



Islamabad POST

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Messi diagnosed with fatigue, return plan uncertain

Detailed News On Page-06

Putin offers debt relief for fighters

Detailed News On Page-08



Rubio says Iran deal still likely

Detailed News On Page-01



US hits Iran with new strikes despite ceasefire

Forces conducted "self-defense" strikes in southern Iran to protect US troops from threats, says Centcom spokesman; Iran seeks release of \$24bn in potential agreement with US, says source

DNA

WASHINGTON: US forces attacked missile sites in southern Iran and boats trying to lay mines on Monday, US Central Command said, imperiling a fragile ceasefire and casting new doubt on a deal to end the Middle East war. The strikes came as top Iranian negotiators arrived in Doha for the latest round of talks to end the months-long conflict, and as the Israeli military stepped up hostilities with Iran-backed Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. Oil prices fluctuated in the wake of the US strikes, which may threaten any agreement to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, where an Iranian blockade has choked global fuel supplies. "US forces conducted self-defence strikes in southern Iran today to protect our troops from threats posed by Iranian forces," Tim Hawkins, a US Central Command spokesman, said in a statement. It gave no details of the attacks and said only that the targets included missile launch sites and boats trying to "emplace mines." Iran's state-run broadcaster IRIB reported several loud explosions were heard in the vicinity of Bandar Abbas at around midnight local time (2030 GMT Monday). It added that the situation in the southern port city was normal and local authorities were investigating the cause of the blasts. The strikes threatened a ceasefire that began on April 8 as the United States and Iran struggle to reach an accord to end a war that has rattled the global economy with a severe disruption of energy flows. Oil prices remained below \$100 on Tuesday morning, with West Texas Intermediate dropping more than 5% while international benchmark Brent crude was up. Hopes of an accord took another blow when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to "crush" Hezbollah in Lebanon. Iran has demanded that any peace accord apply to the fighting in Lebanon as well. Trump also said in a

Continued on Page 06

Supreme leader issues severe warning to US

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Tensions in the Middle East have escalated sharply as a fragile, weeks-old ceasefire faces severe pressure from multiple fronts. Provocative rhetoric from Iran's newly named Supreme Leader collided with an explicit order from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to ramp up military action in Lebanon. Iran: "Nations will no longer serve as shields" In a written Eid al-Adha message broadcast on his Telegram channel, Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, issued a fierce warning to the United States and its regional allies. Khamenei asserted that the geopolitical landscape has permanently shifted, stating: "What is certain in this regard is that the hands of time will not turn backwards, and the nations and lands of the region will no longer serve as shields for American bases." He further claimed that the U.S. is losing its historical foothold and "moving further away from its former status with each passing day." Turning his focus to Israel, Khamenei called it a "shaky Zionist regime" that is rapidly approaching the "final stages of their ill-fated lifespan." Notably, the 56-year-old leader has not made a public appearance since taking office on March 8, following injuries sustained in military strikes.

Continued on Page 06



BEIJING: Prof. Huang Sanwen conferred the Honorary Professorship of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) upon Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

Hajj sermon urges Muslims to uphold patience

Millions gather at Arafat as pilgrims perform Hajj's most significant ritual

DNA

MAKKAH: Muslims were urged to remain patient during hardships and strengthen their devotion to Allah during the Hajj sermon delivered at Namirah Mosque in Arafat on Tuesday. Sheikh Ali Al Hudaifi delivered the Hajj Khutbah before millions of pilgrims gathered in the plains of Arafat. Following the sermon, pilgrims offered combined and shortened Zuhr and Asr prayers. Addressing the congregation, Sheikh Al Hudaifi called on Muslims to adopt piety and fulfil their commitments. "O people, fear Allah, for by it the servant attains salvation in his Hereafter," he said during the sermon.

Continued on Page 06

Concludes China visit

Shehbaz vows to deepen cooperation under CPEC II

He stated that under CPEC 2.0, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Information Technology were among Pakistan's four most important priority programmes that the government is pursuing on a fast-track basis

DNA

BEIJING: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday held a series of high-level meetings with leading Chinese enterprises, wherein he reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to deepening economic, industrial, and infrastructure cooperation under the framework of CPEC Phase II. The prime minister, who is on a four-day official visit to China, met with the delegation of FAMSUN led by CEO Zhengjun Chen and appreciated the company's longstanding contribution to Pakistan's agriculture sector, particularly in grain storage, feed production, and food security. He emphasized Pakistan's focus on reducing post-harvest losses and invited FAMSUN to establish manufacturing and technology

transfer facilities in Pakistan under the incentives available through Special Economic Zones and the Green Pakistan Initiative. Prime Minister Shehbaz also met with Chairman Hou Jianxin and the delegation of Shandong Xinxu Group Corporation and welcomed the Group's expanding footprint in Pakistan across maritime development, battery manufacturing, mineral processing, and industrial cooperation. He appreciated Xinxu Group's role in advancing the Xinxu Special Economic Zone, the Sea-to-Steel project at Port Qasim, and investments in Gwadar and northern mineral sectors, reaffirming his government's full support for these strategic projects and encouraged accelerated implementation under CPEC Phase II.

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Rubio says Iran deal still possible

JAIPUR, India: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Tuesday that a deal with Iran was still possible despite new American strikes that cast doubt on their fragile ceasefire. "There were some talks going on in Qatar today, so we'll see if we can make progress. I think it's a lot of talking back and forth going on about specific language in the initial document, so it'll take a few days," Rubio told reporters in Jaipur during a visit to India. "The president's expressed his desire to make it. He's either going to make a good deal or no deal," he said. The strikes came as top Iranian negotiators arrived in Doha for the latest round of talks to end the months-long conflict, which had prompted Iran to blockade the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial artery for global energy exports. - APP

Political wheeling-dealing

CM KP, Gohar meeting with Mohsin Naqvi spurs widespread speculations

PTI representatives conveyed concerns that continued restrictions on meetings with the jailed former prime minister could further aggravate the political atmosphere. Discussions also reportedly touched upon medical access and other humanitarian concerns related to the PTI founder

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: A recent meeting involving Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has sparked widespread political speculation, as multiple reports and claims continue to emerge about the purpose and significance of the interaction. However, informed sources familiar with the development said that the meeting, held on May 14 at Barrister Gohar's residence in Islamabad, was not limited to discussions on terrorism and security matters alone, contrary to some official portrayals. The News reported. According to sources,

Continued on Page 06

'MPAs not forming group against Afridi'

DNA

KHYBER Pakhtunkhwa Information Minister Shafi Jan on Tuesday dismissed reports of PTI MPAs forming a group against KP Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, terming them "fabricated and baseless". The statement comes in response to media reports claiming that around 50 PTI MPAs had formed a group against CM Afridi over dissatisfaction with his performance. It was also reported that the division may

Continued on Page 06

UN chief slams deadly terrorist attack

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres strongly condemned the deadly terrorist attack against a shuttle passenger train near Chaman Phatak in Quetta on Monday, and called for bringing the perpetrators to justice. According to media reports, at least 24 people were killed and many more were injured when an explosives-laden vehicle struck the train. In a statement issued by the UN spokesperson, Guterres extended his "deepest condolences" to the families of those killed and wishes a swift recovery to those injured. "The Secretary-General reiterates that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is unacceptable," the statement said. "He (the UN chief) stresses that the perpetrators must be identified and brought to justice. - APP

Trump lost the war but won the peace

OPINION

QAMAR BASHIR



WHEN President Donald Trump agreed to extend the Iran ceasefire for another sixty days and reopened the path toward a negotiated settlement, many observers viewed it merely as another tactical pause in a dangerous conflict. In reality, it represented something far deeper: the moment a president who had long been surrounded by war advocates, political pressure groups, strategic alliances, media influence, and ideological expectations finally realized that continuing the war could destroy not only the Middle East, but also America's global standing, economic stability, and military prestige. Trump's dilemma was unlike any faced by previous American presidents. On one side stood Israel and its vast network of political influence inside Washington. On the other stood the growing realization that the war with Iran was becoming economically unbearable, militarily risky, diplomatically

isolating, and strategically unwinnable. The relationship between Trump's inner circle and Israel has long attracted public attention. His eldest daughter, Ivanka Trump, converted to Orthodox Judaism before marrying Jared Kushner in 2009. Kushner comes from a deeply connected and influential Orthodox Jewish family with longstanding ties to Israeli political leadership, including Benjamin Netanyahu. Throughout Trump's political rise, Kushner became one of the most trusted figures in the White House and played a central role in Middle East diplomacy. For critics of Israeli influence in American politics, this relationship symbolized something larger: the ability of powerful lobbying networks to build close personal, financial, and ideological relationships with rising American politicians and business elites. The perception - whether exaggerated or real - is that influence in Washington is often shaped not merely through diplomacy, but through campaign financing, media support, elite networking, think tanks, and strategic political alliances that

Continued on Page 06

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Two alleged Lyari gang members arrested

KARACHI: Pakistan Rangers Sindh arrested two suspected members of the alleged "Jabal group" involved in robbery, street crime and drug peddling during an intelligence-based operation in the Baghdadi area of Lyari, a Rangers spokesperson said on Tuesday. The arrested suspects were identified as Irfan alias Jabal, stated to be the ring-leader of the gang, and Danish Hussain alias Dani Don. According to the spokesperson, Rangers personnel recovered an unlicensed 9mm pistol, a 30-bore pistol, ammunition and two mobile phones from the suspects' possession. The spokesperson said Irfan, along with his accomplices, was allegedly involved in several incidents of robbery, street crime, target killing, extortion and drug trafficking in Mahmoodabad, Chanesar Goth and adjoining areas of Karachi. More than 25 FIRs had reportedly been registered against the suspects at various police stations in the city, the spokesperson added. The Rangers official further said Danish allegedly worked as a front man for Irfan, who had previously been arrested by police and served a jail term. Efforts were under way to apprehend other members of the gang, the spokesperson said, adding that the arrested suspects, along with the recovered weapons and other seized items, had been handed over to police for further legal proceedings.—APP

IGP Sindh reviews Eid security plan

KARACHI: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Javed Alam Odho chaired an important meeting at the Central Police Office Karachi to review overall security arrangements and the law and order situation across the province ahead of Eid al-Adha. According to a spokesperson for Sindh Police on Tuesday, the meeting was attended in person by additional IGs of Karachi and the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), along with DIGs of Sindh Highway and Motorway Police, Special Branch, Training, Rapid Response Force (RRF), Traffic Karachi and CIA. Zonal DIGs, the Director General of Safe City Authority, and AIGs of administration, operations, media and public relations also attended, while Rangers officials, district SSPs and officers of SIU, AVCC and AVLJ joined the meeting through video link. The participants were briefed by senior police officers on the overall security situation and challenges relating to Eidul Azha arrangements across the province. Addressing the meeting, the IGP Sindh directed all police units to further tighten security measures in view of the prevailing security situation in the country. He stressed the need for effective intelligence-sharing and assessment among all law enforcement units and called for intensifying intelligence-based operations to curb crime. Javed Alam Odho also directed police officials to accelerate combing operations against street criminals in coordination with law enforcement agencies and ensure strict implementation of a zero-tolerance policy against criminal elements.—APP

Initiative of engaging kids as health advocates started in KP

"To complement routine immunization services, the School-to-Home Health Outreach Initiative was implemented as a key community engagement component of the broader MERF-GAVI Immunization Project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, covering Peshawar, Khyber, Kurram, and Karak districts," said Dr. Junaid, Project Lead MERF

DNA

PESHAWAR: An innovative initiative of engaging schoolchildren as 'Health Advocates' in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has helped strengthen immunization awareness, improve household behavioural change and increase in uptake of routine vaccination. The exercise, titled "School-to-Home Outreach," was launched to strengthen demand generation for routine immunization, reduce the number of zero-dose children and address persistent vaccine hesitancy in underserved and hard-to-reach communities. Despite ongoing services under the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), field monitoring continued to identify under-immunized and zero-dose children, mainly due to misinformation, low caregiver awareness, and weak communication at the household level. "To complement routine immunization services, the School-to-Home Health Outreach Initiative was implemented as a key community engagement component of the broader MERF-GAVI Immunization Project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, covering Peshawar, Khyber, Kurram, and Karak districts," said Dr. Junaid, Project Lead MERF. Under this approach, trained outreach workers engaged schoolchildren as community health

advocates and EPI champions, enabling them to promote immunization awareness within their households and communities, particularly in high-hesitancy and hard-to-reach areas. Outreach workers identified key government schools within their assigned areas, coordinated with school administrations, and conducted structured awareness sessions for students. Elder students were actively engaged as health messengers, linking classroom learning with communication at the household level. Since the launch of the initiative, a total of 1,248 structured awareness sessions have been conducted across participating schools, ensuring consistent engagement and reinforcement of EPI messages over time. These sessions enabled students to actively share immunization-related messages with their families and communities, making them trusted sources of health information within households. Through this integrated approach, students carried immunization messaging beyond schools into homes and communities, contributing to improved awareness and positive behavioural change regarding routine vaccination. The initiative reached an estimated 15,600 households and sensitized around 46,800 individuals across the four districts. Outreach workers reported that children frequently reminded families about vaccination schedules, encouraged caregivers to attend EPI sessions, and helped address mis-

conceptions related to vaccines at the household level. During the campaign, 52 outreach workers were deployed across the four districts. A total of 1,248 structured school awareness sessions were conducted, while 130 schools were directly engaged through outreach coverage. In Khyber district, a noticeable reduction in vaccine refusal trends was observed in intervention areas, particularly during outreach activities linked with schools. In Peshawar, urban informal settlements reported improved turnout and participation in vaccination sessions. In Kurram, student-led engagement played a vital role in countering misinformation in remote communities, while in Karak, improved coordination between schools and EPI teams strengthened follow-up and ensured completion of vaccination for defaulter children. A caregiver from Khyber district said, "When my child brings health messages from school every month, we pay attention. Now we never miss vaccination days." An outreach worker remarked, "Children became the strongest and most trusted messengers in the community, especially in areas where access and acceptance were difficult." The School-to-Home Health Outreach Initiative demonstrated that structured engagement of schoolchildren, supported by regular outreach sessions and strong community linkages, can significantly improve immunization awareness and strengthen routine vaccination uptake.

