country in terms of lithium reserves. According to various surveys, large lithium deposits are found in the Afghan provinces of Ghazni, Helmand, Nimroz, and Herat, with estimated reserves of about 2.2 million tons or even more. In 2010, American officials referred to Afghanistan as the "Saudi Arabia of Lithium." If Afghanistan begins to utilize its mineral resources, especially lithium reserves, effectively, it could become a strong and prosperous economy. The export of minerals could generate billions of dollars in foreign exchange, create new employment opportunities, and promote industrial growth. Moreover, increased foreign investment could improve the country's infrastructure, education, healthcare, and energy sectors. The proper use of mineral resources could also enhance the standard of living of the Afghan people and significantly reduce

poverty. However, Afghanistan has suffered for decades from political instability, civil war, terrorism, and foreign interference. Unnecessary intervention by major powers, political conflicts, internal divisions, and ineffective government policies have prevented lasting peace in the country. As a result, Afghanistan has not been able to fully benefit from its natural wealth. Investors around the world prefer to invest in countries where peace, political stability, and a strong legal system exist. It is a fact that until peace and political stability are established in a country, neither foreign investment nor economic development can truly flourish. If Afghanistan overcomes its political and social challenges, promotes modern technology, and wisely utilizes its natural resources, it could emerge as a strong and prosperous economy in the future. Valuable mineral resources such as lithium could become a golden opportunity for Afghanistan's economic progress. If the government organizes the mining sector through transparent policies, Afghanistan could gain economic significance not only in the region but throughout the world.

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Briefs

Maryam for fool-proof security on Eid

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed the authorities concerned to strictly implement security SOPs in order to ensure foolproof security in the province on Chand Raat (the night before Eid) and on Eid-ul-Adha days; besides taking extraordinary security measures at sensitive locations. She directed patrols and deployment of lady police officers in markets on Chand Raat; besides ensuring real-time monitoring via Safe City cameras for security operations. She also directed Assistant Commissioners to coordinate with religious scholars (Ulema), and to install metal detectors and walk-through gates for security of Eid congregations. She said that religious scholars will be briefed by the relevant authorities on security and cleanliness arrangements for Eid-ul-Adha. Chief Minister Punjab directed a strict ban on camps set up by proscribed organizations for collecting animal hides; and directed DPOs to personally visit sites to enforce the ban in this regard. She also directed to ensure a ban on hateful content on social media and other media platforms; besides taking action against motorcyclists engaged in one-wheeling and hoologanism on Eid-ul-Adha.

Secret service shoots White House shooting suspect

DNA

WASHINGTON: Police and security forces swarmed the White House on Saturday evening after shots were fired near the complex, triggering a lockdown and a major response from the US Secret Service and FBI. US President Donald Trump was inside the White House at the time, as he continued his diplomatic efforts related to an Iran-related deal, officials said. Access routes were cordoned off, and National Guard troops blocked entry points in downtown Washington, with journalists and bystanders ordered to move away from the area. According to a US law enforcement official cited by Reuters, a person approached a checkpoint at 17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue near the White House and opened fire on officers. The suspect was later "down" and taken to George Washington Hospital, the official said, adding that the suspect's condition and the exact circumstances of how he was brought down were not immediately clear. The suspect later succumbed to his wounds in the hospital, according to US media reports.

Türkiye: police asked to evict CHP leaders

ANKARA: Turkish authorities ordered police to evict the leadership of the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) from their headquarters on Sunday, enforcing a court ruling that reinstated the former leader and fueled a political crisis. Riot police and crowds gathered outside the gates of CHP headquarters in the Turkish capital after the Ankara governor's office issued the order to remove CHP members aligned with ousted leader Özgür Özel. A Turkish appeals court on Thursday annulled the results of a CHP congress at which Özel was elected in 2023, citing unspecified irregularities. In Özel's place, the court reinstated former CHP Chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, who lost to President Tayyip Erdoğan in elections earlier that year. Özel called on Saturday for a new party congress to be held as soon as possible while Kılıçdaroğlu has said that a congress would be held at an "appropriate" time. - APP

ASEAN community showcases unity and diversity at Islamabad Event

Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan Chandra Warsenanto Sukotjo, who currently chairs the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad, thanked the participants and ASEAN member missions for making the initiative a success



ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Islamabad hosted the closing ceremony of the Online Internship Program (OIP) 2026 and ASEAN Village 2026, bringing together diplomats, academics, students, government officials and members of the ASEAN community to celebrate regional cooperation and cultural diversity. The event, organized by the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad (ACI), marked the culmination of the month-long online internship initiative aimed at promoting dialogue, learning and people-to-people connectivity between ASEAN member states and Pakistan. The program engaged students, academics and young professionals in discussions on ASE-

AN's political, economic and socio-cultural experiences, regional cooperation, democracy, climate change and economic integration. Among the distinguished guests were Vice Chancellor of the University of the Punjab Professor Muhammad Ali, senior officials from Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including the Director General of the Foreign Office, diplomats, media representatives and participants of the internship program. Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan Chandra Warsenanto Sukotjo, who currently chairs the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad, thanked the participants and ASEAN member missions for making the initiative a success. He highlighted the importance of educational engagement and cultural diplomacy in strengthening ties between ASEAN and Pakistan.

