



Islamabad POST

Wednesday, July 01, 2026

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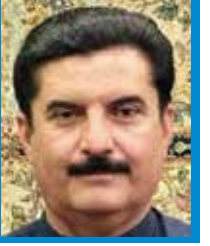
Pakistan wants peace in the region: Dar

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Zero tolerance against rape offenders

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Briefs

Iran warns against MoU violations

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran has issued a stern warning that it will respond decisively to any violation of the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signaling its firm stance amid heightened regional tensions. Officials in Tehran emphasized that the agreement must be respected in full, cautioning that breaches would invite immediate countermeasures.

In a statement released Tuesday, Iranian authorities clarified that no meeting with the United States is planned in the coming days, dismissing speculation about potential diplomatic engagement. "There will be no talks with Washington in the next few days," the statement read, underscoring Iran's reluctance to enter negotiations while questions remain over the implementation of the MoU.

The warning comes at a sensitive time, as regional observers note that mistrust between Tehran and Washington continues to overshadow efforts at dialogue. Analysts argue that Iran's firm tone reflects both domestic pressure and a desire to project strength internationally. The insistence on adherence to the MoU highlights Tehran's concern that any perceived violation could undermine its credibility and security interests.

Diplomatic sources suggest that Iran's position is also aimed at sending a message to other signatories and stakeholders in the region: compliance is non-negotiable. The absence of planned meetings with U.S. officials further illustrates the depth of the current impasse, raising questions about the future of diplomatic engagement between the two countries. For now, Iran's warning serves as a reminder of the fragile state of regional diplomacy. Without concrete steps to build trust, the risk of escalation remains high.

Pak takes seat as member of Olive Council

DNA

LISBON: Pakistan takes its seat for the first time as a Permanent Member of the International Olive Council at the 123rd Session held in Lisbon. Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, led the Pakistan delegation to attend the UN International Olive Council (IOC) meeting in Lisbon today. The Minister was accompanied by Ambassador of Pakistan to Portugal H.E. Aisha Farooqui.

Following Pakistan's membership of the International Olive Council in May 2026, Pakistan was invited to take its seat at the 123rd meeting of the Council, together with 27 other Olive oil producing nations. Pakistan was warmly welcomed to the IOC by the Executive Director, the Chairman of IOC and by all the member countries. The Minister for National Food Security & Research in his statement thanked the IOC and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to take forward the objectives and goals of the IOC.

The Minister briefed the Council members on Pakistan's growing Olive sector with over 7 million olive trees cultivated across 55,669 acres and olive clusters expanding across the country. A complete "farm-to-fork" value chain has been established through 51 olive oil extraction units, modern processing facilities, nurseries, weather stations, and four IOC-aligned quality laboratories.

Pakistan says

IWT issue matter of national security

Pakistan ready for effective response against any attempt to halt water flow: Atta Tarar

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Waters Syed Muhammad Mehar Ali Shah said on Tuesday that the issue of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) for Pakistan was not just a matter of hydrology but national security. "When the lives and livelihoods of more than 240 million are tied to the Indus basin, when more than 80 per cent of the arable land depends on these waters [...], when agriculture contributes almost a quarter of GDP and almost one-third of employment, water uncertainty becomes national uncertainty," he explained, highlighting the significance of the water-sharing agreement between India and Pakistan. The commissioner remarked, "Flow prediction is not a luxury of planning but part of the survival architecture of the state." He expressed these views at a seminar held in Islamabad to highlight the legal and constitutional framework of the IWT, which remains a contentious issue between India and Pakistan. The 1960 treaty regulates the distribution of the Indus River system between India and Pakistan. However, India announced last year that it was placing its IWT obligations in abeyance. The announcement followed an attack on tourists in occupied

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AJK uprising

Banned JAAC leader Shaukat Mir arrested
Mir and his associate moved to undisclosed location, says DC Munir Qureshi

DNA

DHIRKOT: Central leader of the banned Jammu Kashmir Awami Action Committee (JAAC), Shaukat Nawaz Mir, was arrested along with an associate in Dhirkot, Muzaffarabad Deputy Commissioner Munir Qureshi said on Tuesday. The DC said Mir was arrested by police and security personnel from the Hail Sarang area. He added that Mir and his associate have subsequently been moved to an undisclosed location. It is noteworthy to mention here that the AJK government had imposed a ban on the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) on June 5 under the

Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) after violent protests that resulted in fatalities during clashes with law enforcement in May 2024 and September 2025.

The group's latest protest campaign centres on its demand to abolish the 12 seats in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly reserved for refugees from Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) who migrated to Pakistan after 1947.

The federal government has described the demand to abolish the reserved seats for Kashmiri voters residing in Pakistan as an attempt to disrupt the electoral process ahead of the July 27 elections for the 53-member AJK Legislative Assembly.

Can Afghanistan move toward a new political understanding?

Many critics argue that the Taliban lack both political maturity and a commitment to civic values; The experience of the past four decades demonstrates that neither war nor isolation has solved Afghanistan's problems or brought lasting stability

ANALYSIS

SHAMIM SHAHID

AFTER nearly five years of relative silence, former Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has once again taken a position on Afghanistan's future that may open a new chapter in the country's ongoing political debate. His first ever statement, hitting the headlines, issued after Pakistan's latest air strikes inside Afghanistan, killing dozens of people and injuring scores of others. Interestingly, all leading Taliban leaders including Supreme leader Mullah Haibat Ullah, prime minister Mullah Hassan Akhund, interior Minister Siraj Ud Din Haqqani and Defence Minister Mullah Yaqub are tight lipped.