BISP advancing towards digital payments

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid Monday said the programme was moving towards digitizing beneficiary payments through Digital Wallets in line with the Prime Minister's vision for a cashless economy and under the special directions of the President of Pakistan. She stated this during a meeting held in Karachi with Governor State Bank of Pakistan Jameel Ahmad, where matters relating to BISP payments through Digital Wallets and implementation of the interoperability mechanism were discussed. Senator Rubina Khalid, accompanied by BISP Secretary Amer Ali Ahmad, said the process of distributing free mobile SIMs to beneficiaries had been expedited while awareness campaigns were also being strengthened so that those who had not yet received SIMs could collect them from their nearest BISP offices before June 15, said a news release. Highlighting the importance of interoperability—APP



ISLAMABAD: A man trying to control his sacrificial bull in a street of Federal Capital ahead of Eid Al-Adha.

Progress on T5, witnesses T4 LLO Testing reviewed

ISLAMABAD: Chairman WAPDA, Lt Gen Muhammad Saeed (Retd), was briefed on the progress of the projects during his visit to Tarbela Dam. The day-long visit was aimed at reviewing progress on the under-construction Tarbela 5th Extension Hydro-power Project (T5 HPP) and witnessed testing and commissioning of Low Level Outlet (LLO) of Tarbela 4th Extension Hydro-power Project (T4 HPP). Chairman IRSA Amjad Saeed, Members of IRSA Technical Committee and WAPDA's Member Water and Member Power also accompanied him during the visit. At T5 HPP, the Chairman was briefed about the component-wise progress achieved so far. These included Intake Structure, Connecting Tunnel, Penstock and LLO, Power House, Tailrace Culvert, Tailrace Canal and Switchyard. Concerted efforts are underway to meet the timelines for each component. The Chairman appreciated the efforts and directed the Project Team, the Consultants and the Contractors to take all requisite measures for expeditious execution of work while ensuring quality standards and safety parameters. T5 HPP has an installed generation capacity of 1530 MW. World Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank are providing US\$ 390 million and US\$ 300 million respectively for construction of the Project. With completion of T5 HPP, the installed power generation capacity at Tarbela will increase from 4888 MW to 6418 MW. Earlier at T4 HPP, the Chairman witnessed testing and commissioning of LLO to ensure availability of the outlet to meet IRSA's demands for water releases in Kharif season. During the visit of T4 HPP Machine Hall and Control Room, the Chairman was briefed that the Project, completed with the World Bank's financial assistance, started electricity generation in March 2018 and it has so far provided 33.254 billion units of electricity to the National Grid. Later, the Chairman had a briefing about the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of Tarbela Dam and Khanpur Dam.—DNA

Eid preparations gain momentum in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: With the arrival of Eid-ul-Azha approaching, the buying and selling of sacrificial animals has gained momentum across Rawalpindi, with a large number of citizens visiting livestock markets. To facilitate the public, the district administration has set up eight temporary cattle markets and sale points where arrangements for cleanliness, security, and other basic facilities are being ensured. According to the district administration, cattle markets have been established in various areas including Bhatta Chowk and Ranyal in Rawalpindi Cantt, near Fatima Jinnah Women University on Chakri Road, and at a designated plot near Police Station Rawat on GT Road. Similarly, a cattle market has been set up in Gujar Khan near the slaughterhouse on Galian Road, while in Wah Cantt, a designated sale point has been established near Sharif Hospital Stop on GT Road. In Taxila, a sale point has been set up near the Sunday Bazaar at Tumbair Market, while in Kallar Syedan and Kahuta, cattle markets and sale points have been made operational at Bypass Chowk and Tangi Road near Sakhi Sabzwari, respectively. All these facilities are being managed by relevant municipal bodies, cantonment boards, and the district administration, while assistant commissioners are continuously monitoring the arrangements. As Eid draws closer, crowds have significantly increased at these livestock markets. Citizens, along with their families, are visiting to purchase sacrificial animals, while children are also showing keen interest in selecting animals of their choice. Livestock traders said that the price of an average goat ranges between Rs50,000 and Rs80,000, while medium-sized cows are being sold between Rs200,000 and Rs300,000. Some buyers noted that prices have increased compared to last year; however, they remain hopeful of further adjustments. Many middle-class families are opting for collective sacrifice to fulfill the Sunnah of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) in line with directives of the Punjab government, special focus is being given to cleanliness, hygiene, and provision of civic facilities in livestock markets to ensure a safe and comfortable environment for both buyers and traders. Meanwhile, the Rawalpindi Waste Management Company has cancelled holidays of sanitary workers and officials to ensure effective cleanliness arrangements during Eid-ul-Azha. Following directives from Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, a comprehensive sanitation plan has also been prepared for the timely disposal of offal and maintenance of city cleanliness.—APP

Bhatta Chowk cattle market comes alive as Eid approaches

It is worth mentioning here that a total 8 cattle markets have been set up in Rawalpindi district including in Taxila, Wah Cantt, Gujar Khan, Kahuta, Rawalpindi' Cantonment areas, Rawat, Chakri Road and Kallar Syedan

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Twin cities' largest cattle market at Bhatta Chowk has started gaining momentum as Eid-ul-Azha draws closer, with increasing activity of traders and buyers across Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Traders from far-flung areas have brought a variety of healthy and well-groomed sacrificial animals, adding to the vibrancy of the market. The market presents colourful scenes, with large

and strong bulls on display at some spots, while goats and sheep of different breeds are attracting buyers at others. Citizens are visiting the market along with their families, where selection of animals, bargaining and purchasing activities are continuing throughout the day. Talking to APP, a buyer Yasir said he had come with his family to find a suitable animal and was satisfied with the variety available, though prices were slightly higher this

year. Another citizen, Amir, said that he was visiting different markets to compare prices and quality before making a final purchase, adding that arrangements at Bhatta Chowk were better than previous years. A cattle trader, Habib, informed that traders had brought animals from different areas of the country and were hopeful of good business in the coming days as the rush increases closer to Eid. The Rawalpindi Canton-

ment Board (RCB), being administrative body of the market has made arrangements on around an area of 25 acres, to facilitate both traders and visitors by providing water, electricity and medical services at the market. "We are regularly monitoring the market activities here, our staff is deployed in the mandi to maintain its standard", said an RCB official. Officials said cleanliness, security and animal care measures had also been ensured to provide a safe

and comfortable environment for buyers. Eid-ul-Azha, besides being a religious obligation, reflects the spirit of sacrifice and devotion, and the festive atmosphere at cattle markets across Rawalpindi is a manifestation of these sentiments. It is worth mentioning here that a total 8 cattle markets have been set up in Rawalpindi district including in Taxila, Wah Cantt, Gujar Khan, Kahuta, Rawalpindi' Cantonment areas, Rawat, Chakri Road and Kallar Syedan.

CNF seizes illegal liquor, narcotics worth Rs78m

During interrogation, another suspect, Muhammad Yaseen, was identified as the alleged supplier of narcotics to educational institutions across Punjab

LAHORE: Punjab Counter Narcotics Force (CNF) recovered illegal liquor and narcotics worth over Rs78 million in separate operations conducted in Sheikhupura and Multan divisions ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, officials said on Tuesday. Punjab Counter Narcotics Force Director General Brigadier Mazhar Iqbal said the force, acting on a confidential tip received through Helpline 1012, recovered illegal and substandard liquor worth Rs30 million from Bahar Colony in Sheikhupura, averting a potential tragedy and saving precious lives. The DG said the operation exposed an organized liquor supply network operating in Lahore, Sheikhupura and Multan divisions during Eid festivities. According to the spokesperson, the raid conducted on secret information revealed large-scale production of locally brewed liquor. Timely action by the force not only halted the illegal man-

ufacturing process but also led to the arrest of suspects at the spot. During the operation, authorities seized 24,910 litres of locally brewed liquor, including 182 cans containing 300 litres each, 17 fully filled tanks and two half-filled tanks with a capacity of 1,000 litres each. More than 3,200 bottles of 450ml liquor were also recovered. Officials also recovered a 30 bore pistol, three magazines and nine rounds of ammunition from the accused. CNF DG Mazhar Iqbal said the arrested suspects had been handed over to the Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Department Punjab for further legal action. He said every year hundreds of people in Punjab lost their lives due to the consumption of poisonous and substandard liquor, while many others suffered permanent disabilities. He termed the operation a major success in protecting public safety and human lives.

The DG further said the force had also arrested a gang involved in supplying narcotics to educational institutions in different cities of Punjab. During the operation, authorities recovered 16 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine, commonly known as Ice, worth approximately Rs48 million. A 40 bore rifle along with 10 rounds of ammunition was also seized from the suspects. The anti-narcotics operation was launched after a confidential tip received at the Multan station of the force. Following 96 hours of surveillance at Sher Shah Toll Plaza, two suspects identified as Iftikhar Ahmed and Shabbir Ahmed were arrested for their alleged involvement in Ice smuggling. During interrogation, another suspect, Muhammad Yaseen, was identified as the alleged supplier of narcotics to educational institutions across Punjab. He was later taken into custody after reportedly confessing to the offence.—APP

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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 Forced 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

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police...9266044
Motorway Police.9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi...5555489
CAA.....9281022



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....561116
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224
Potohar Town.....9209224
Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: A motorcyclist coming down from broken fence bridge with on 7th Avenue in the Federal Capital may cause any serious incidents, needs the attention of concerned authorities.

Musadik warns India against water aggression

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr. Musadik Malik on Tuesday warned that efforts to undermine international water-sharing agreements could jeopardize the rights of downstream nations, accusing India of attempting to politicize shared water resources in violation of long-standing international commitments. Addressing the Fourth High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development" in Dushanbe, Malik said unilateral actions affecting transboundary rivers could create serious global challenges related to water security, food production and climate resilience. "Water aggression is unacceptable," Malik said, stressing that no country should be allowed to use water as a weapon or suspend international agree-

ments unilaterally while depriving other nations of their lawful water rights. The minister urged India to respect the 1960 'Indus Waters Treaty' and honor international mediation mechanisms, warning that any attempt to place the treaty in abeyance would set a dangerous precedent for downstream countries around the world. Malik expressed concern over what he described as the decline of multilateralism in global affairs, saying cooperative international frameworks are increasingly being replaced by unilateral approaches. He warned that upstream countries could exploit this trend to pressure vulnerable downstream states by restricting access to shared water resources. Calling access to clean water a fundamental human right, Malik said farmers and rural communities in developing na-

tions are particularly vulnerable to disruptions in water supply. He also highlighted Pakistan's growing climate challenges, saying the country remains among the nation's most severely affected by global warming. Recurrent floods and extreme weather events, he said, have devastated infrastructure, damaged agricultural lands and disrupted livelihoods across Pakistan. The minister warned that increasingly frequent "super floods" are intensifying economic pressure on the country and contributing to food security concerns through declining agricultural productivity. During the conference, Malik also emphasized the urgent need for regional cooperation on glacial melt and ecosystem preservation. He noted that both Pakistan and Tajikistan host nearly 13,000 glaciers each and have lost approximately 1,000 glaciers because

of rising global temperatures. He called for stronger cross-border coordination to monitor shrinking glaciers and protect shared ecosystems, while also engaging in discussions on regional climate and conservation protocols, including cooperation on wildlife protection initiatives such as conservation. The Dushanbe conference is widely viewed as a preparatory forum for the upcoming United Nations Water Conference, where governments are expected to address growing concerns over climate change, transboundary water governance and global water security. Malik concluded by urging stronger international commitment to the enforcement of global water-sharing agreements, saying compliance with transboundary water treaties remains one of the major unresolved challenges facing the international community.—DNA

1st South Air flight lands at New Gwadar Int'l Airport

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a major boost to Gwadar air connectivity, private airline South Air has officially launched its first test flight service from Karachi to Gwadar, Gwadar Pro reported. The test flight has landed safely at the New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA). The operational airport supports the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

(CPEC) by facilitating smoother transportation of passengers, goods and services. According to the schedule at Karachi Airport, the first flight, operating under flight number Z8 905, departed on May 25 (Monday) at 12:00 PM from Karachi. It landed at 3:40 pm at New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA). The launch of this new air service is expected not only to reduce travel distances between Gwadar, Karachi, Quetta, and other cities, but

also to boost trade, tourism, and development activities across the Makran Division. Experts believe that improved connectivity between Gwadar Port and the airport could transform the city into an ideal trade and transit hub, where maritime and air transport complement each other—leading to increased business activity, better employment opportunities, and overall economic growth in the region.