The ceremony featured the distribution of certificates to outstanding participants of the OIP 2026, recognizing their contributions and active engagement throughout the program. Cultural performances by students and ASEAN member states added color to the occasion, showcasing the rich traditions and heritage of Southeast Asia. A major attraction of the event was the ASEAN Village, where member states established cultural and food stalls displaying traditional cuisine, handicrafts, tourism information and cultural exhibits. Guests toured the stalls, sampled delicacies from across ASEAN countries and appreciated the vibrant cultural showcase. The High Commission of Brunei also organized a special interactive game that drew enthusiastic participation from attendees. The activity became one

of the highlights of the event, promoting cultural interaction in an engaging and informal setting. Participants and guests also enjoyed traditional dances, musical performances and fashion presentations representing various ASEAN nations. Speaking on the occasion, the organizers expressed hope that the Online Internship Program and ASEAN Village would continue to serve as effective platforms for academic collaboration, intercultural dialogue and stronger people-to-people ties between ASEAN member states and Pakistan. The event concluded with networking sessions, cultural performances and an ASEAN-themed "Amazing Race" activity, reinforcing the spirit of friendship and cooperation between ASEAN and Pakistan.

- (Detailed coverage of the event in the June issue of CENTRELINE magazine)

Russian strikes Kyiv with missiles

DNA

KYIV: Russia struck Ukraine's capital Kyiv on Sunday with a massive wave of missiles and drones that damaged residential buildings, offices and schools, killing at least one person and injuring 21, officials said. Explosions reverberated through the city just after 1 a.m. (2200 GMT Saturday), following a warning by Ukraine's air force on its Telegram channel that Russia might launch a hypersonic Oreshnik ballistic missile. The air force did not respond to a request for comment on whether an Oreshnik struck any target during the attack. Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said on Telegram that one person was believed to have been killed after a nine-story residential building in the capital's central district of Shevchenko was hit. Emergency services were at the site extinguishing a blaze, the mayor said. Klitschko said 21 people were injured, with 13 of those hospitalized, three of them in serious condition. Air raid sirens sounded again after sunrise on Sunday in Kyiv. Many residents sought shelter overnight in the city's metro stations. Natalia Zvarych, 62, said she had rushed to her local station as explosions started rocking the city. "It was terrifying, scary," she said. "We have been sitting here for more than three hours now, listening to the explosions up there." In Shevchenko, several people were trapped inside an air raid shelter at a school after a strike blocked its entrance with debris, Klitschko said. More people were believed to be stuck inside a shelter at a business center in the same neighborhood, the head of the city's military administration said. He said more than 40 locations in the city had been damaged. Strikes were reported in other parts of Ukraine. Three more people were injured in the broader Kyiv region, according to the governor, Mykola Kalashnyk.

What is the US-Iran deal?

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The agreement the U.S. and Iran are close to signing involves a 60-day ceasefire extension during which the Strait of Hormuz would be reopened, Iran would be able to freely sell oil, and negotiations would be held on curbing Iran's nuclear program, according to a U.S. official. Why it matters: The deal would avoid an escalation of the war and decrease the pressure on the global oil supply. However, it's unclear whether it will lead to a lasting peace agreement that also addresses President Trump's nuclear demands. State of play: Both Trump and the mediators have indicated the deal could be announced on Sunday, though it has not been finalized and could still fall apart. The U.S. official provided a detailed outline of the draft as it stands, much of which was verified by other sources close to the talks. Those details have not been confirmed by the Iranian side, though Tehran has also indicated a deal is getting close. What's in the deal: Both sides would sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that would last 60 days and could be extended by mutual consent. During the 60-day period, the Strait of Hormuz would be open with no tolls and Iran would agree to clear the mines it deployed in the strait to let ships pass freely. In exchange, the U.S. would lift its blockade on Iranian ports

and issue some sanctions waivers to allow Iran to sell oil freely. The U.S. official acknowledged that would be a boon to Iran's economy, but said it would also give significant relief to the global oil market. The U.S. official said the faster the Iranians clear the mines and let shipping resume, the faster the blockade will be lifted. The official said Trump's key principle in the agreement is "relief for performance." Iran wanted funds unfrozen immediately and permanent sanctions relief, but the U.S. side said that would only happen after tangible concessions were made, according to the official. The draft MOU includes commitments from Iran to never pursue nuclear weapons and to negotiate over a suspension of its uranium enrichment program and the removal of its stockpile of highly enriched uranium, the U.S. official said. According to two sources with knowledge, Iran gave the U.S. through the mediators verbal commitments about the scope of the concessions it's willing to make on suspending enrichment and giving up the nuclear material. The U.S. would agree to negotiate over lifting sanctions and unfreezing Iranian funds during the 60-day period - though those steps would only be implemented as part of a final agreement that is verifiably implemented. U.S. forces that were mobilized in recent months would stay in the region during the 60-day period and only withdraw if a final deal is reached.