In his recent remarks, deposed President Dr Ashraf Ghani has insisted on creation of an atmosphere aimed at a broad national consensus, restoration of Afghanistan's international neutrality, and the restoration of relations with the international community as the fundamental path toward resolving the country's challenges. Ghani argues that Af-

ghanistan's foreign policy should be guided solely by national interests because, in his view, as long as the country remains internationally isolated, the voices of Afghans will not reach the world, nor will the international community seriously listen to the suffering of its people.

In his comments, he also indirectly referred to recent security incidents, saying that a situation has emerged in which bombs are falling on Afghan soil almost daily, yet the global response remains weak, while many countries in the region are beginning to regard such incidents as a normal reality. These remarks come at a time when Afghanistan faces multiple challenges. On one hand, the Taliban government has still not been formally recognized by the international community. On the other hand, economic difficulties, declining humanitarian assistance, restrictions on girls' education, continuing migration, and recent military tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan have further complicated the country's situation. Ashraf Ghani is among the Afghan politicians who enjoyed international academic and economic recognition before entering politics.

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AFRICA DAY CELEBRATIONS



ISLAMABAD: Governor KP Faisal Karim Kundi, Additional Foreign Secretary Hamid Asghar Khan, President ICCI, Heads of Missions of the African countries cutting cake to celebrate the Africa Day. - DNA

Fund created to check energy prices

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has established the "Petroleum Prices Stabilisation Fund" to address fluctuations in petroleum product rates, allocating a government account. The Ministry of Finance issued a notification to inform all relevant institutions, including the Auditor General of Pakistan, the Controller General of Accounts and the Accountant General Pakistan Revenues, about the establishment of the fund. The notification stated that the Accountant Generals of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan have also been informed, while provincial governments have been directed to complete

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PM Shehbaz to visit Iran

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is likely to visit Iran in the first week of July to attend the funeral prayers of the late Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, according to sources. Khamenei, Iran's number one since 1989, was martyred in the first hour of the US-Israel war against Iran on February 28 in a strike on a meeting of senior officials in Tehran that also left his daughter-in-law, daughter, and at least one grandchild martyred, as per reports. Ali Khamenei has yet to be buried, with state media reporting that his funeral will take place on July 9 in his hometown, the northeastern city of Mashhad, following three days of funeral

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The poor are the victims again

At least 14 children die as tuition centre roof collapses

Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz takes notice of the incident, seeks report from relevant authorities

BUREAU REPORT

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif grieved

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: At least 14 children were killed while several others received injuries after the roof of a tuition centre collapsed in Lahore's Kahna area on Tuesday, officials said. Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Imran Nazir said that 19 children were brought to Kahna Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital following the incident. The minister confirmed that 14 children had died in the collapse. "After receiving initial medical treatment, two children were discharged, while four others remain in hospital," he said. The provincial health minister described the incident as deeply tragic and said rescue teams had completed the operation. Meanwhile, rescue officials said that over 30 children were present inside

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WATER JUST GOT BETTER!!

MURREE SPARKLETS
Bottled Drinking Water

Carbonated Water Also Available in Glass Bottle

f/Mureesparklets Officialmureesparklets

Pak, Turkiye agree to deepen coop in AI-driven learning

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Wajiha Qamar, held a bilateral meeting with Yusuf Tekin on the sidelines of the Türkiye Education Technologies Summit and Fair (TETZ 2026) in Istanbul, where both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening Pakistan-Türkiye cooperation in education, skills development and educational innovation. The meeting focused on expanding collaboration in education, technical and vocational training, language education, educational technology, academic exchange and cultural cooperation. Both sides discussed measures to institutionalize collaboration through the signing of a comprehensive education cooperation agreement and the establishment of joint working groups to accelerate implementation of mutually beneficial initiatives. Both Ministers also exchanged views on the growing role of artificial intelligence in education, particularly in language learning. They explored opportunities to develop AI-assisted platforms for teaching Turkish in Pakistan and Urdu in Türkiye, aiming to promote greater cultural understanding and stronger people-to-people ties between the two brotherly nations. Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Wajiha Qamar emphasized that Pakistan attaches great importance to its longstanding and historic relations with Türkiye and is committed to translating bilateral understandings into tangible outcomes. She stressed the need for the timely implementation of existing agreements while pursuing new frameworks of cooperation in education, digital learning, teacher development, technical and vocational education, and academic partnerships. She said that enhanced collaboration in education and skills development would contribute significantly to preparing future generations for emerging global challenges while further strengthening the enduring friendship between Pakistan and Türkiye.—APP

KP to launch summer learning, grooming festival

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elementary and Secondary Education Department has decided to launch a Summer Learning and Grooming Festival for students of government schools to provide educational, developmental and recreational opportunities during the summer vacation period. Under the first phase of the initiative, around 2,000 students from grades six to twelve belonging to 19 districts across the province will participate. Residential summer camps will be organised in Swat, Mansehra and Abbottabad. Preparations for the programme were reviewed during a meeting chaired by Provincial Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education Arshad Ayub Khan. The meeting was attended by senior education officials, divisional commissioners, chairpersons of education boards and district education officers.—APP

KP CM orders zero tolerance against rape offenders

They further stated that 75 new development schemes, with an estimated cost of Rs .63.6 billion, and 80 ongoing schemes, valued at Rs .95.2 billion, have been included in the Annual Development Programme for the upcoming fiscal year