Pak, China celebrate diplomatic ties

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani and Chinese officials marked the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries at a ceremony in Karachi, reaffirming support for deeper economic and strategic cooperation, including the next phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The event was attended by senior political leaders, diplomats, business executives and military officials from both countries, according to a Gwadar Pro's report. Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said the Pakistan-China relationship had remained resilient through regional and global challenges and described the two countries as "iron brothers." Bilawal said the next phase of CPEC, commonly referred to as CPEC 2.0, would focus on industrial cooperation, technology transfer, innovation and special economic zones. He also highlighted the role of Sindh and Karachi in future trade, investment and connectivity projects involving China. Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said the relationship between Islamabad and Beijing remained one of Pakistan's strongest diplomatic partnerships and noted ongoing Chinese investment in transport, energy, industrial and infrastructure projects in Sindh.—APP

Eid ul Azha sparks surge in BBQ essentials sale

ISLAMABAD: With Eid ul Azha approaching, residents of the capital are busy preparing for the traditional barbecues that have become a hallmark of the festive celebrations. Markets across the city, including Aabpara Market and G-9 Markaz, are witnessing a surge in demand for barbecue-related items such as coal, burners, skewers and knives. Shopkeepers report a significant increase in sales as the festival draws nearer. Zaheer, a vendor at Aabpara Market, told APP that demand for BBQ burners and accessories nearly doubles in the days leading up to Eid. "This is a profitable season for us and the best time to sell these items," he said while arranging stock for eager customers. Many buyers consider barbecue gatherings an essential part of Eid festivities. Ali, a shopper at Aabpara


Market, said, "Eid ul Adha feels incomplete without barbecue and seekh kebabs. Every year, we host a barbecue night for family and friends." However, Ali and several other consumers expressed concern over the rising prices of essential barbecue items. Hania, another visitor at G-9 Markaz, said, "We already have some items at home, but I came to buy a new BBQ burner. Every year, my family celebrates the first night of Eid on our rooftop with a traditional barbecue," she said. Hania noted that while the tradition strengthens family bonds and adds joy to the occasion, rising costs are becoming burdensome. "It would be a relief if the authorities took steps to stabilise prices so everyone could celebrate without worry," she added.—APP

ITP finalizes Eid traffic plan

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) reviewed traffic arrangements for Eid-ul-Adha during a meeting chaired by Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Muhammad Sarfraz Virk to ensure smooth and safe traffic flow across the federal capital during the holidays. An ITP official told APP on Tuesday that SP Traffic and all zonal officers attended the review meeting. During the meeting, the CTO Virk reviewed traffic arrangements made for mosques, parks, public places, markets and cattle markets across Islamabad. Safe City surveillance cameras would also be utilized to further strengthen traffic monitoring and management in different parts of the city during Eid holidays. Virk directed all zonal officers to remain present in the field throughout Eid holidays and personally supervise traffic arrangements in their respective areas. He emphasized that effective traffic management at all duty points must be ensured to facilitate safe travel for citizens during Eid days.—APP

Police recover abducted three-year-old girl

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police recovered an abducted three-year-old girl belonging to Islamabad's Golra area from Abbottabad within hours through the help of modern technology, Safe City cameras and human intelligence. An official told APP on Tuesday that the parents of the minor girl, identified as Samra, daughter of Waqar, reported the kidnapping incident at Golra Police Station, upon which SSP Operations Qazi Ali Raza took immediate notice and constituted special police teams under the supervision of SP Sadder Zone Kazim Naqvi. The official said police teams launched immediate search and combing operations in different areas and traced the child using Safe City surveillance cameras, modern technology and human intelligence sources. During a successful operation in Abbottabad, police safely recovered the abducted girl.—APP



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Notice Inviting E-Bidding Single Stage One Envelope Through E-PADS

The Rawalpindi Cantonment Board being the procuring entity hereby invites E-Bids from reputable firms registered with Pakistan Engineering Council having valid NTN No, and PEC Registration of relevant codes and relevant category are eligible to apply as mentioned in the Bidding Documents and the Scope of the Project has been defined in bidding documents for the following project:

Sr #	Description	Estimated Cost Rs. In Millions	02% Earnest Money in Rs.	EPADS v2.0
01	Construction of Boundary wall, Entrance Gates and allied miscellaneous works at Cattle Market Bhatta Chowk.	39.20 M	784000	P40379

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- i. **Availability of Documents:**
Bidding documents shall be available **only** on PPRA and EPADS V2.0 portals. No hard copies shall be issued. Only firms registered on EPADS as vendors shall be eligible to participate.
- ii. **Submission & Opening of Bids:**
E-bids, prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in the bidding documents, must be submitted **electronically** through EPADS V2.0 on or before:
12 June, 2026 at 1:00 PM
The bids will be opened on the same day at:
12 June, 2026 at 1:30 PM
- iii. **Manual submission of bids shall not be entertained.** Vendors not registered on EPADS V2.0 may register at: <https://vendors.epads.gov.pk/>
Tutorial link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNW6T38v7tc>
- iv. **Grievance Redressal:**
In accordance with **Rule 48 of PPRA Rules, 2004**, a **Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC)** has been constituted. The notification is available on the procuring agency's website and EPADS portal.
- v. **Procurement Method:**
Procurement shall be carried out through **Open Competitive Bidding under Single Stage – One Envelope Procedure PPRA rule 36(a)**, adopting the **Least Cost Based Selection (LCBS)** technique in line with PPRA Rules, 2004.
- vi. **Earnest Money:**
Bidders shall submit **2% of the estimated cost** in the shape of **Call Deposit Receipt (CDR)** issued by any scheduled bank in favour of the **Cantonment Executive Officer, Rawalpindi Cantonment Board**.
 - i. A scanned copy shall be uploaded with the e-bid.
 - ii. The original CDR must be submitted **prior to opening of bids**.
- vii. **Award of Contract:**
Issuance of work order shall be subject to the approval of the **Competent Authority**.
- viii. **Eligibility:**
Firms/contractors **blacklisted by any Government/Semi-Government organization** shall not be eligible to participate.
- ix. **Additional Terms:**
Detailed terms and conditions may be seen in the office of the **Rawalpindi Cantonment Board** during working hours on any working day.
- x. **Right of Rejection:**
The Procuring Agency reserves the right to **accept or reject any or all bids** prior to acceptance in accordance with **Rule 33(1) of PPRA Rules, 2004**, without assigning any reason.

PID(1)9559/25 Cantonment Executive Officer Rawalpindi

Briefs

Rs 2.6m
overcharged
fare refunded
to passengers

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) has returned more than Rs2.6 million to passengers recovered from transporters on account of excessive fares during a nationwide campaign against overcharging and overloading. According to an NHMP spokesperson, the special campaign was being carried out on the directions of Inspector General Sultan Ahmed Chaudhry to curb overcharging, overloading and traffic violations by public transport vehicles. The spokesperson said more than 9,000 challans had also been issued to passenger vehicles over overloading, overcharging and incomplete travel documents. Passengers were advised to register complaints directly with Motorway Police officers, through the helpline 130, or via the official social media handle @NHMP, the spokesperson added. The NHMP is also conducting awareness campaigns regarding road safety at toll plazas across the country, the spokesperson said.—APP

FIA foils
suspected
human
trafficking bid

ISLAMABAD, May 26 (APP): Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Immigration Islamabad foiled a suspected human trafficking attempt and offloaded a woman passenger during timely action at Islamabad International Airport. An official told APP on Tuesday that passenger Sheeza Fatima, daughter of Tariq Mehmood, travelling to Thailand through Thai Airways flight TG-350, was referred for secondary profiling at the immigration counter on May 25, 2026.

During interrogation and scrutiny of travel documents, the official said it surfaced that the woman was allegedly being trafficked abroad by accused Naeem Irshad Gill. The victim reportedly disclosed during initial questioning that the same accused had earlier attempted to send her abroad from Allama Iqbal International Airport Lahore on May 24, 2026. According to preliminary findings, the accused appeared to have links with a human trafficking network involved in illegal overseas movement of individuals. The official further said a large number of electronic devices were also recovered from another passenger accompanying the case, indicating possible links with traffickers and smugglers.

Both passengers were offloaded and shifted to FIA Anti-Human Trafficking Circle (AHTC) Islamabad for further legal action and registration of a case, while further investigation into the network was underway.—APP

35,000
volunteers
mobilized as
Hajj volunteer

ISLAMABAD, May 26 (APP): The Hajj Volunteer Operations Center has launched its activities for the Hajj 1447 AH season with plans to mobilize more than 35,000 male and female volunteers across the holy sites to support pilgrims during Hajj rituals.

According to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA), the center is operating for the third consecutive year in cooperation with several government and nonprofit organizations, including the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, the Pilgrim Experience Program, and the National Center for Non-Profit Sector. The report said the center aims to organize and strengthen volunteer efforts through an integrated operational system designed to improve coordination among participating organizations and enhance services provided to pilgrims. Authorities said the initiative reflects Saudi Arabia's growing institutional volunteer model based on digital systems, unified operations, and real-time performance monitoring. SPA told APP that during Hajj 1446 AH, the center facilitated the participation of more than 34,000 volunteers who completed over 2.8 million volunteer hours, exceeding planned participation targets by 138 percent.—APP



ISLAMABAD: A deserted view of Jinnah Avenue in the Federal Capital as the mostly people went to their native towns to celebrate Eid with their love ones.

Over 3,700 cops deployed
to maintain security at Eid

The CPO further said a special patrolling plan has been devised through police mobiles and motorcycle squads, while more than 43 special pickets have been set up across the district to strengthen security monitoring

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Police have finalized a comprehensive security and traffic management plan for Eid ul Azha to ensure public safety, maintain a peaceful environment, and keep traffic flowing smoothly across the district during the festive holidays. According to City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani, more than 3,700 police officers and personnel will perform duties at Eid congrega-

tions, public places, and major highways throughout the district. The CPO said special security and traffic arrangements have been made for Eid prayers at 736 mosques, 62 Imambargahs, and 60 open grounds to provide citizens with a safe and convenient environment during the auspicious occasion. To maintain smooth traffic flow across the city, over 1,000 traffic officers and personnel will remain deployed on roads and key intersections. In addition, 25 special check-

points have been established to prevent one-wheeling and ensure public safety, where more than 250 officers and officials will perform duties. Police authorities have also enhanced security at parks, public places, and recreational areas, with more than 350 personnel assigned to these locations. Meanwhile, 277 officers and jawans will perform security duties at graveyards during Eid days. The CPO further said a special patrolling plan has been devised through police mobiles and motorcycle squads, while more than 43 special pickets have been set up

across the district to strengthen security monitoring. He added that alongside district police, the Elite Force, Ladies Police, Dolphin Force, and Muhafiz Squad will also remain on duty during Eid ul Azha, while senior police officers will personally supervise field operations to ensure effective implementation of the security plan. According to a spokesperson for Rawalpindi Police, all available resources are being utilized to ensure foolproof security arrangements so citizens can celebrate Eid ul Azha in a peaceful and secure environment.

Nationwide alert issued for
heatwave, flash floods

ISLAMABAD: The National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC) of the National Disaster Management Authority has issued a nationwide weather outlook for May 26 to 31, warning that rising temperatures, heatwave conditions, glacial melting, flash floods, and landslides could impact several parts of Pakistan, particularly the northern and southern regions. The advisory outlines expected weather systems, the most vulnerable regions, intensifying threats, and how federal and provincial authorities are preparing emergency response measures to protect public safety. According to the NDMA, temperatures are expected to rise significantly across most parts of the country, with several regions likely to experience extreme heat ranging between 40°C and 48°C. Southern Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan are expected to remain under intense heatwave conditions during the forecast period. The NDMA said provincial disaster management authorities have already initiated anticipatory actions in line with federal directives to tackle any emergency arising from extreme temperatures. Public awareness campaigns have been launched, while emergency response teams, cooling centers and medical preparedness measures are being strengthened nationwide. The NEOC stated that moist western weather systems may trigger light rain in northern areas, including the Pothohar region. However, rapidly rising temperatures in Gilgit-Baltistan, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and other mountainous areas are accelerating glacier melt, increasing the risk of landslides, flash floods and Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs). Areas including Hunza, Nagar, Gilgit, Chilas, Astore, Shigar, Chitral, Kalam, Upper Kohistan and parts of Azad Kashmir have been identified as vulnerable to landslides. The NDMA further warned that key routes including the Karakoram Highway, Shigar Valley Road, Skardu Road and Deosai Road may face blockages due to falling debris and landslides. The authority also identified Shimshal, Attabadd Lake, Karimabad, Gulmit, Shishkat Bala and Passu as highly sensitive areas where road connectivity may be disrupted due to unstable mountain slopes. Due to rapidly melting glaciers and the possible bursting of glacial lakes, flood-like situations may emerge in Darkot, Lasht, Reshun, Booni, Bad Swat, Shisper, Golgin, Hanarchi, Roshan and Kumrat. Mountain streams and rivers in Hunza, Ghizer, Diamer, Astore, Ghanche, Shigar, Chitral, Dir, Swat and Kohistan may also witness unusually high water flows. In Sindh, districts including Jacobabad, Qamber, Shahdadkot, Dadu, Jamshoro, Khairpur, Sanghar, Umerkot, Sukkur, Ghotki and Mirpurkhas are expected to remain under severe heat stress. Similarly, Chagai, Washuk, Kharan, Turbat, Dera Murad Jamali, Usta Muhammad, Sibi, Lehri, Naseerabad and Jaffarabad in Balochistan are likely to experience extreme temperatures. Punjab regions including Multan, Lodhran, Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Toba Tek Singh, Jhang, Muzaffargarh, Bhakkar, Layyah, Lahore, Sahiwal and Kasur are also expected to face intensified heatwave conditions.—DNA

Haider assures
CNG sector to
take up issues

RAWALPINDI: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan on Tuesday assured the CNG sector of support. He said that he would take up the issues facing the CNG owners with relevant authorities. The governor remarked this while meeting a delegation of the CNG Owners Association at Punjab House in Islamabad. The delegation apprised the governor of issues being faced by the sector and sought resolution of their de-

mands. The governor said the concerns were legitimate and assured to take up the matter with the relevant authorities for early relief. He said that the business community was continuing operations despite challenging economic conditions, calling it a reflection of patriotism. He expressed optimism that the country would soon overcome economic difficulties. Referring to the broader national context, the governor said that the civil and military leadership had enhanced Pakistan's stature at the global level. He also said that President Asif Ali Zardari had consistently advocated democratic continuity and reconciliation in the national interest. Sardar Saleem Haider Khan maintained that the Pakistan Peoples Party had always represented the underprivileged and worked for resolving issues faced by the common man. The delegation appreciated the governor's welfare initiatives and assured their full cooperation.—APP