China continues search for mine blast victims

NEWS DESK

QINYUAN, China: Emergency rescuers in northern China were undertaking a major operation on Sunday to find two people still missing after a gas explosion at a coal mine killed at least 82. The blast at the Liushenyu shaft in Shanxi province on Friday was the country's worst mining disaster in nearly two decades, with 247 workers underground at the time, according to state media. Hundreds of rescuers have rushed to the site, with medical teams taking 128 people to hospital as

of Saturday evening, loaded into ambulances and carried on stretchers. AFP journalists saw police blocking the road leading to the mine late Saturday, allowing only authorized vehicles to enter. Helmeted rescuers took turns descending into the shaft overnight to look for the two missing workers, also sending down a robot to probe the mine conditions, state media reported. "As long as there is hope, we will make every possible effort," one rescuer told state news agency Xinhua. Chinese authorities launched an investigation into the blast, the worst since 2009 when 108 people were killed in a mine explosion in northeastern Heilongjiang province. Preliminary findings showed the company operating the mine, reported as Shanxi Tongzhou Group, had committed "serious illegal violations," authorities told a press conference broadcast by the state-run CCTV. "Those found responsible will be severely punished in accordance with laws and regulations," they added. More than half of the workers in the shaft on Friday had gone down without being properly registered, state media said, citing a personnel board at the site.

Man dies after being attacked by shark

DNA

CANBERRA: A 39-year-old man has died after being attacked by a shark at the Great Barrier Reef on Sunday, police said, the second fatal shark attack in Australia this month. The man was rushed to shore after being bitten near Kennedy Shoal, a shallow reef around 45 km (28 miles) off the coast of the state of Queensland in northeast Australia, a Queensland Police Service spokesperson said. The man was met by an ambulance but died shortly afterwards, the spokesperson said, without identifying him.

Sindh govt announces 3 Eid holidays

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Sindh government has announced a three-day Eidul Azha holiday from May 26 to 28, in correction of an earlier notification of a four-day holiday, which included Friday. The decision is in line with the federal government's announcement of a three-day public holiday from Tuesday to Thursday to mark Eidul Azha. In a corrigendum dated May 23 and issued by Sindh Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, the provincial government declared May 26 (Tuesday), May 27 (Wednesday), and May 28 (Thursday) as public holidays for Eidul Azha throughout the province, "except essential services and departments/offices engaged in preparation of budget for financial year 2026-27".

Russian embassy condemns attack

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Russia in Pakistan strongly condemns the May 24 terrorist attack in the vicinity of a railway station in Quetta, Balochistan province. We hope that those who organized this attack will be identified and brought to justice. We extend our deepest condolences to the families and friends of the victims and wish all those injured a speedy recovery.

Moroccan culinary Festival in the Capital

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The vibrant Moroccan Food Festival concluded at the luxurious Mövenpick Hotel Centaurus Islamabad after captivating guests with the rich aromas, exotic flavors, and cultural warmth of Morocco's celebrated cuisine. The festival, organized in collaboration with the Embassy of Morocco, provided visitors with a memorable culinary journey showcasing the traditions and heritage of Moroccan gastronomy. Food lovers, diplomats, members of the business community, and residents of the capital thronged the festival throughout its duration, enjoying authentic Moroccan delicacies prepared by expert chefs. Traditional dishes such as tajine, couscous, pastilla, and harira remained the center of attraction, offering guests an unforgettable taste of Morocco's centuries-old culinary traditions. Speaking at the opening ceremony, the Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of Morocco, Ahmed Drif, welcomed the participants on behalf of Ambassador Mohamed Karmoune, who was in Rabat on an official mission. He said the festival had been or-



ganized in partnership with Mövenpick Hotel Centaurus Islamabad to showcase Morocco's rich and generous culinary culture, deeply rooted in Berber, Arab, Andalusian, and Oriental traditions. Ahmed Drif noted that Moroccan cuisine reflects the country's diverse cultural influences and centuries-old heritage. He added that the food festival celebrated Morocco's unique culinary identity and provided visitors with an excellent opportunity to discover the flavors and traditions that define Moroccan cuisine. "Moroccan food is not merely about taste; it is a reflection of our history, hospitality, and cultural diversity," he remarked, adding that such cultural events help



strengthen people-to-people ties between Pakistan and Morocco. General Manager of Mövenpick Hotel Centaurus Islamabad, Nicolas Verdun, also addressed the gathering and thanked the Embassy of Morocco for partnering with the hotel in organizing the successful festival. He said the management of the hotel was committed to offering unique cultural and

culinary experiences to guests and assured that similar international food festivals would continue to be organized in the future as well. The Moroccan Food Festival not only delighted food enthusiasts but also served as a platform for cultural exchange, promoting friendship and understanding between the people of Pakistan and Morocco through the universal language of cuisine.