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Muhammad Sohail Khan Afridi directed authorities to adopt a zero-tolerance policy against individuals involved in rape cases across the province, stressing that such criminals should be made an example and must not be allowed to escape legal punishment. He issued these directives while chairing a high-level review meeting on development projects, law and order, governance, and service delivery in Kohat Division. The Chief Minister said that divisional-level review meetings were being formally initiated following the approval of the provincial budget, emphasizing that public trust, positive feedback, and citizen satisfaction would remain the true benchmarks of success. He stated that the law and order

situation in southern districts required special attention and reiterated the government's commitment to addressing security challenges and making the new fiscal year a period of peace, development, and prosperity. He added that significant allocations had been made in the budget for police, health, and education sectors, while increasing police strength in southern districts was also under consideration. The Chief Minister directed district administrations to maintain close contact with the public, improve service delivery, and ensure the timely completion of development projects. He also instructed authorities to expedite efforts for a long-term solution to the issue of clean drinking water in southern districts. Calling narcotics a serious social men-

ace, he ordered an indiscriminate crackdown against drug dealers and directed authorities to implement measures for the rehabilitation of drug addicts. Reviewing progress on the Salt and Gypsum City project in Karak, the Chief Minister expressed concern over delays and directed authorities to ensure visible progress within three months. Officials informed the meeting that 377 development schemes are currently underway in Kohat Division under ADP 2025-26, with 99.6 percent of allocated funds released and a utilization rate of 96.7 percent. They further stated that 75 new development schemes, with an estimated cost of Rs .63.6 billion, and 80 ongoing schemes, valued at Rs .95.2 billion, have been included in the Annual Development Programme for the upcoming fiscal year.—DNA

Gas cylinder explosion sparks panic in G 8 Markaz

Authorities from the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and other relevant departments have previously taken action against unsafe commercial operations in residential buildings. However, locals allege that enforcement is short-lived, with businesses reopening after officials accept bribes or overlook violations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In the early hours of Tuesday, a powerful gas cylinder explosion rocked Awan Plaza in G 8 Markaz, Islamabad, sending shockwaves through the neighborhood and sparking panic among residents and shopkeepers. The blast occurred inside a local restaurant, Jhal Chakian, situated on the ground floor of the residential plaza. Witnesses reported hearing a deafening sound followed by smoke and chaos as people rushed out of nearby hotels and apartments. This is not the first such incident in the area. Awan Plaza, though primarily

ly a residential building, has long been home to a cluster of restaurants and small hotels operating without adequate safety measures. Residents have repeatedly raised concerns about the risks posed by gas cylinders stored in cramped kitchens, often without proper ventilation or fire safety equipment. Customers, staff, and families living in the plaza remain exposed to these dangers on a daily basis.

Authorities from the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and other relevant departments have previously taken action against unsafe commercial operations in residential buildings. However, locals allege that enforcement is short-lived, with businesses

reopening after officials accept bribes or overlook violations. "Every time there's a raid, they shut down for a few days, and then they're back in business as if nothing happened," said one resident, visibly shaken by the latest blast. The explosion on Tuesday caused damage to the restaurant's interior and shattered windows in nearby shops. Fortunately, no fatalities were reported, though several people sustained minor injuries while fleeing the scene. Emergency services arrived promptly, and firefighters managed to contain the situation before it escalated further. Still, the incident has reignited debate over lax enforcement and the dangers of mixing residential living

with unregulated commercial activity. Experts warn that if preventive measures are not strictly implemented, a far bigger tragedy could occur in the future. "We are sitting on a ticking time bomb," said a safety consultant familiar with the area. "Gas cylinders in congested plazas pose a serious threat not only to customers but to entire neighborhoods." Residents are now demanding that CDA and other authorities enforce building codes rigorously and permanently shut down unsafe operations. Without decisive action, they fear that G 8 Markaz could witness a disaster far worse than Tuesday's blast.

Digital systems to enhance judicial efficiency, transparency

LAHORE: Lahore High Court (LHC) Chief Justice Miss Aalia Neelum, on Tuesday inaugurated five state-of-the-art digital systems as part of the Court's ongoing judicial reforms and digital governance initiative aimed at modernizing the justice delivery system across Punjab. The inauguration ceremony was attended by LHC Registrar Raja Qamar uz Zaman, Director General (Judicial and Case Management) Javed Iqbal Bosal, and other senior court officials. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Justice Aalia Neelum said the judiciary's digital transformation was focused on harnessing modern technology to ensure faster, more efficient and transparent administration of justice. She observed that the integration of digital solutions would help reduce delays in judicial proceedings while significantly improving public access to timely justice. She reaffirmed the Lahore High Court's commitment to institutional reforms based on the principles of merit, transparency, accountability and good governance, adding that the newly launched digital platforms would strengthen judicial record management and enhance administrative efficiency through technology-driven processes. Earlier, Additional Registrar (IT) Jamal Ahmad gave a detailed presentation on the newly launched systems. He said the Secure Judicial Communication System had been developed to provide a secure and efficient platform for official judicial correspondence. He further informed the participants that the Lahore High Court Query Management System would centrally manage and process public queries received through WhatsApp and email, enabling their prompt routing, monitoring and timely resolution. Highlighting another major reform initiative, he said the Procurement Management System would enhance transparency and efficiency in procurement.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal addressing a media briefing about monthly development update.