Scholars urge devotion in
Dhul Hijjah first ten days

ISLAMABAD: Religious scholars and officials have described the first ten days of Dhul Hijjah as among the holiest and most spiritually rewarding days of the Islamic year, urging Muslims to devote the sacred period to prayers, fasting, charity and remembrance of Allah. Special sermons delivered in mosques highlighted the religious significance of the days, emphasizing that while Dhul Hijjah is commonly associated with Qurbani and Eid-ul-Adha preparations, its deeper spiritual message often receives less public attention. Talking to media, the official spokesperson of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Muhammad Umar Butt said that the first ten days of Dhul Hijjah hold immense importance in the light of the Holy Quran and Hadith. He said Dhul Hijjah, the final month of the Islamic calendar, was regarded as sacred even before Islam, while Islam further elevated its sanctity, particularly the first ten days. Referring to Surah Al-Fajr, he cited the verses, "By the dawn; and by the ten nights," explaining that according to Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas (RA), the "ten nights" refer to the first ten nights of Dhul Hijjah. He said Allah Almighty taking oath by these nights reflects their greatness and elevated status. Quoting a narration from Musnad Ahmad, he added that the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) declared that no days are greater in the sight of Allah, nor are good deeds performed during them more

beloved to Him, than those carried out in the first ten days of Dhul Hijjah. Muhammad Umar Butt urged Muslims to increase recitation of Tahleel (La ilaha illallah), Takbeer (Allahu Akbar) and Tahmeed (Alhamdulillah) during these days. He further said that according to Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas (RA), rewards for good deeds during this sacred period are multiplied many times over. Highlighting the significance of Yaum-e-Arafah, the 9th of Dhul Hijjah, he said it is among the most virtuous days in Islam, while the blessed days conclude with Eid-ul-Adha, when Muslims around the world offer sacrifices in obedience to Allah and commemorate the spirit of devotion and submission. In a conversation with , Information Secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami Women Wing Islamabad, Sadia Saif, stressed the spiritual significance and blessings of the holy month and urged Muslims to increase worship, repentance, charity and remembrance of Allah during the first ten days. She said Allah Almighty declared four months as sacred in the Holy Qur'an, including Dhul Hijjah, Dhul Qa'dah, Muharram and Rajab, adding that Muslims are instructed not to wrong themselves during these sacred months. She also reminded worshippers to recite Takbirat after obligatory prayers from the Fajr of 9th Dhul Hijjah until the Asr prayer of 13th Dhul Hijjah.—APP

APHC extends
Eid greetings
to Muslim
Ummah
worldwide

ISLAMABAD: On the joyous and blessed occasion of Eid-ul-Adha, the leadership of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) Azad Kashmir and Pakistan Chapter extended heartfelt Eid greetings to the Muslim Ummah worldwide, the people of Jammu and Kashmir, Hurriyat detainees, political activists, and the families of the martyrs of Kashmir. In a joint statement, the Hurriyat leaders including Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi, General Secretary Advocate Parvez Ahmad Shah, Information Secretary Mushtaq Ahmad Butt, and other senior leaders, said that Eid-ul-Adha is not merely a religious festival, but a profound symbol of sacrifice, loyalty, piety, obedience to Allah, and unwavering devotion. They described the unparalleled sacrifices of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and Prophet Ismail (AS) as a timeless example for the Muslim Ummah, teaching humanity that true faith demands sacrifices in the pursuit of truth, justice, dignity, and the defense of oppressed people. The leaders stated that the people of Kashmir have been rendering immense sacrifices for decades in their struggle for the fundamental right to self-determination, freedom, dignity, and justice. They emphasized that the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha serves as a renewed pledge to continue the Kashmir freedom movement at every level until it reaches its logical and legitimate conclusion. The APHC leadership appealed to the people of Jammu and Kashmir not to forget those suffering under oppression, siege, poverty, imprisonment, and humanitarian hardships during the Eid celebrations. They particularly urged the public to remember the families of martyrs, widows, orphaned children.—APP

Imli-Aloo Bukhara Sharbat
refreshes capital residents

ISLAMABAD: As temperatures continue to soar in the federal capital, residents are increasingly turning to traditional desi beverages to beat the heat, with Imli-Aloo Bukhara sharbat emerging as one of the most popular summer drinks among people of all ages. The timeless flavour of Imli-Aloo Bukhara sharbat continues to offer residents a refreshing escape while keeping alive a cherished culinary tradition. Known for its tangy, sweet and refreshing taste, the traditional drink made from tamarind (imli) and dried plums (aloo bukhar) has remained a household favourite for decades, despite the growing popularity of carbonated beverages and commercially packaged juices. Prepared using soaked tamarind, dried plums, sugar, black salt, mint and chilled water, the sharbat is typically served with ice and garnished with fresh mint leaves. Some vendors also add lemon juice and spices to enhance its flavour. Street vendors, juice stalls and roadside eateries across Islamabad and Rawalpindi are witnessing increased demand for the cooling drink, particularly during peak afternoon hours when temperatures are at their highest. Vendors say the drink not only provides relief from scorching heat but is also valued for its natural ingredients and digestive benefits. Imran, a vendor who has been selling Imli-Aloo Bukhara sharbat during summers for the past ten years, told APP that people continue to prefer traditional sharbats because they feel refreshed and healthy after consuming them. "Imli and aloo bukhar together create a unique flavour that customers enjoy, especially during extreme summer days," he added.—APP

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Defence, Dignity and Diplomacy: Pakistan's Proud Path Since 28 May

MUHAMMAD MOHSIN IQBAL

IN the quiet dignity of retrospect, the 28th of May 1998 endures as one of the most solemn and elevating moments in Pakistan's journey as a nation. On that day, amidst the rugged hills of Chagai, our homeland answered provocation with measured resolve, proclaiming through the voice of nuclear capability its unyielding right to self-defence and strategic equilibrium in South Asia. It was not a gesture of bravado but an act of necessity, born of a people long tested by adversity and determined never to bow before existential threat. By the grace of Allah Almighty, Pakistan stood firm, its civil and military leadership united in wisdom and purpose. The provocation had come clearly. India's nuclear tests at Pokhran in mid-May 1998 reopened old wounds and posed a direct challenge to Pakistan's sovereignty. History had already recorded the wars of 1948, 1965, and 1971; the hostility that followed Partition had never truly subsided. In those critical days, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif demonstrated exemplary statesmanship. Facing immense international pressure, inducements, and threats of isolation, he consulted closely with the military high command and patriotic scientists. Together, civil and military leaders reviewed Pakistan's preparedness with calm deliberation. The decision, taken after prayerful reflection, was conveyed with resolve: Pakistan would exercise its sovereign right. On the 28th and 30th of May, Chagai-I and Chagai-II restored the delicate balance of deterrence. These were acts of restraint and responsibility, ensuring that peace would rest upon strength. Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan and dedicated teams from the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, supported by the unwavering commitment of institutions and personnel, translated vision into reality. Their combined efforts, under successive governments and military stewardship, had prepared the ground over decades. The foundations had been laid earlier, most notably after India's 1974 nuclear explosion. Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's historic declaration – that Pakistan would "eat grass, even go hungry" to secure its deterrent – ignited a national endeavour. Through periods of sanctions and adversity, civil leadership provided direction while the armed forces offered steadfast institutional support, guarding the programme's sanctity. This harmonious civil-military collaboration proved vital in 1998, when the nation spoke with one voice. Nearly three decades later, that same spirit of unity shone brightly in May 2025. When Pakistan faced manufactured aggression in a brief yet perilous



conflict with India, civil and military leadership once more stood shoulder to shoulder. Under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's government and the resolute command of the armed forces, led by Field Marshal General Syed Asim Munir, Pakistan responded with valour, precision, and unity of purpose. The armed forces, drawing upon years of professional excellence and operational readiness, executed their duties with distinction, while civilian institutions demonstrated seamless coordination. By the infinite mercy of Allah, victory was granted. Our defenders turned back the threat, bearing wounds with pride and saluting their martyrs with reverence. That triumph, rooted in the synergy between elected civilian government and military command, not only reaffirmed external deterrence but also strengthened internal cohesion. In its wake came unprecedented diplomatic successes. Pakistan emerged as a credible mediator in regional tensions, particularly in efforts to de-escalate conflicts in the Gulf. This role, facilitated through mature engagement by both civil and military leadership, earned respect across divides and highlighted Pakistan's commitment to stability. Field Marshal Asim Munir's elevation and the strengthening of coordinated defence structures reflected the evolution of a mature civil-military partnership dedicated to national security. Divine guidance has ever illuminated this path. The Holy Qur'an commands preparation of power to deter the enemy (Surah Al-Anfal, 8:60). Pakistan's leadership fulfilled this sacred duty. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, taught balance: "Tie your camel and trust in Allah." True security demands vigilance alongside faith. Nuclear capability, while indispensable, is no panacea. Hybrid threats – economic subversion, cyber challenges, and internal discord – require continued unity. As the Qur'an reminds us, Allah changes not the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves (Surah Ar-Ra'd, 13:11). A strong deterrent shields the frontier; only national cohesion, economic progress, and moral renewal can secure the future. On this anniversary, we offer humble gratitude to the Almighty who has shown repeated mercy. We salute the scientists whose genius lit the path, the soldiers who guard it still, the statesmen who bore heavy burdens with wisdom – from Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif to Shehbaz Sharif and beyond – and the military commanders whose partnership has fortified the nation. Their legacy is one of resolve tempered by responsibility. Pakistan stands tall today not through its own power alone, but by the will of Allah and the sacrifices of its sons. May this day renew in every heart the commitment to justice and steadfastness. As the Qur'an instructs, "O you who believe, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah..." (Surah An-Nisa, 4:135). Let us guard sovereignty with wisdom, mend divisions with sincerity, and walk humbly before our Creator. In unity between civil and military institutions, in faith, and in gratitude lies the true guarantee of our dignity. May Allah continue to protect Pakistan, guide its leaders, and grant it strength – ever resolute, ever thankful, and ever victorious in His cause.

The Thucydides Trap and Choices for China and United States

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Domestic politics in both countries further complicate the picture. In the United States, bipartisan scepticism towards China has intensified amid concerns over trade imbalances, intellectual property, and national security. In China, nationalism and the narrative of national rejuvenation have strengthened public expectations regarding sovereignty and global status. Leaders on both sides increasingly operate under domestic pressures that make compromise politically sensitive. Nevertheless, geopolitics is ultimately ...

THE growing rivalry between United States and China has become the defining geopolitical question of the 21st century. From trade wars and technological competition to military manoeuvres in the Indo-Pacific, the relationship increasingly appears trapped in a cycle of suspicion and strategic anxiety. In recent years, many scholars and policymakers have invoked the idea of the "Thucydides Trap" to explain this dangerous trajectory. Yet history suggests that great power conflict is not inevitable. The future of US-China relations will depend less on historical determinism and more on political choices, diplomatic maturity, and strategic restraint. The term "Thucydides Trap" was popularised by political scientist Graham Allison, drawing inspiration from the ancient Greek historian Thucydides. In his account of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides famously argued that "it was the rise of Athens and the fear that this inspired in Sparta that made war inevitable." Allison used this historical analogy to describe the structural tensions that emerge when a rising power challenges an established hegemon. In the present era, China's remarkable economic and military rise has unsettled the strategic dominance long enjoyed by the United States. Over four decades, China transformed itself from a largely agrarian society into the world's second-largest economy and a central pillar of global manufacturing, trade, and finance. Beijing's growing naval presence in the South China Sea, technological ambitions, and expanding influence through initiatives such as the Belt and Road project have reinforced American concerns about a shifting balance of power. Washington, meanwhile, increasingly views China not merely as a competitor but as a strategic rival capable of reshaping the global order. Successive American administrations despite their domestic political differences have adopted tougher policies towards Beijing. Tariffs, export restrictions on advanced semiconductors, military alliances in the Indo-Pacific, and efforts to reduce dependence on Chinese supply chains all reflect a broader strategy of containment and competition. However, reducing this complex relationship to the inevitability of conflict risks oversimplifying both history and contemporary geopolitics. The Thucydides Trap should be understood as a warning, not a prophecy. History itself provides important nuance. While power transitions have often produced war, they have not always done so. The peaceful accommo-

modation between United Kingdom and the rising United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries demonstrates that strategic adjustments are possible. Similarly, despite intense ideological hostility during the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union avoided direct military confrontation through diplomacy, deterrence, and crisis management. The US-China rivalry differs significantly from earlier great power contests. Unlike the Cold War rivalry between Washington and Moscow, the American and Chinese economies are deeply interconnected. China remains one of America's largest trading partners, while US companies retain major investments in Chinese markets. Supply chains, financial systems, and technological networks bind the two powers in ways unprecedented in modern history. A military conflict would therefore carry catastrophic consequences not only for both states but for the entire global economy. Moreover, the nature of contemporary power itself has evolved. Military strength remains important, but influence today also depends on technological innovation, economic resilience, digital infrastructure, and diplomatic partnerships. In this context, competition does not necessarily require confrontation. Strategic rivalry can coexist with selective cooperation. Indeed, global challenges increasingly demand collaboration between Washington and Beijing. Climate change, artificial intelligence governance, nuclear non-proliferation, pandemics, and financial stability cannot be addressed effectively without coordination between the world's two largest economies. Even during periods of heightened tension, both countries have occasionally recognised the necessity of dialogue. High-level diplomatic engagements, military communication channels, and economic negotiations indicate that neither side entirely seeks uncontrolled escalation. Yet the danger lies in miscalculation. History shows that wars between major powers often emerge not from deliberate intention but from fear, nationalism, alliance commitments, and failures of communication. The Taiwan issue remains perhaps the most dangerous flashpoint in US-China relations. Beijing considers Taiwan an inseparable part of China, while the United States continues to support Taiwan's defence capabilities under its long-standing strategic framework. Any military incident in the Taiwan Strait could rapidly escalate into a wider confrontation. Similarly, disputes in the South China Sea continue to fuel tensions. Competing territorial claims, freedom