CM unveils plan to deploy 5,000 electric buses

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday unveiled a major green transport initiative aimed at expanding electric buses, e-bikes, e-taxis and electric three-wheelers across the province. Chairing a meeting of the Transport Department and the Punjab Mass Transit Authority, here the chief minister was briefed on progress regarding electric buses, the Gujranwala and Faisalabad mass transit projects, e-taxis, the Lahore Super Autonomous Rapid Transit (SRT) project, e-bikes, the command and control centre, and the Murree Glass Train initiative. The meeting decided to introduce additional electric buses, e-taxis, e-bikes and electric three-wheelers simultaneously to promote green transport across the province. Officials informed the meeting that Punjab had also achieved another milestone by establishing an electric bus manufacturing industry under the government's business-friendly policies. An assembly plant has already commenced assembling electric buses in the province. The chief minister said Punjab would deploy 5,000 electric buses over the next five years, adding that the province was no longer only operating buses but had also started manufacturing them. The meeting also approved the re-launch of the interest-free e-bike scheme for students under easier installment plans. Under the programme, 100,000 electric bikes would be provided to students within one year. The Punjab government would provide a subsidy of Rs70,000 per e-bike. Male students would pay a down payment of Rs14,000 and an interest-free monthly installment of Rs2,100. The CM Punjab announced that the provincial government would bear the entire down payment and registration fee for female students, who would only have to pay an interest-free monthly installment of Rs2,100. Government employees would also be eligible to obtain e-bikes on easy installments. The meeting was informed that 1,500 electric buses would be operated in 91 tehsils across the divisions of Gujranwala, Gujrat, Rawalpindi, Multan, Sahiwal, Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Faisalabad and Sargodha during the first phase. The meeting approved the PCI for the procurement of buses. Officials said work on the Gujranwala and Faisalabad mass transit systems was progressing rapidly. Around 400 electric buses were already operational in various districts, while another 400 buses would soon be converted to electric operation. The chief minister directed the immediate launch of 61 electric buses in 28 districts ahead of their scheduled inauguration on July 10. She also ordered the immediate operationalisation of buses in Jhang, Kabirwala, Bhakkar, Attock, Mandi Bahaudin, Hafizabad, Chiniot, Layyah, Okara and Sialkot. She also hinted at that another 189 newly acquired electric buses, prepared for soft launching in different districts, would be inaugurated online. The meeting was informed that 112 additional electric buses had reached Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sheikhpura, Multan, Murree, Vehari, Kasur, Lodhran, Nankana Sahib and Narowal and would begin operations from July 25. Officials further informed the meeting that 488 more electric buses would depart from a Chinese port for Punjab on July 20. She directed the authorities to immediately introduce electric bus services in Kot Addu, Talagang and Taunsa Sharif, besides extending services to Vehari and Lodhran. She also ordered an increase in the number of electric buses in Vehari, Lodhran and Nankana Sahib. She directed that every district should have at least 15 electric buses, ordering that additional buses be dispatched wherever the existing fleet falls below that number. The chief minister remarked that Punjab had not only introduced electric buses but had also established a new manufacturing industry. The meeting reviewed pictorial evidence and video footage of construction work on the Gujranwala and Faisalabad mass transit projects. Officials informed the meeting that the 19.5-kilometre Gujranwala Mass Transit route had been expanded to 25 stations, with construction, barricading, diversions and piling work progressing at a fast pace. Work on the Gakhar Mandi and Aimanabad underpasses and stations was also underway in multiple shifts, while tree transplantation was being carried out alongside construction. The chief minister directed the authorities to ensure strict implementation of safety measures throughout the construction phase and noted that the project would significantly upgrade the surrounding urban infrastructure. The meeting was also informed that work on the 20.3-kilometre Faisalabad Mass Transit System, comprising 21 stations, was progressing swiftly. Bus depots would be established at Faisal Town and Airport Chowk, while work on both the at-grade and elevated sections had commenced.—DNA

Friend held as Police crack blind murder case

KOHAT: Kohat Police have claimed to have solved a blind murder case within days of the recovery of an unidentified body, arresting the victim's friend who allegedly confessed to killing him over money, officials said on Tuesday. According to police, the body of an unidentified man was found in the Farangi Talab area on June 18. Taking immediate notice, District

Police Officer (DPO) Shahbaz Elahi constituted a special investigation team headed by SP Saddar Ihsan Shah, with DSP Gumbat Sajjad Haider, SHO Gumbat Ayub Janan and other investigators, who employed modern scientific techniques and human intelligence to trace the suspect. During the investigation, the deceased was identified as Hashim, alias "Lala Jee." After

his son, Awais, lodged a formal murder report, investigators established that the victim had travelled to Farangi Talab with his friend, Adil, a resident of Kinder in Gumbat, in a rented black vehicle bearing Islamabad registration number PB-002. Police said the victim had recently sold his Mehran car for Rs445,000 and was carrying an M4 rifle along with a substantial amount of cash.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY

July 01/Japan Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada National Day

July 01/Somalia Independence Day

July 04/USA Independence Day

July 05/Algeria Independence Day

July 09/Argentine Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium National Day

July 20/TRNC Independence Day

July 23/Egypt National Day

July 26/Cuba National Day

July 26/Liberia National Day

July 30/Morocco National Day

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Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Ethiopian embassy holds tourism promotion event in Islamabad

H.E. Hamid Asghar Khan thanked Ethiopia for launching direct flight operations in Pakistan, calling them the most critical link between the two countries. Recalling his visit to Ethiopia, he lauded massive production of energy in Ethiopia, rapid development in its urban areas, wonderful tourism landscapes, and above all the strides it has made in aviation sector



SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad has hosted a tourism promotion event bringing together diplomats, travel agents, media, and digital influencers to spotlight Ethiopia as a destination and deepen bilateral ties with Pakistan. H.E. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, Advisor and Coordinator to the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Tourism, attended as a chief guest, alongside guest of honor H.E. Ha-

mid Asghar Khan, Additional Secretary (Africa) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Welcoming the guests, H.E. Dr. Oumer Hussien Oba, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, emphasized on the historic bond between the two nations to ancient "Habesha" which sheltered early Muslims during the First Hijra. He noted that the historic Al-Nejashi Mosque and the legacy of Hazrat Bilal Habeshi create a lasting bond of brotherhood and spiritual affinity for Pakistanis. The Ambassador showcased Ethiopia as the Land of Origins and Africa's fastest-growing tour-

ism destination, pointing to world-class resorts and parks developed under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed. He said the capital city of Ethiopia—Addis Ababa is the third diplomatic hub and home to the African Union, hosting over 150 international summits last year. The Ambassador highlighted the Ethiopian Airlines' direct Karachi—Addis Ababa flights as a key advantage for Pakistani travelers. H.E. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan praised the Embassy's initiative for strengthening people-to-people ties and appreciating the Ethiopian Airlines for closing the connectivity gap between Pakistan

and Africa. Announcing a reciprocal influencer exchange, he announced Pakistani content creators will soon visit Ethiopia, while Ethiopian and African influencers will receive complimentary tourism packages to Pakistan. H.E. Hamid Asghar Khan thanked Ethiopia for launching direct flight operations in Pakistan, calling them the most critical link between the two countries. Recalling his visit to Ethiopia, he lauded massive production of energy in Ethiopia, rapid development in its urban areas, wonderful tourism landscapes, and above all the strides it has made in aviation sector.

ISSI hosts UNAOC High representative Miguel

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP), at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a public talk by Miguel Angel Moratinos, United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations and UN Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia (UNAOC). Dr. Neelum Nigar, in her introductory remarks, noted that the work of UNAOC remains highly relevant, as its emphasis on dialogue among cultures and religions reflects Pakistan's enduring commitment to peaceful coexistence, interfaith harmony, constructive international engagement, and respect for all religions and civilizations. In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood observed that the world is witnessing an alarming rise in identity-based polarization, religious intolerance, hate speech, violent extremism, and shrinking space for constructive dialogue, with Islamophobia emerging as one of the most serious manifestations of these trends. He stressed that Islamophobia has evolved beyond isolated acts of discrimination into a global challenge that threatens the universal principles of equality, human dignity, religious freedom, and peaceful coexistence. Highlighting the growing prevalence of anti-Muslim rhetoric, attacks on places of worship, and discriminatory narratives, he referred to the situation in India and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza as examples of developments that have drawn widespread

international concern over religious discrimination and intolerance. Reaffirming Pakistan's principled position that no religion should ever be associated with terrorism or extremism, nor any faith community subjected to hatred because of the actions of a few individuals, he recalled Pakistan's leading role in securing the United Nations General Assembly's designation of the International Day to Combat Islamophobia and welcomed the appointment of the UN Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia. Concluding, Ambassador Mahmood emphasized that lasting peace can only be achieved through mutual respect, intercultural dialogue, and inclusive engagement, while commending the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations for its vital role in fostering understanding, countering extremism, and promoting peaceful and resilient societies. Delivering the keynote address, H.E. Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos observed that the international system stands at a defining inflection point, marked by growing geopolitical fragmentation, diminishing confidence in multilateral institutions, and an increasingly complex array of transnational challenges. He argued that restoring dialogue, rebuilding trust in multilateralism, and strengthening intercultural understanding are no longer aspirational objectives but strategic imperatives for preserving international peace, security, and sustainable development. Stressing that the world is undergoing a profound transformation, he called for renewed political leadership and collective in-

ternational action to address global challenges through cooperation rather than confrontation. Mr. Moratinos cautioned that international discourse has increasingly become dominated by narrow security considerations, while the broader objective of achieving sustainable peace has gradually receded from the forefront of global policymaking. He observed that persistent conflicts, widening economic inequalities, the accelerating impacts of climate change, and the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence are reshaping the international landscape. While recognizing AI's transformative potential, he underscored that it also presents profound ethical, social, and governance challenges that require responsible regulation and strengthened international cooperation. Highlighting the interconnected nature of contemporary global challenges, Mr. Moratinos emphasized that issues such as climate change, terrorism, pandemics, artificial intelligence, and sustainable development transcend national boundaries and cannot be effectively addressed through unilateral action. He argued that the defining question of the twenty-first century is not whether nations can outcompete one another, but whether they possess the political will to cooperate in addressing shared challenges. Reaffirming that multilateralism remains the only credible framework for mobilizing collective action, he stressed that dialogue and international cooperation are indispensable for securing a more stable, peaceful, and prosperous future.

National savings meets Rs1.384t target

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has successfully achieved its annual savings mobilisation target of Rs1.384 trillion for the fiscal year 2025-26, reflecting strong public confidence in government-backed investment schemes and secure savings instruments. According to official sources, CDNS collected Rs1.384 trillion between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026, successfully meeting its annual target of the same amount. Officials attributed the achievement to growing investor trust and an increasing preference among citizens for safe and reliable financial planning options. To expand its investment portfolio, CDNS earmarked Rs 60 billion for Islamic savings instruments during FY2025-26. The initiative is intended to promote Shariah-compliant investment opportunities while supporting the continued growth of Pakistan's Islamic finance sector. Officials highlighted that in the previous fiscal year (FY2024-25), the directorate had set an ambitious savings target of Rs1.65 trillion, including Rs170 billion for Islamic finance investments, with the objective of enhancing financial inclusion and broadening investment opportunities. CDNS has maintained a strong performance record in recent years. During FY2023-24, it exceeded its target by mobilising Rs1.742 trillion against a goal of Rs1.7 trillion, while it successfully achieved its Rs1.6 trillion target in FY2022-23. In FY2021-22, the initial savings target of Rs1.3 trillion was revised upward to Rs1.4 trillion in response to favourable market conditions and improved resource mobilisation.—APP

Mushaal denounces fresh charge sheet

She concluded that the cases against Yasin Malik were not a reflection of justice but of political revenge, reaffirming that the struggle for the rights and aspirations of the Kashmiri people would continue.

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick, wife of jailed Kashmiri Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik, on Tuesday strongly condemned the filing of a fresh charge sheet against her husband in a 36-year-old case, describing it as the "worst example of political vengeance." In a statement, she alleged that the case is based on the names of deceased persons and accused India of attempting to convert Yasin Malik's life imprisonment into a death sentence, calling it a grave violation of human rights and an attempt to suppress the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. MS Mullick said the filing of a new charge sheet in a

decades-old case exposed the political misuse of the judicial process. She asserted that prosecuting a case in the names of deceased individuals raised serious questions about the credibility and fairness of India's judicial system. She maintained that efforts to seek the death penalty for Yasin Malik despite his existing life sentence, amounted to a serious violation of internationally recognised human rights and reflected political retaliation rather than the pursuit of justice. She added that the voice of the Kashmiri people could not be crushed through force, intimidation or coercive measures. She further stated

that the spirit of freedom among Kashmiris could not be extinguished through fear or violence and urged the international community to take immediate notice of India's "judicial drama." Calling on the United Nations and international human rights organisations to fulfil their responsibilities, Mushaal warned that remaining silent in the face of alleged injustice would amount to tacit approval of oppression. She concluded that the cases against Yasin Malik were not a reflection of justice but of political revenge, reaffirming that the struggle for the rights and aspirations of the Kashmiri people would continue.—APP

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Briefs

IRSA releases
287,500
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 287,500 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 343,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1448.28 feet, which was 48.39 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 207,900 cusecs and 148,300 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1162.90 feet, which was 112.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 36,500 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 197,300, 161,200, 101,200, and 45,000 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 47,300 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 25,100 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

MD NPF
reviews
recruitment

ISLAMABAD: Managing Director National Police Foundation (NPF) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi chaired a high-level meeting to review the progress of recruitment under the NPF Testing and Assessment Service, housing projects, IT initiatives, ongoing development schemes and key administrative matters. An official told APP on Tuesday that senior officers of the National Police Foundation attended the meeting, where detailed discussions were held on the progress of various projects and measures to ensure transparency, quality and timely completion. The official said the meeting also reviewed the ongoing recruitment process being conducted through the NPF Testing and Assessment Service and discussed ways to further strengthen its transparency and efficiency. According to the official, participants deliberated on improving police welfare and enhancing facilities for Pakistan Police employees, besides exploring the effective use of modern technology to strengthen institutional performance. The official said future strategies were also discussed to improve service delivery, accelerate development projects and further enhance the overall efficiency of the organization. Rizvi directed the relevant officers to maintain the highest standards of transparency, professionalism and accountability and ensure the timely completion of all ongoing projects for the benefit of police personnel, the official added.—APP

Saudi dates
target US
market

ISLAMABAD :Saudi Arabia is showcasing its premium dates and value-added date products at one of the world's largest specialty food exhibitions in New York as it seeks to expand exports and strengthen its presence in the U.S. market. According to Saudi Press Agency (SPA), Saudi Arabia is participating as the Partner Country at the Summer Fancy Food Show 2026, being held in New York from June 28 to 30, with representatives from 50 countries and around 2,400 exhibitors. The exhibition is expected to attract more than 30,000 visitors from around the world. The Kingdom, represented by Saudi Dates and the National Center for Palms and Dates, is displaying a wide range of premium locally produced dates and innovative value-added products that have gained increasing popularity in international markets. SPA told APP that the participation of several Saudi date companies in the exhibition provides an important opportunity to promote their products, establish new business partnerships and expand exports to the United States. Saudi dates have witnessed strong global demand, helping increase export value and expand the number of importing countries. Officials said the exhibition also highlights the high quality and nutritional value of Saudi dates while strengthening the Kingdom's presence at major international food events in line with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani awarding degree to Muhammad Bilal during 30th Annual Convocation of GIK Institute, 2026 at GIK Institute, Topi Campus, Swabi. DNA Photo

DICE Forum, Bulgaria embassy donate Books to Mashal school

Highlighting the work of The DICE Forum, Ms. Agha said the organisation promotes diplomacy, inclusion, climate action and education through practical community initiatives. She explained that the KITAB Project seeks to establish and strengthen school and community libraries, improve access to quality education

MAHNOOR ANSAR

Islamabad: The DICE Forum, in collaboration with the Embassy of Bulgaria, donated a collection of books to Mashal School under its KITAB Project, reaffirming a shared commitment to promoting literacy and expanding access to quality education. The ceremony was attended by H.E. Ms. Irena Gancheva, Ambassador of Bulgaria to Pakistan, who graced the occasion as the chief guest, Mr. Malik Sohail, Chairman Coordination, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Chairperson of The DICE Forum Ms. Aliya Agha, President of Mashal School Ms. Fauzia Asim, educators, students. Welcoming the guests, Aliya Agha, Chairperson of The DICE Forum, said the event was not merely about donating books but about investing in human potential. She said education remains one of the most effective tools for breaking the cycle of poverty and that books continue to play an irreplaceable role particularly

at a time when digital distractions are shortening attention spans. "Books are the only way to save the brains of our youth." She said the donation by the Embassy of Bulgaria represented an investment in Pakistan's youth and reflected the power of cultural diplomacy and friendship between the two countries. Expressing gratitude to Ambassador Irena Gancheva, she appreciated the Embassy's continued support for educational initiatives that directly benefit children and communities. Highlighting the work of The DICE Forum, Ms. Agha said the organisation promotes diplomacy, inclusion, climate action and education through practical community initiatives. She explained that the KITAB Project seeks to establish and strengthen school and community libraries, improve access to quality education. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Malik Sohail, Chairman Coordination, FPCCI, praised The DICE Forum for translating policy ideas into practical action through the KITAB Project. He commended the leadership of Aliya Agha in promoting education as a pillar