of navigation operations, and expanding military deployments create an atmosphere where accidents or tactical misjudgments could spiral beyond control. Domestic politics in both countries further complicate the picture. In the United States, bipartisan scepticism towards China has intensified amid concerns over trade imbalances, intellectual property, and national security. In China, nationalism and the narrative of national rejuvenation have strengthened public expectations regarding sovereignty and global status. Leaders on both sides increasingly operate under domestic pressures that make compromise politically sensitive. Nevertheless, geopolitics is ultimately shaped by human agency, not historical inevitability. Structural tensions may create pressure, but leaders still possess the capacity to choose restraint over escalation. The lesson of the Thucydides Trap is not that war must occur, but that unmanaged rivalry can become dangerously self-fulfilling. Avoiding conflict will require a careful balance between competition and coexistence. The United States must recognise that China's rise cannot simply be reversed through containment alone. China, for its part, must reassure the international community that its growing influence will not translate into coercive dominance. Both powers need institutional mechanisms capable of managing crises, reducing strategic mistrust, and maintaining open channels of communication. Middle powers also have an important role to play. Countries across Asia, Europe, and the Global South increasingly seek stability rather than binary alignment. Many states prefer a multipolar order in which economic cooperation can continue without forcing nations into rigid geopolitical blocs. The future of international politics may therefore depend on whether Washington and Beijing can move beyond zero-sum thinking. The Thucydides Trap is best understood not as an unavoidable fate written by history, but as a strategic warning about the consequences of fear and mismanagement. Great powers do not stumble into conflict merely because history predicts it; they do so when diplomacy fails, perceptions harden, and political imagination disappears. The main question is not whether China will rise or whether America will resist. The real question is whether both nations possess the wisdom to compete without catastrophe. History offers warnings, but it does not eliminate choice.

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The Kingdom That Gleamed

Dr. M. Mehboob Hassan Khan



Unemployment deepens this wound. In a just social contract, labor is the bridge between human effort and human worth. But what becomes of a society where effort finds no reward, where education yields no livelihood, and where the market devours aspiration? A young person without employment is not only deprived of income; he is deprived of rhythm, confidence and place

THERE is a story we read as children – perhaps you remember it still – of a magnificent kingdom where the boulevards were swept until they gleamed like mirrors, where fountains danced in marble courtyards, and where gardens bloomed with flowers so rare their names have faded from memory. Foreign travellers wrote odes to this realm. Merchants from distant shores praised its splendour. Yet beneath the gilded domes and along those very swept streets walked a people in tatters, their ribs countable through threadbare shirts, their children's eyes hollow with the particular darkness of hunger that no sunset can illuminate. The moral of the tale, our teachers told us, was elegantly simple: a nation is not its buildings, its gardens, or the admiring glances of foreign visitors. A nation is its people. One would have thought we learned the lesson. One would have been mistaken. Fast forward some decades, and the parable has acquired a Pakistani accent. Our kingdom too now gleams – if not in fountains and flowerbeds, then in the sterner marble of diplomatic triumph. Peace overtures are made with historic enemies. Strategic partnerships are forged in the capitals of the world. Our Field Marshal, draped in the ceremonial gravitas of starched khaki, is received in the halls of Washington, Beijing, and Riyadh with the deference once reserved for sovereigns. The world, we are told, has taken notice. Pakistan is back on the map. The photograph albums of international diplomacy swell with handshakes and communiques pledging eternal friendship. And all the while, in the unphotographed corners of the republic, a different story unfolds – one that no press release will ever capture. The philosopher Frantz Fanon, writing of post-colonial societies in *The Wretched of the Earth*, warned of a ruling class that "is not engaged in production, nor in invention, nor in construction, nor in labour; it is completely canalised into activities of the intermediary type. Its innermost vocation seems to be to keep in the running and to be part of the racket." The intermediary state – broker of geostrategic advantage, facilitator of great-power competition, recipient of aid and approval in exchange for services rendered – prospers in its own way. But the people? The people are the raw material of which diplomatic leverage is made, and like all raw materials, they are expendable in the calculus of high politics. This is the great fracture of our time: the widening gulf between the prestige of the

state and the pain of society. For the common citizen, the day does not begin with geopolitical triumph. It begins with arithmetic. A man earning a modest salary wakes not to the promise of national recognition, but to the burden of impossible calculation. How much for transport? How much for milk? Can cooking oil wait another week? Will the school fee be paid this month, or must the child be told to stay home 'for a few days'? The poor do not experience the nation through speeches; they experience it through prices. Inflation, in economic textbooks, is a rise in the general price level. In the life of the poor, however, inflation is a slow confiscation of dignity. It is the mother who waters down milk so that it may last until morning. It is the father who begins to walk to work because fuel has become a luxury. It is the graduate with a degree in hand and despair in the heart, standing in a queue with hundreds of others for a job that pays less than survival demands. Inflation is not merely a statistic; it is a daily humiliation. Unemployment deepens this wound. In a just social contract, labor is the bridge between human effort and human worth. But what becomes of a society where effort finds no reward, where education yields no livelihood, and where the market devours aspiration? A young person without employment is not only deprived of income; he is deprived of rhythm, confidence and place. He begins by postponing plans, then lowering expectations, and eventually doubting his own value. This is how economic failure mutates into moral injury. The tragedy is that such suffering is often made invisible by the language of 'macro-stability', 'security imperatives' and 'strategic gains'. These phrases have their place, no doubt. States must engage the world; diplomacy matters; peace is preferable to conflict. But when these objectives are celebrated without equal concern for bread, work and welfare, governance begins to resemble theatre. The stage is lit, the curtains are rich, and the applause is loud – but backstage the actors are hungry. One may admire a state's international recovery, but admiration abroad cannot be eaten at home. Consider the lived experience of a lower-middle-class family in an urban neighborhood. The breadwinner's salary, if he is fortunate enough to have one, no longer covers rent, utility bills, transport and food. Electricity bills arrive like legal threats. Gas supply is erratic, but the charges remain punishing. A visit to the doctor is postponed because di-

agnosis itself has become expensive. Children grow up listening not to bedtime stories but to whispered parental arguments about debt. Weddings are delayed, nutrition declines, and even small pleasures – fruit, meat, a school outing, a bus journey to visit relatives – become occasions for guilt rather than joy. In rural Pakistan, the picture is no gentler. A landless laborer, a small farmer, or a village shopkeeper lives at the mercy of rising input costs, shrinking margins, unstable markets and fragile public services. Inflation in cities becomes desperation in the countryside. When fertilizer rises, when diesel rises, when transport rises, the blow travels through the entire chain of subsistence. And when flood, drought or illness enters the scene, as it often does, the family falls from hardship into ruin. One must ask, then: what is progress if it bypasses the people? What is stability if it stabilizes only the façade? What is diplomacy worth if the diplomatic success of the state coincides with the domestic exhaustion of society? There is a point at which the patience of the poor ceases to be a virtue and becomes a resource to be exploited – a point at which the phrase "national interest" becomes indistinguishable from the interest of those who rule in the nation's name. Pakistan approaches that threshold. Every roti not eaten, every medicine not bought, every child's growth stunted by malnutrition while officials celebrate diplomatic coups – each is an entry in a ledger that history keeps with unforgiving precision. The school story had it right all along. The kingdom that impressed foreigners while its people starved was not a success story; it was a moral failure wearing a costume of grandeur. We are building that kingdom again – not with fountains and flowerbeds, but with MOUs and military partnerships, with carefully managed photographs and communiques of friendship. The architecture differs; the underlying disease persists. The school story ended with the prince, finally shamed by a wandering sage, opening the granaries and tearing his own silk to clothe the naked. It was a fairy-tale resolution, the kind that does not occur in history without struggle. But the moral remains: a state that wins the world's applause while losing its people's stomachs has not succeeded. It has merely learned to perform success more convincingly than its predecessors. And performances, as every child who has read that old story knows, eventually end.

Briefs

US hits Iran with new strikes...

FROM PAGE 01
social media post that he expected Iran to hand over its enriched uranium to the United States to be destroyed, or have it destroyed in Iran with an international witness. "The Enriched Uranium (Nuclear Dust!) will either be immediately turned over to the United States to be brought home and destroyed or, preferably, in conjunction and coordination with the Islamic Republic of Iran, destroyed in place or, at another acceptable location, with the Atomic Energy Commission, or its equivalent, being witness to this process and event," Trump wrote. It was not clear whether he meant this would be part of a potential accord with Iran, and the commission he cited was abolished in 1974. Earlier Monday, Trump said it should be mandatory for Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Pakistan, Egypt, Turkey, Bahrain, and Jordan to sign up to the Abraham Accords, a set of agreements brokered in 2020 with nations historically hostile to Israel, as part of a peace deal with Iran. Trump said he had spoken to the leaders of those countries on Saturday about efforts to end the war. Bahrain and the UAE have already signed the accords, along with Morocco and Sudan. The US-Iranian ceasefire has held while diplomats push for a negotiated settlement, although Iran has maintained controls on Gulf shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, and the US Navy has sought to blockade Iran's ports. While the Abraham Accords were welcomed by some, they remain deeply unpopular in many parts of the Middle East — in part because they fail to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Supreme leader issues...

FROM PAGE 01
His comments come at a highly delicate moment: despite the fiery rhetoric and a series of "self-defense strikes" conducted by the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) against missile sites in southern Iran, both Washington and Tehran have reported ongoing backdoor negotiations in Qatar aimed at establishing a framework to end their recent three-month-old war. Israel: Netanyahu Orders IDF to "Press the Pedal Harder" Simultaneously, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced a major escalation against Hezbollah in Lebanon. This move directly responds to a surge in drone warfare—including the deployment of advanced fiber-optic drones—which recently struck a home in Metula and a school bus stop in Shomera.

CM KP, Gohar meeting with Naqvi...

FROM PAGE 01
Barrister Gohar's residence has also previously served as a venue for sensitive high-level contacts and is considered a trusted channel for informal communication between the PTI and relevant authorities. While the deteriorating security situation and terrorism-related concerns did come under discussion, political matters reportedly formed a significant part of the conversation. Sources said the talks particularly focused on issues relating to PTI founder Imran Khan, including ensuring improved access for the members of his family and party leaders to meet him in jail. "Had the discussion been purely security-oriented, the venue and participants would likely have been different," a source familiar with the talks remarked. The meeting is being described by insiders as part of an ongoing backchannel engagement aimed at reducing political tensions and creating space for a broader understanding between the stakeholders. Sources said PTI representatives conveyed concerns that continued restrictions on meetings with the jailed former prime minister could further aggravate the political atmosphere.

PFF XI Beat UN XI in World Football day thriller

The event which organised by Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) brought together diplomats, football personalities, and international representatives to promote the message of peace, unity, and brotherhood through sports

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Football Federation XI produced an impressive performance to defeat United Nations (UN) XI 3-1 in a vibrant exhibition match held to celebrate World Football Day at the Jinnah Stadium, Islamabad. The event which organised by Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) brought together diplomats, football personalities, and international representatives to promote the message of peace, unity, and brotherhood through sports. The exhibition match was attended by United Nations Pakistan Resident Coordinator Mohamed Yahya, diplomats from France, Romania, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe, Pakistan Football Federation President Syed Mohsin Gilani, Pakistan football team head coach Nolberto Solano, former Pakistan captain Essa Khan and several other distinguished guests. PFF XI dominated the contest with Shahzeb scoring twice, while Essa Khan added another goal to seal the victory. Nnu Gibson scored the lone goal for the UN XI. Speaking on the occasion, Mohamed Yahya said Pakistan possesses immense football talent and the United Nations would con-



tinuing supporting efforts for the promotion and development of football in the country. PFF President Syed Mohsin Gilani said football is rapidly growing in Pakistan and

the federation is committed to creating more opportunities for young players and taking the game to every corner of the country. The World Football Day celebra-

tion concluded with a strong message that sports are not merely a source of entertainment, but also a powerful tool to promote peace, friendship, and global harmony.