of sustainable development and thanked the Embassy of Bulgaria for supporting knowledge-sharing initiatives in Pakistan. He stressed the importance of partnerships among the public sector, private sector and civil society. Referring to the role of the business community, he said the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry would encourage businesses across the country to support educational initiatives by donating books, sponsoring libraries and investing in learning spaces as part of their corporate social responsibility. Addressing the gathering, Ambassador Irena Gancheva emphasised that books remain a timeless source of knowledge and personal growth despite rapid technological advances. She said education and access to reading materials empower young people to become informed, responsible and compassionate citizens. The Ambassador expressed her pleasure in supporting the KITAB Project, describing it as a meaningful initiative that strengthens educational opportunities while deepening the friendship between Bulgaria

and Pakistan. The president of Mashal school, Ms Fauzia Asim made the closing speech and expressed gratitude to the Embassy of Bulgaria and The DICE Forum for the generous donation. She said the books would significantly enrich the school's library and provide students with greater opportunities to read, learn and explore new ideas. She also appreciated the collaborative efforts of the Embassy, The DICE Forum and FPCCI in supporting educational development.

The event concluded with the formal presentation of books to the Mashal School library and an interaction between guests and students. Participants reaffirmed their shared commitment to expanding access to books and strengthening libraries as centres of learning across Pakistan. The KITAB Project, an initiative of The DICE Forum, continues to work with schools, development partners and the private sector to establish and strengthen libraries, for better learning outcomes and retention of students.

Chinese buyers show interest in Pakistani snacks

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chinese buyers have shown interest in Pakistani snack products during a visit to China by a food-sector delegation from South Punjab. Shahid Imran, convener of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's regional food committee, said the delegation was exploring export opportunities, business partnerships and possible joint ventures in food manufacturing and processing. He said the response from Chinese buyers had been encouraging, particularly for Pakistani snacks that meet international food safety and quality standards. Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. Imran said products made by Zia Snacks had attracted attention from Chinese importers because of their taste, quality and manufacturing standards. He said Pakistani manufacturers could target China with a wider range of processed food products, including potato chips, corn-based snacks, biscuits, confectionery and other

value-added foods. Moving from raw agricultural exports towards processed food could help Pakistan increase export earnings, support value addition and improve the competitiveness of its food-manufacturing sector, he said. Imran said stronger government facilitation, improved logistics, better trade connectivity and compliance with international food safety standards would be needed to expand processed food exports. He also urged Pakistani food manufacturers to improve quality certification, production technology, packaging, branding and pricing to build a longer-term presence in the Chinese market. He said closer links with Chinese importers, distributors and retail chains, as well as more trade exhibitions and business-to-business meetings, would be important for sustaining growth. The visit comes as Pakistan and China seek to expand agriculture and food-sector cooperation under the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, with officials from both countries identifying value addition and export-led growth as priorities.

HEC confers best university teachers awards

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan, has successfully concluded the HEC Best University Teacher Award (BUTA) 2025 Cycle, recognizing seven outstanding faculty members across various categories from universities throughout Pakistan for their excellence in teaching, research, and academic contributions. The award recipients were selected following a comprehensive evaluation process conducted by HEC. The HEC Best University Teacher Award (2025) Ceremony was organized at HEC Secretariat on Tuesday, where the awards were formally conferred upon the recipients. The ceremony highlighted the commitment of HEC to promoting academic excellence, recognizing the valuable role of university teachers, and strengthening the higher education sector in Pakistan. Chairman HEC Prof. Dr Niaz Ahmad Akhtar was the chief guest on the occasion. Executive Director HEC, Prof. Dr Zia Ul Haq, Adviser (Research and Innovation) HEC, Dr Muhammad Ali Nasir, Vice Chancellors of Air University and Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University, Pro-Rector of Bahria University Islamabad, Members of the Selection Committees and senior HEC management attended the ceremony. The winners of Best University Teacher Awards were given cash prizes of Rs. 1 million each and certificates. The Awards were conferred on Dr Nadia Nawaz from COMSATS University Islamabad, Wah Campus in Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction category, Dr Rashid Jaill from University of

Engineering & Technology, Lahore in Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics category, Dr Ifran Bashir University of Management & Technology, Lahore in Education Category, Dr Abrar Ashraf Ali from King Edwards Medical University, Lahore in Health & Welfare category, Dr Owais Mufti from Institute of Management Sciences, Peshawar in Business, Administration & Law category, Dr Ahsan Ul Haq from Pakistan Institute of Development Economics in Social Sciences, Journalism and Information category, Dr Rao Zahid from University of Agriculture, Faisalabad in Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary category for year 2025. While addressing the ceremony, Chairman HEC Dr Niaz Ahmad Akhtar congratulated the award recipients. He emphasized that the award recognizes excellence in the teaching profession, dedication to knowledge dissemination, meaningful engagement with students, and the development of skills necessary to prepare youth for future challenges and opportunities. He further underscored that teachers must serve as role models for their students by demonstrating integrity, professionalism, and a commitment to lifelong learning. He called upon universities and faculty members to focus on producing knowledge, skills, and innovations that equip youth for the future and generate meaningful, real-world impact. The Chairman also appreciated the efforts of the reviewers and the HEC team for conducting a rigorous and transparent evaluation process to identify.—DNA

Banks directed not to freeze accounts without legal authority

ISLAMABAD: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has directed all banks not to block customers' bank accounts without lawful authority, approval of the competent authority and proper verification, according to a compliance report submitted before the Islamabad High Court (IHC). The report, filed in compliance with the court's directions, stated that banks have been instructed that restrictions on any bank account might only be imposed after fulfilling all legal requirements and obtaining approval from the competent authority. The SBP further directed banks to ensure that account holders did not suffer losses due to arbitrary or precautionary restrictions imposed without legal justification. The report was submitted following earlier directions of the Islamabad High Court, which had already restrained banks from freezing accounts without legal authority and prior approval of the competent authority.—APP