After AFCON drama, Morocco head to World Cup with big ambitions

Morocco were a surprise package then, having only previously made the knockout stage of a World Cup once, when they reached the last 16 in Mexico in 1986

DNA

PARIS: Morocco produced a historic best performance for an African and Arab nation at the 2022 World Cup, but their hopes of another run to the latter stages this time may not have been helped by a turbulent few months. The Atlas Lions reached the semifinals in Qatar, eliminating Spain on penalties in the last 16 and knocking out Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal in the quarter-finals. Their remarkable run ended in defeat to France, before they lost the third-place play-off against Croatia. Morocco were a surprise package then, having only previously made the knockout stage of a World Cup once, when they reached the last 16 in Mexico in 1986. This time is different: they are ranked eighth in the world, in between the Neth-

erlands and Belgium, and two places above Germany. At home, supporters want to see their side play more expansive football than the largely defensive style which proved so effective in 2022. Walid Regragui was the mastermind of Morocco's run in Qatar, but he left the coaching job in March, six weeks after his side lost a chaotic Africa Cup of Nations final to Senegal. With home advantage, Morocco were favorites to win that competition but appeared to blow it when Brahim Diaz — their outstanding performer — failed to score a penalty deep in injury time in the final in Rabat. Senegal were so furious at the decision to give the spotkick that most of their players stormed off the pitch. They eventually came back on, an unsettled Diaz had his kick saved, and Morocco lost 1-0 in extra time. Having faced criticism

from a demanding public and media, Regragui departed to be replaced by Mohamed Ouahbi. Born and raised in Brussels, Ouahbi was promoted to the top coaching role after overseeing Morocco's triumph at the Under-20 World Cup last October. Days after his appointment, the Confederation of African Football stripped Senegal of the AFCON crown as a punishment for their walk-off protest, and handed the title to Morocco. An outraged Senegal are challenging that decision in the Court of Arbitration for Sport, and the whole affair casts a cloud over both teams as they head to the United States. They might not face each other at the World Cup, although curiously they will be based just a short distance apart in New Jersey. But Ouahbi and his team

— led by Paris Saint-Germain's brilliant right-back Achraf Hakimi, the reigning African player of the year — must try to focus solely on the challenge in store at the World Cup. They begin with a mouth-watering clash against Brazil, before also facing Scotland and Haiti in the group phase. "The Atlas Lions have a real and serious chance at this World Cup. The current team is more experienced and more talented than four years ago," insists Oussama Berraoui, a Moroccan football pundit. Morocco's transformation into a serious player on the international stage has been achieved thanks to two main pillars. They have a successful youth program at the Mohammed VI academy, the national training center just outside the capital Rabat. — APP

Messi diagnosed with left hamstring fatigue, return plan uncertain

38-year-old icon has not formally confirmed he plans to play in WC

LIONEL Messi remained at the heart of an injury scare only weeks before the World Cup after medical tests diagnosed him with muscle fatigue in his left hamstring, Inter Miami announced on Monday. The Major League Soccer club's update provided no clear timetable for the Argentine superstar's return after his abrupt exit from Miami's 6-4 victory over Philadelphia in the 73rd minute on Sunday. The 38-year-old icon for the defending World Cup champions grabbed the back of his left leg and asked to come off, but appeared to be walking normally as he made his exit to the locker room. "After undergoing further medical tests this Monday, the initial diagnosis indicates an overload associated with muscle fatigue in his left hamstring," Inter Miami said in a statement. "The timeline for his return to physical activity will depend on his clinical and functional progress." That gave precious little indication about the status of the eight-time Ballon D'Or winner as Argentina prepares to defend the crown in a World Cup co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico that kicks off June 11. Argentina's first match will be five days later against Algeria in Kansas City. Messi has managed his workload since joining Inter Miami in 2023, with team staff regularly excusing him from matches in congested fixture periods. MLS has started a break for the World Cup. Messi has not formally confirmed he plans to play in the World Cup, but is widely expected to return for what would be a record-matching sixth appearance at the finals. Argentina's squad is due to be named next week and the South American giants will journey to the United States for pre-World Cup friendlies against Honduras on June 6 and Iceland on June 9. — APP

'MPAs not forming group...

FROM PAGE 01
impact the passage of the upcoming provincial budget, due to which CM Afridi had met with Jamia Ulema-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman for his "support". In a statement posted to his X account, Jan said that the reports of assembly members forming a group against CM Afridi were "false, fabricated, and baseless," warning that "those who dream of sowing division among party assembly members have failed". Jan clarified that all members of the KP Assembly remained "united under the leadership of CM Afridi and were determined to serve people". He said that "organised and baseless propaganda" had been carried out against the chief minister ever since he took office. The provincial minister stated that CM Afridi had the confidence of PTI founder Imran Khan, whose decision within party ranks remained "final". Referring to CM Afridi's meeting with JUI-F's Rehman, Jan clarified that the meeting focused on the death of cleric Maulana Muhammad Idrees and the overall law and order situation. Dismissing the reports of a division, he said that KP was the only province in the country "where true democratic values were being promoted". He added that CM Afridi had united the opposition parties for the sake of public interest. "He is also holding regular meetings over mega development projects for public welfare," Jan added. He advised those spreading "fake news" to "wait for the provincial budget," stating that "not only will the budget pass without hurdles, but it will also prove to be a harbinger of development and prosperity".

Shehbaz vows to deepen...

FROM PAGE 01
In the meeting with Zhang Bingnan, Chairman of China Communications Construction Corporation (CCCC) and senior representatives of China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), the prime minister highly appreciated the companies' over six decades of contribution to Pakistan's infrastructure development, including landmark projects such as the Karakoram Highway, Rashakai Special Economic Zone. He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to fast-tracking priority infrastructure projects, including ML-1, KKH alignment, and other connectivity initiatives under CPEC, emphasizing that Pakistan valued the companies as long-term strategic partners in infrastructure modernization and regional connectivity. The Chinese companies reaffirmed their confidence in Pakistan's economic potential and expressed strong interest in expanding investments across agriculture, industrial manufacturing, logistics, infrastructure, and technology sectors. In the said meetings, Prime Minister Shehbaz was assisted by senior ministers and government officials who were instructed to ensure rigorous and timely follow-up of the decisions taken on the occasion.

Saudi transport minister reviews smart transport

ISLAMABAD: Saudi transport minister Saleh Al-Jasser conducted a field inspection tour of transport facilities and operational centers in the holy sites to review readiness arrangements and transport services being provided to pilgrims during Hajj 1447 AH. According to Saudi Press Agency (SPA), the minister began his tour at the seasonal operations center of the Roads General Authority, where he reviewed intelligent transport systems and real-time monitoring technologies aimed at improving traffic safety and facilitating smooth pilgrim movement during Hajj. The report said Al-Jasser also visited the Operations and Control Center of Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) to assess the operational readiness of the Holy Sites Train and crowd-management plans. SPA told APP that the minister later inspected the control room at the general transport center of the Royal Commission for Makkah City and Holy Sites, where he reviewed digital monitoring systems used to regulate transport movement in the holy sites. The tour concluded with a visit to the Hajj Security Command and Control Center of the Ministry of Interior to discuss coordination and integration between transport and security sectors during the Hajj season. — APP

Hajj sermon urges...

FROM PAGE 01
He stressed that true preparation for the Hereafter lies in monotheism and sincere worship. "The greatest preparation for the Hereafter is through monotheism and the worship of Allah alone, and abandoning the supplication to anyone other than Him," he said. The imam also reminded worshippers that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was the final messenger of Allah and urged Muslims to adhere to truthfulness while avoiding falsehood, backbiting and religious innovations. Highlighting the spiritual and social significance of Hajj, Sheikh Al Hudaifi said the pilgrimage reflects unity and solidarity among Muslims from across the world.

35,000 volunteers mobilized

Authorities said the initiative reflects Saudi Arabia's growing institutional volunteer model based on digital systems, unified operations, and real-time performance monitoring. ISLAMABAD: The Hajj Volunteer Operations Center has launched its activities for the Hajj 1447 AH season with plans to mobilize more than 35,000 male and female volunteers across the holy sites to support pilgrims during Hajj rituals. According to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA), the center is operating for the third consecutive year in cooperation with several government and nonprofit organizations, including the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, the Pilgrim Experience Program, and the National Center for Non-Profit Sector. The report said the center aims to organize and strengthen volunteer efforts through an integrated operational system designed to improve coordination among participating organizations and enhance services provided to pilgrims. Authorities said the initiative reflects Saudi Arabia's growing institutional volunteer model based on digital systems, unified operations, and real-time performance monitoring. SPA told APP that during Hajj 1446 AH, the center facilitated the participation of more than 34,000 volunteers who completed over 2.8 million volunteer hours, exceeding planned participation targets by 138 percent. The report said the center uses an integrated digital monitoring system to track volunteer performance, analyze field data, and improve coordination among volunteer teams and participating entities. Officials added that the operational framework helps unify the efforts of government institutions, nonprofit organizations, and volunteer groups under one coordinated system focused on field requirements during Hajj. According to SPA, this year's operational plan focuses on expanding volunteer opportunities, improving readiness levels, and increasing the use of digital solutions to manage volunteer activities more effectively during the Hajj season. — APP

Trump lost the war but won the peace

FROM PAGE 01

gradually align American policy with Israeli strategic objectives. Trump entered office already surrounded by many foreign policy hawks who strongly favored Israel's security agenda. Over time, many of those voices pushed the United States toward confrontation with Iran, arguing that Tehran's regional influence and nuclear ambitions posed an existential threat to Israel and Western interests. When Israel launched aggressive military operations against Iranian assets and the regional crisis escalated, the United States was gradually pulled into direct confrontation. Yet the war did not unfold as many in Washington had predicted. Instead of collapsing internally, Iran absorbed enormous punishment while maintaining national cohesion. Rather than triggering regime change, the conflict strengthened Iranian nationalism and hardened resistance across the region. American bases across the Middle East suddenly became vulnerable targets. Countries hosting U.S. military installations realized that those bases were not shields protecting them, but magnets attracting retaliation. The economic consequences became devastating. Oil infrastructure across the region suffered repeated disruption. Shipping through the Strait of Hormuz became severely restricted, paralyzing global trade routes and energy supplies. Oil prices surged dramatically. Inflation spread worldwide. Every family purchasing fuel, food, transportation,

or consumer goods began paying the hidden tax of war. For ordinary Americans, the crisis became deeply personal. Gasoline prices climbed sharply. Markets turned volatile. Insurance costs rose. Supply chains weakened. Investors feared a prolonged global recession. The world economy, already fragile after years of geopolitical instability, stood dangerously close to another financial meltdown. At the same time, Trump began confronting another uncomfortable reality: America's military supremacy was no longer unquestioned. The war exposed the enormous consumption of precision-guided ammunition, missile interceptors, naval deployments, and air-defense systems. Strategic stockpiles were being depleted at alarming speed. Prolonged warfare risked exposing vulnerabilities that American military planners had long tried to conceal. The myth of unlimited American military endurance was beginning to crack. Trump also witnessed a dramatic geopolitical shift unfolding before his eyes. For decades, world leaders traveled to Washington seeking approval, protection, and partnership. But increasingly, major European, Asian, African, and Middle Eastern leaders were now turning toward Xi Jinping and China as an alternative center of global economic gravity. Beijing was emerging not only as an economic powerhouse but also as a diplomatic magnet. The Iran conflict accelerated that transformation. Many countries viewed the war as another example of destructive interventionism that destabilized entire regions while delivering

little strategic success. America's allies in the Gulf began reconsidering their dependence on Washington. They realized that hosting American bases could expose them to catastrophic retaliation while offering limited actual protection. Trump, known for his unpredictability, ultimately recognized that continuing the war could sink his presidency and permanently damage America's global influence. The ceasefire, therefore, was not merely a retreat from conflict. It was an acknowledgment of reality. In choosing diplomacy over escalation, Trump effectively turned against many of the forces that had once surrounded him. He angered powerful war advocates. He frustrated headline Israeli leadership. He disappointed sections of the American media establishment that had continuously demanded stronger military action against Iran. He upset defense contractors, energy speculators, and financial actors profiting from wartime instability. Even within his own political and personal circles, the decision carried enormous risk. But Trump appeared to conclude that preserving global stability and preventing economic catastrophe outweighed the political cost of defying entrenched interests. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the ceasefire was that it represented not military victory, but political survival through restraint. Trump understood that wars are easier to start than to end. Leaders surrounded by nationalism, lobbying pressure, media campaigns, and ideological expectations often become prisoners of esca-

lation. History is filled with rulers who continued disastrous wars simply because retreat appeared politically humiliating. Trump, however controversial, chose a different path. He realized that the Middle East was approaching total chaos. Continued escalation could have devastated global energy markets, collapsed already weakened economies, triggered wider regional wars, and possibly drawn major powers into direct confrontation. The economic suffering would not have remained confined to Iran, Israel, or the Gulf states. It would have reached every household on Earth. By extending the ceasefire and reopening negotiations, Trump may not have won the war, but he may have won something far more important: peace. That peace came at immense political cost. It required him to resist pressure from influential allies, political donors, ideological supporters, media narratives, and even elements close to his own family circle. It required him to acknowledge changing global realities and accept that military force alone could no longer dictate world order. The decision also reflected a broader truth emerging in global politics: the era of unilateral domination is fading. Military superiority without economic resilience, diplomatic legitimacy, and international trust is becoming increasingly unsustainable. Trump's ceasefire with Iran may therefore be remembered not simply as a temporary pause in conflict, but as the moment when America itself confronted the limits of power in a rapidly changing world.

Briefs

Drone strike on Sudan border town kills at least 14

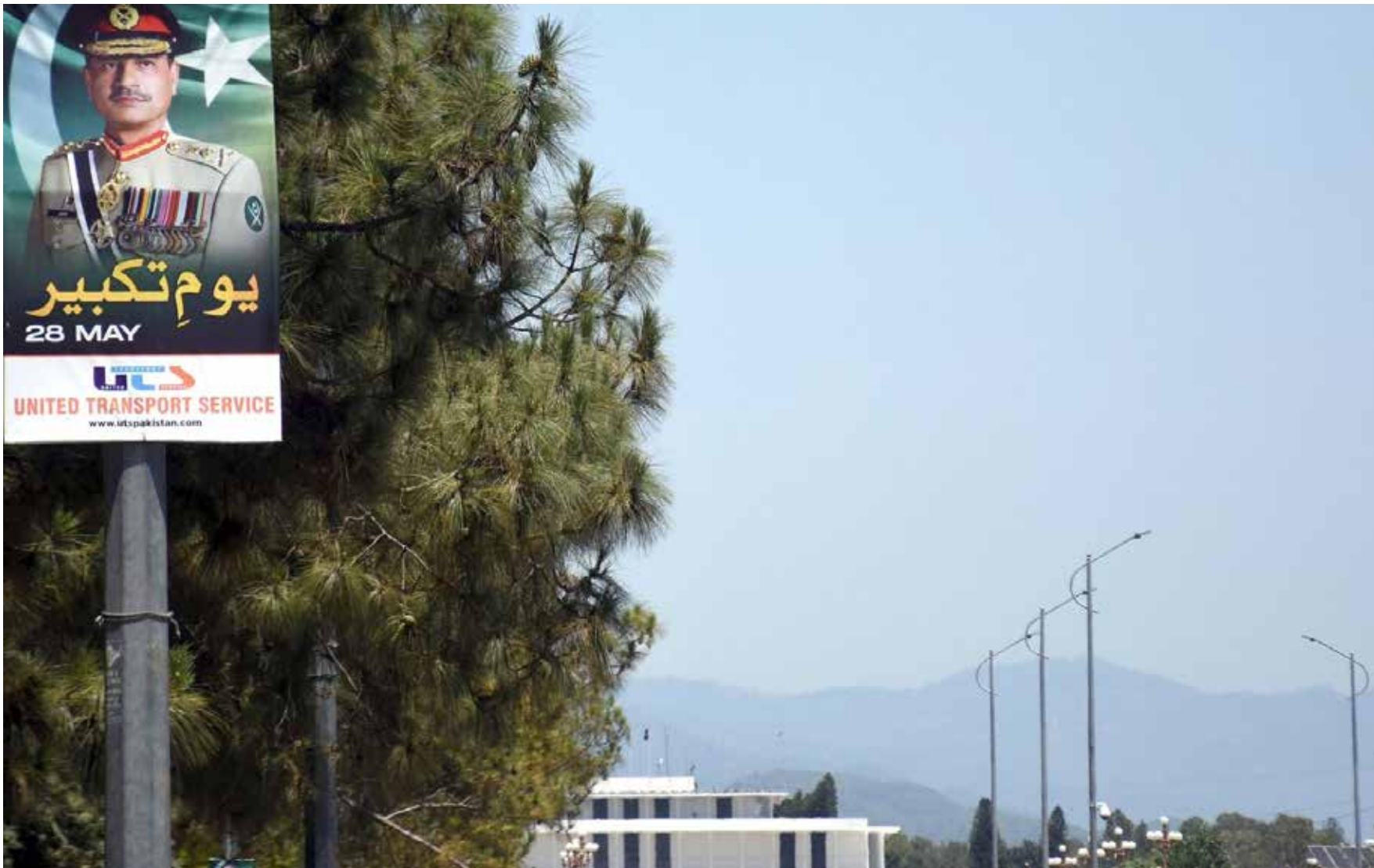
KHARTOUM: A drone strike blamed on the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces killed 14 people, mostly women, in the Sudanese town of Al-Tina, on the border with Chad, a survivor of the attack and a government official told AFP on Tuesday. Locals who rushed to bury the dead "found 14 bodies at the bomb site, most of them women," the survivor said, using a satellite Internet connection to circumvent a communications blackout. Requesting anonymity for their safety, they said the attack on Monday "targeted a gathering of women selling food and tea in the Al-Tina market." Deadly attacks on civilian sites including markets are common in the war between Sudan's army and the RSF, which since April 2023 has killed tens of thousands. An exact toll is impossible to confirm but aid workers estimate over 200,000 people have been killed. A government official confirmed the attack and said authorities were "working to tally the number of casualties." Al-Tina on the border with Chad in the far west of the Darfur region, has come under regular attack from the RSF this year. The city is at imminent risk of famine, according to UN food security analysis, and thousands have fled across the border to Chad. The paramilitary last year consolidated its control on the Darfur region, but the Joint Forces, a coalition of armed groups fighting alongside the army, maintains enclaves near the border, including Al-Tina.

Israeli strikes kill seven people in Gaza

CAIRO: Israeli strikes killed at least seven Palestinians in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday including five in a refugee camp and two in a car, health officials said. Medics and residents said an Israeli drone fired a missile at people who came out of their homes when an Israeli-backed Palestinian militia tried to storm an area east of Maghazi camp. As well as at least five fatalities, several people were injured. The Israeli military, which has been fighting Hamas militants in the Palestinian territory since October 2023, did not immediately respond to a request for comment on that incident. Incursions by Israeli-backed armed gangs, whom Hamas brands "Israeli collaborators," have escalated in past weeks. Leaders of those groups, who operate in areas under Israeli control, say they aim to topple Hamas rule. Later on Tuesday, an Israeli airstrike struck a vehicle in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, killing two people and wounding several others, medics said. The Israeli military told Reuters it was a "targeted strike" and provided no further details.—APP

Planes carrying 19 Australians linked to Daesh group land

MELBOURNE: Two planes carrying 19 Australian women and children linked to the Daesh group landed in Melbourne and Sydney on Tuesday, despite Australia's government warning that the returnees could face charges. The government earlier confirmed seven women and 12 children were heading home on Qatar Airways flights, less than three weeks after a group of 13 people in similar situations returned to Australia's two largest cities. Two women with seven children flew to Melbourne. Four women with six children landed about an hour later in Sydney, news media reported. It was not immediately apparent if any arrests were made at the airports. Three of the four women on the earlier flights were charged with slavery and terrorism offenses and remain behind bars. Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke said anyone among the 19 on their way to Australia who has committed crimes "can expect to face the full force of the law." "The government has not and will not provide any assistance to this group," Burke said in a statement.—APP



ISLAMABAD: A banner of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir displayed on street light pole at Jinnah Avenue on eve of Youm-e-Takbir (The Day of Greatness).

US, India launch maritime surveillance coop with Japan, Australia

Historically, nations tracked the seas independently, leaving large blind spots," Saraf said. "Given the vulnerability of maritime chokepoints as revealed during the West Asian War, tracking vessel transit logs through the Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok straits would be of vital interest

NEW DELHI: The US, India, Japan and Australia launched on Tuesday a maritime surveillance initiative for the Indo-Pacific region and a series of new collaborations, as their foreign ministers gathered in New Delhi. The meeting took place among members of the four-state strategic security alliance known as the Quad, which was established in 2007 to counter the increased regional economic and military influence of China in Asia. Together, the bloc makes up about a third of the world's gross domestic product and nearly 2 billion people. Under the Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Collaboration, the four countries will integrate their surveillance capabilities and strengthen information sharing across the region, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said at a joint press conference. "The reason why maritime

security is so important, beyond the fact that current events remind us of what can happen when maritime security is impeded, is the fact that 60 percent of global maritime trade passes through the Indo-Pacific," he told reporters. "It's a vital national interest, not just to the four countries represented here today, but to dozens and dozens of countries, countless countries around the world." The US, India, Japan and Australia also agreed to expand their cooperation on maritime domain awareness, which will provide real-time data on ship movements, including commercial ships. The bloc announced plans to deepen cooperation on critical minerals and energy, as well as a joint port infrastructure project in Fiji, which will be their first in the region. "We are beginning to show real

achievements and real accomplishments. We are deeply committed to this partnership. It is a linchpin and a cornerstone of our global strategy as a nation in the United States," Rubio said. As the Quad foreign ministers met after the high-profile summit between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping, it signals that Washington "wants to use the Quad as a tool in its broader 'constructive strategic competition' with China," said Vanshika Saraf, a research analyst with the geostrategy program at the Takshashila Institution. The new and expanded collaborations also allow the countries to understand China's long-range naval ambitions and movements across the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific, while also protecting underwater data cables and monitoring regional

ports. "Quad's revival shows that the US is not withdrawing from Indo-Pacific competition despite being focused on the war in West Asia, domestic political volatility and trade disputes," she told Arab News. The Delhi meeting also comes as the Strait of Hormuz remains closed following the US-Israeli attacks on Iran, effectively grinding the shipment of global energy supplies to a halt. Its outcomes appear as an effort to create a unified network to make the Indo-Pacific more transparent. "Historically, nations tracked the seas independently, leaving large blind spots," Saraf said. "Given the vulnerability of maritime chokepoints as revealed during the West Asian War, tracking vessel transit logs through the Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok straits would be of vital interest.—DNA

Naqvi reviews facilities for Pakistani Hujajj

Lauds Saudi support and praises arrangements for elderly Hajjis

MAKKAH: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the Pakistani Hajj camps in Mina. He inspected various camps and reviewed the facilities provided to the pilgrims. He met several pilgrims, especially elderly ones, and inquired about their well-being. Mohsin Naqvi also met a 100-year-old pilgrim personally and asked about his health, praising his determination and spirit. The Interior Minister asked the pilgrims about the facilities provided at the camps, including accommodation and food arrangements. The pilgrims stated that the arrangements this time were good, although they faced some issues which were resolved with the cooperation of the staff. Mohsin Naqvi appreciated the efforts made by Sardar Muhammad Yousaf and his team in resolving the pilgrims' issues. Interior Minister said that every pilgrim is very special and that staff is available to resolve all their concerns. Mohsin Naqvi further stated that the Government of Saudi Arabia has provided excellent immigration facilitation for Pakistani pilgrims this year. He expressed special gratitude to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the Saudi Ministry of Hajj.



Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Muhammad Sohail Khan Afridi and Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi presenting souvenir to Prince Rahim Aga Khan.

KSA premium dining sector turns to new financing models

Technology and data are also becoming critical in improving restaurant performance and attracting investment. "On the operational side, AI-driven tools are materially improving unit economics. Applications such as menu engineering, demand forecasting, dynamic pricing, and personalized customer engagement enable operators to optimize margins, reduce waste, and stabilize revenues

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's rapidly expanding foodservice industry is fueling demand for new financing models as Vision 2030 accelerates tourism and hospitality growth. With restaurant sales rising about 7 percent annually, according to Bain & Co., alternative funding platforms are increasingly stepping in to support premium dining concepts. Vision 2030 has transformed demand in the F&B sector faster than traditional capital providers have adapted. According to Arjun Vir Singh, partner and global head of financial services at Arthur D. Little, Saudi Arabia ended 2025 with small and medium-sized enterprise credit reaching SR467.7 billion (\$124.7 billion), up 33 percent year on year, with banks accounting for SR446.6 billion of total financing. Lending to MSMEs now represents 11.5 percent of total bank loan portfolios, up from 9.6 percent a year earlier, though still below the Vision 2030 target of 20 percent. "The distribution of this capital reveals the structural issue. Micro enterprises — those with annual revenues below SR3 million, where most independently owned premium concepts sit — received only SR83.3 billion, while medium-sized enterprises absorbed SR220.9 billion. Capital is available, but it is concentrated where underwriting is eas-

iest rather than where growth is most dynamic," Singh told Arab News. Singh noted that Saudi Arabia's tourism sector, which welcomed an estimated 122 million visitors and generated SR300 billion in tourism spending in 2025, is driving sustained demand for premium dining across mega-projects and major events. However, traditional banks remain cautious about financing asset-light, brand-driven restaurant operators, accelerating the rise of alternative funding models such as revenue-linked financing and non-bank lenders. Federico Piro, partner at Bain & Co., said: "MENA's growth is being shaped by channel evolution and rising expectations on convenience, especially in markets like the UAE, where e-commerce is already meaningful and still expanding. Companies that adapt route-to-market, sharpen their portfolios, and execute with discipline can capture growth while strengthening brand resilience." According to Arthur D. Little, traditional bank financing falls short in Saudi Arabia's premium F&B sector for three key reasons. "First, approval timelines — often measured in weeks — do not match the speed at which operators need to act, whether to secure locations, expand, or capture demand. Second, collateral-based underwriting is ill-suited to as-

set-light, brand-driven businesses with limited tangible assets. Third, fixed repayment schedules are misaligned with highly variable revenues shaped by seasonality, Ramadan cycles, and tourism," Singh said. He added: "As a result, these businesses do not primarily rely on banks for capital. Instead, they tend to default to family capital, supplier credit, and community-based funding — informal capital sources. In practice, the real competition is not between financial institutions, but between formal finance and informal funding sources." Singh also said alternative financing models are gaining traction by offering faster, more flexible funding structures aligned with restaurant cash flows while reducing reliance on personal guarantees. Technology and data are also becoming critical in improving restaurant performance and attracting investment. "On the operational side, AI-driven tools are materially improving unit economics. Applications such as menu engineering, demand forecasting, dynamic pricing, and personalized customer engagement enable operators to optimize margins, reduce waste, and stabilize revenues. As adoption scales, these capabilities are rapidly shifting from competitive advantage to operating requirement," Singh said. — APP

Oman raises \$26m in Treasury bills

RIYADH: Oman issued 10 million Omani rials (\$26 million) in government Treasury bills, including 4 million rials allocated to a 91-day maturity period, with an average yield of 3.85 percent. The average accepted price stood at 99.050 rials per 100 rials, matching the minimum accepted price, while the average discount rate reached 3.81 percent, the Oman News Agency reported. The sultanate also issued 6 million rials in 182-day Treasury bills at an average accepted price of 98.073 rials per 100 rials and an average yield of 3.94 percent. Treasury bills are short-term, low-risk financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance that allow licensed commercial banks to invest excess liquidity. The Central Bank of Oman manages the issuances and supports liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities. The latest issuance comes as Oman continues to strengthen its fiscal and investment profile amid improving liquidity conditions and stronger sovereign returns. "It may be noted that the interest rate on the repo operations with CBO is 4.25 percent while the discount rate on the Treasury bills discounting facility with CBO is 4.75 percent," ONA reported. Earlier this year, Oman Investment Authority reported profits of \$7.8 billion for 2025, driven by gains in public markets and restructuring across state-owned companies.—APP

Egypt revenue climbs 35% to \$50b

RIYADH: Egypt's government revenues rose 34.7 percent year on year to 2.66 trillion Egyptian pounds (\$50.6 billion) in the July-April period of fiscal year 2025/26, driven by a sharp increase in tax collections and ongoing fiscal reforms. According to the Finance Ministry's latest monthly bulletin, tax revenues, which accounted for 82.9 percent of total income, climbed 29.3 percent to 2.21 trillion pounds during the period, reflecting stronger business activity, wider tax compliance, and the impact of tax facilitation measures aimed at small and medium-sized enterprises. "The notable increase in tax revenues was driven by 'improved confidence with business community,' as well as the impact of a 'bunch of tax incentives,' the report said. The ministry added that "the digitalization of the tax system has enhanced tax collections, and widened the tax base." The stronger revenue performance helped narrow Egypt's overall budget deficit to 5.3 percent of gross domestic product from 6.2 percent a year earlier, while the primary surplus widened to 897 billion pounds, equivalent to 4.2 percent of GDP.—APP

S. Korea says it will build nuclear-powered submarines

SEOUL: South Korea will build its nuclear-powered submarines at home, the defense minister said on Tuesday, with a plan to launch its first vessel in the mid-2030s. Seoul is seeking to bolster deterrence against nuclear-armed North Korea, with the South set to join a small circle of countries that operate nuclear-powered submarines after receiving US approval for the supply of restricted nuclear fuel. "We will develop and build nuclear-powered submarines with our own technology to launch the first vessel in the mid-2030s," Defense Minister Ahn Gyu-back told a defense strategy meeting attended by President Lee Jae Myung. Ahn said the first submarine would enter operational service "in the latter half of the 2030s." South Korea has long sought to acquire nuclear-powered submarines to counter North Korea's growing military threats, although it had been constrained by a nuclear cooperation agreement with the United States. Lee said in November Seoul had received Washington's approval for the construction of nuclear-powered submarines as part of a long-awaited security and trade agreement.—APP

Briefs

India bans cow, calf sacrifice

INDIAN authorities have imposed fresh restrictions ahead of Eid ul Adha with a ban on the slaughter of cows, calves and camels, drawing attention to growing concerns over religious freedom and curbs on Muslim religious practices in different states. As Muslims in India prepare to celebrate Eid ul Adha on Wednesday, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath directed officials to strictly enforce measures related to the religious observances, including a ban on animal sacrifice at public places and a prohibition on road blockades for Eid prayer, Indian media reported.

Chairing a high-level law and order meeting through video conference, Adityanath instructed district administrations to permit sacrifices only at pre-designated sites and stressed that no new traditions should be allowed during the festival. He also ordered that Eid prayer be offered only at traditional locations and said no permission should be granted for namaz on roads under any circumstances.

The Uttar Pradesh government further directed authorities to ensure strict monitoring of slaughter activities, maintain a ban on open meat sales and take action against illegal slaughterhouses. Officials were also instructed to conduct flag marches and increase patrols around religious sites during the festival period. Meanwhile, in Delhi, minister Kapil Mishra warned of strict action ahead of Eid ul Adha against what authorities described as illegal animal transportation, unauthorised slaughter and "animal cruelty". - APP

North Korea fires projectiles

SEOUL: North Korea fired several projectiles, including at least one short-range ballistic missile, toward waters off the country's west coast on Tuesday, South Korea's military said. They were launched at around 1 pm (0400 GMT) from near Chongju in North Korea's North Pyongan Province, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said in a statement. The missile flew about 80 kilometres, the JCS said.

It is North Korea's first known missile launch since April 19, when the country test-fired several short-range ballistic missiles, which it said were equipped with cluster bombs.

In early April, Pyongyang also said it tested a new cluster-bomb warhead on a ballistic missile and an electromagnetic weapon, in a move that analysts said was part of efforts to showcase the North's capacity to fight a modern war.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said in March that his country's status as a nuclear-armed state was irreversible and that expanding a "self-defensive nuclear deterrent" was essential to national security. - APP

Russia blames West for NPT collapse

"The aggression by Israel and the US against Iran... under the far-fetched pretext of defending the nuclear non-proliferation regime became a major stumbling block in terms of achieving the forum's objectives. These unprovoked, unjustified and unlawful actions can have disastrous consequences for the NPT"

DNA

MOSCOW: Following the collapse of the 11th Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in New York, the Russian Foreign Ministry issued a scathing statement blaming the United States and its Western allies for the forum's failure to reach a consensus.

The four-week conference, chaired by Vietnamese Ambassador Do Hung Viet, concluded on May 22, 2026, without adopting a final outcome document. According to Moscow, the failure was an inevitable reflection of the "dramatic deterioration" of global security and a stark division among state parties.

The Russian Foreign Ministry singled out Western military actions in the Middle East

as the primary catalyst for the conference's gridlock. Moscow explicitly pointed to military operations led by Israel and the United States against Iran over the past year—specifically citing strikes in June 2025 and early 2026—as the chief disruption.

"The aggression by Israel and the US against Iran... under the far-fetched pretext of defending the nuclear non-proliferation regime became a major stumbling block in terms of achieving the forum's objectives. These unprovoked, unjustified and unlawful actions can have disastrous consequences for the NPT." Russia accused Western powers of using the non-proliferation treaty as a geopolitical tool to "settle political scores and justify the use of force," asserting that the UN forum was "The statement leveled sharp criticism at the "collective West," particularly targeting NATO and European Union members. Moscow claimed Western

delegations arrived in New York to pursue "vested political interests" rather than productive dialogue, shifting the conference's focus toward criticism of Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea (DPRK).

Furthermore, Russia accused European nations of hypocrisy regarding nuclear exercises:

- **Dual Allegiance:** Moscow claimed European states used "cynical and clumsy" arguments to justify their participation in shared nuclear missions.
- **Lack of Transparency:** The Ministry stated these nations flatly refused to adopt more transparent postures regarding nuclear practices that Russia argues run counter to NPT rules.
- **Strategic Blindness:** Russia also criticized rigid disarmament advocates, stating they failed to account for "present-day military, political and global strategic reality."

Despite the acrimony, Russia praised the efforts of Chairman Do Hung Viet, noting that a draft outcome document came remarkably close to a consensus. However, the ministry stated the document was ultimately withheld from a final vote because the U.S. and its allies maintained an unyielding "hard line" on specific sticking points. According to Moscow, the Chair's decision not to force a vote on the contested text successfully prevented a deeper political confrontation that could have poisoned the next review cycle.

Despite the lack of a formal joint declaration, Moscow maintained a firm stance on the endurance of the treaty itself. The Foreign Ministry concluded that the collapse of the talks "does not cast a shadow on the NPT's relevance," reaffirming that the accord remains the "cornerstone of international security and nuclear non-proliferation."

DPM/FM Dar arrives in New York

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Ishaq Dar, flew into New York from Beijing late Monday evening on a three-day visit during which he will take part in important United Nations meetings and hold bilateral talks with his counterparts and top UN officials. He was received at Kennedy International airport by Pakistan's UN Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad and Consul General in New York, Aamir Ahmed Atoazi and other mission and consulate officials.

Dar will take part in the UN Security Council's open debate themed "Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Upholding the Purposes and Principles of the UN Charter and Strengthening the UN-centred International System." The debate will be chaired by Foreign Minister Wang Yi of China, which holds the 15-member Council's presidency for the month of May. The high-level debate is China's 'signature event', and its Ambassador Fu Cong said Beijing's first priority is to revitalize the authority of the UN Charter and the role of the world body.

In recent years, the world has been witnessing growing turbulence in the international landscape, with conflicts increasing, divisions widening and the multilateral system, along with international law, under considerable strain, he said at a briefing at the start of this month. In this regard, the Chinese envoy urged the international community to take urgent actions to uphold the authority of the UN Charter and reinforce the role of the United Nations to prevent the world from "relapsing into the jungle" and "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war." On its part, Pakistan welcomed this timely initiative by China, which highlights the importance of strengthening multilateralism and upholding central role of United Nations in addressing today's complex global challenges. - APP



ISLAMABAD: As part of the shared commitment to countering illegal migration and migrant trafficking, the first Italian-led training course for Pakistani police officers on migration management. - DNA

Putin offers debt relief for fighters

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree Monday freeing new army recruits of debts of up to 10 million rubles (\$139,000), as Moscow continues to roll out financial incentives to lure more men to fight in Ukraine. Russia has for more than four years offered lucrative salaries to men signing up to take part in its full-scale offensive against Ukraine. The decree, published by the Kremlin, makes Russians who signed an army contract after May 1 this year and their spouses eligible for the debt exemption. The army contract should be signed for a minimum of one year and be for "fulfilling the tasks of the special military operation" - the Kremlin's term for its war against Ukraine. The decree is the latest economic support measure for Moscow's troops in Ukraine. Russia's economy has been on a war footing for more than four years, with the needs of the army taking priority over other sectors. Putin has also advocated for the social lifting of Ukraine war veterans, calling on fighters returning from front to be given high-profile professional roles back home. - DNA

India prepares report, not final, on Air India crash anniversary

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI/MONTREAL: Indian officials investigating last year's deadly Air India crash are preparing an interim report rather than a final one ahead of the anniversary of the Boeing 787 accident that killed 260 people, said a person with direct knowledge of the matter. The interim report from India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) will be "more comprehensive" than the preliminary report put out last July and will examine possible primary causes and other contributing factors, the person said.

The 15-page preliminary report into the aviation industry's deadliest disaster in a decade showed the Dreamliner's engine fuel switches flipped almost simultaneously and starved the engines of fuel shortly after the flight from Ahmedabad to London took off on June 12, 2025. A cockpit recording of dialogue between the two pilots supported the view that the captain cut the flow of fuel to the plane's engines, according to US officials' early assessment reported by Reuters last year. The AAIB said at the time it was "too early to reach any definite conclusions." By releasing an interim report, Indian au-

thorities will not be required to share the findings ahead of time with the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), which is participating in the investigation because the aircraft was designed and manufactured in the United States. The NTSB would be allowed to comment on a final report, which could also provide more closure for the crash victims' family members.

The final report will not be ready by the crash anniversary because "it is a very complex investigation and is taking time," said the person, adding the interim report still needed to be submitted to government authorities and the timing of a final report remained unclear. A second source with knowledge of the matter also said investigators were still working on the probe and needed more time. Both sources spoke on condition of anonymity as the internal workings of the investigation are private.

Under international rules, a final report is due within a year of an accident but sometimes investigations take longer, so if that is not completed, an interim statement should be issued on each anniversary. The AAIB, India's civil aviation ministry and Air India did not respond to emails seeking comment.

FIA foils suspected human trafficking bid

ISLAMABAD: Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Immigration Islamabad foiled a suspected human trafficking attempt and offloaded a woman passenger during timely action at Islamabad International Airport. Passenger Sheeza Fatima, daughter of Tariq Mehmood, travelling to Thailand through Thai Airways flight TG-350, was referred for secondary profiling at the immigration counter on May 25, 2026. During interrogation and scrutiny of travel documents, the official

said it surfaced that the woman was allegedly being trafficked abroad by accused Naeem Irshad Gill. The victim reportedly disclosed during initial questioning that the same accused had earlier attempted to send her abroad from Allama Iqbal International Airport Lahore on May 24, 2026. According to preliminary findings, the accused appeared to have links with a human trafficking network involved in illegal overseas movement of individuals. Official further said a large number of electronic devices were also recovered from another passenger accompanying the case, indicating possible links with traffickers and smugglers. Both passengers were offloaded and shifted to FIA Anti-Human Trafficking Circle (AHTC) Islamabad for further legal action and registration of a case, while further investigation into network was underway. - DNA

Australia-India-Japan-US Quad to build a port

The Quad meeting came as the US and Iran have been circling around a possible deal to end their three-month conflict and reopen the Strait of Hormuz

DNA

SYDNEY: The foreign ministers of Australia, India, Japan and the US agreed to jointly build a port in Fiji and signed pacts covering critical minerals and energy security, as they sought to inject fresh energy into the grouping.

The brief meeting between the countries' top diplomats - Australia's Penny Wong, India's S Jaishankar, Japan's Toshihiro Motegi and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio - was the third such gathering of the group known as Quad since September 2024. The Quad meeting came as the US and Iran have been circling around a possible deal to end their three-month conflict and reopen the Strait of Hormuz. The group unveiled its first joint infrastructure project, a port in Fiji.

"We are going to be partnering on issues of port infrastructure, in particular in response to insufficient port capacity in the Pacific Islands, we are announcing plans to work with Fiji," Rubio said, adding that the initiative would be "a practical demonstration of our collective ability to deliver high-quality, resilient infrastructure". The four-nation group had lost some momentum last year after failing to hold a leaders' summit, amid tensions between US

President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi over Washington's tariffs and other matters. "We are beginning to show real achievements and real accomplishments," Rubio said. "We are deeply committed to this partnership. It is a linchpin and a cornerstone of our global strategy as a nation in the US." He said the group agreed to launch an initiative on Indo-Pacific Energy Security and a critical minerals framework. The minerals framework will guide how to leverage economic policy tools and coordinate investment to strengthen critical minerals supply chains - including in mining and processing - and in critical minerals recycling, Rubio said.

The initiative could be significant for Japan after China halted shipments of some minerals used in aerospace, defence and semiconductor industries following a diplomatic dispute. Previous Quad meetings have put forward initiatives to maintain "the free and open maritime order" in the Indo-Pacific by improving information gathering on what is happening in their waters. New Delhi has pressed for a Trump visit to India, a trip that would likely be tied to a Quad summit. Analysts have questioned whether a lack of leader-level engagement has downgraded the Quad's importance.

Foreign ministers did not comment on the possibility of a summit later this year, but over the weekend, Rubio said that diplomats would work toward a meeting later this year. "The absence of a leaders' summit has raised some doubts, but that does not necessarily indicate declining importance," said Premesha Saha, a senior policy fellow at the Asia Society Australia in Melbourne. "If the Quad can keep delivering at the ministerial and working levels, it can remain relevant even without regular leaders-level signalling."

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