Seminar highlights gender-based violence in IIOK

ISLAMABAD: The International Muslim Women Union, in collaboration with the Kashmir Institute of International Relations, is convening a seminar titled "Gender-Based Violence in Context of Conflicts" to examine the intersection of international human rights and humanitarian law with the ongoing situation in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The event addressed the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, enforced disappearances, and the resulting trauma faced by women, including those known as half-widows and half-wives. From the mass rape at Kunan Poshpora in 1991 to incidents in Khutha, Shopian and other areas, survivors and human rights monitors have documented patterns of sexual violence by Indian security forces, as received in a press release here on Tuesday. Such acts, committed in the context of armed conflict, may constitute war crimes under the Geneva Conventions and other applicable international standards. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) report on Kashmir (2018-2019) raised serious concerns over sexual violence, lack of accountability, and excessive use of force.—APP

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 06 Issue:

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394

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US-Israel rift has been brewing for some time

YOSSI MEKELBERG

THERE is perhaps nowhere further removed from the horrors of war unfolding across the Middle East than the tranquility of Lake Geneva, its surrounding mountains and the city itself, where negotiations between the US and Iran have been proceeding at a painfully slow pace in an effort to reach a deal that could end the conflict. Yet, alongside these talks, another development has emerged that could significantly influence their outcome and reshape the political and security architecture of the Middle East in both the short and long term: the growing rift between the US administration and the Israeli government. This divide reflects a genuine divergence of interests over whether the war should continue or end. It also mirrors a gradual shift in American attitudes away from unquestioning support for Israel. Equally, it is a product of the personalities of the leaders of both governments: leaders who tend to be tactical, transactional and self-serving rather than strategic. There has long been an element of predictability to this growing tension, as it has been brewing for some time. At the outset of the latest round of hostilities with Iran, both countries operated on the assumption that the campaign would be short, lasting days or at most weeks, and would fatally weaken the Iranian regime. This, in turn, was expected to eliminate Iran's nuclear program, its long-range ballistic missile capabilities and its support of a network of regional allies and proxies. Needless to say, these assumptions were unrealistic from the outset. More importantly, there was no Plan B when Plan A failed. While Israel never appeared to regard the possible closure of the Strait of Hormuz or Iranian attacks against neighboring Gulf states as decisive factors in either launching or ending the war, these should have been critical considerations for American policymakers when deciding whether to join the campaign or how to conduct it. The absence of an alternative strategy beyond the best-case scenario of a rapid and total victory exposed a striking lack of strategic thinking. Little consideration was given to the consequences for the global economy if one of the world's most important maritime arteries were to be disrupted. The desperate manner in which Washington is conducting negotiations with Tehran derives directly from this strategic failure. Yet the current crisis between the US and Israel over the latter's conduct in Lebanon, which is seen in America as obstructing progress in the negotiations, is only the immediate manifestation of a broader political and societal reassessment of the "special relationship" that has been gathering pace for years. A broader political and societal reassessment of the 'special relationship' has been gathering pace for years. For Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, particularly since Oct. 7, 2023, a perpetual state of war has become both a political objective and a governing strategy. It



enables him to remain in office while delaying any state commission of inquiry into the failures surrounding the Hamas attacks. An endless war, in which tactical successes are repeatedly portrayed as strategic breakthroughs or steps toward "absolute victory," serves primarily to keep a failed government in power. This approach stands in sharp contrast to President Donald Trump's political instincts. Trump is impatient, seeks immediate results and appears to place little value on enduring alliances or long-term strategic partnerships. At the outset of the conflict, Trump and those around him embraced the idea that a swift military victory could permanently resolve the Iranian challenge. Once the economic, political and diplomatic costs became apparent, however, the administration shifted toward limiting the damage as quickly as possible, with relatively little regard for the long-term consequences.

The US withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2018 followed a similar logic. Influenced in large part by Netanyahu, Trump also sought to dismantle one of Barack Obama's signature foreign policy achievements. The result was that Iran, no longer constrained by the agreement, accelerated significant aspects of its nuclear program. More recent understandings between Washington and Tehran may have reduced immediate tensions but they also contain the seeds of future instability and an Iranian attempt at hegemony. Despite suffering extensive military losses, the Iranian leadership has survived and may emerge believing that it is the US and Israel, not Tehran, that will ultimately be forced to make concessions.

Netanyahu should perhaps have drawn lessons from the way Trump has treated other foreign leaders. His administration has repeatedly demonstrated how quickly long-standing relationships can be discarded once they cease to serve immediate political interests. Personal loyalty matters only so long as it remains useful, while criticism is often delivered in deliberately harsh, public terms to exert political pressure. When Vice President J.D. Vance reportedly remarked that "you can't just kill your way out" of problems and argued that the US was effectively the only friend Israel has left — suggesting that Trump remained the only major world leader still openly sympathetic toward Israel — he was articulating an uncomfortable reality. Yet it was successive US administrations, including the current one, that helped create this situation. In Iran, Washington aligned itself closely with Israeli military objectives rather than pursuing durable political settlements through negotiations.

None of this, however, absolves the Israeli government of responsibility for the manner in which it has conducted its wars, often with little regard for civilian lives. Hence, Netanyahu's approach to conflict over the past several years has left Israel increasingly isolated internationally. Now, growing tensions with Washington risk undermining Israel's own long-term security and prosperity. Since its founding, Israel has been the largest cumulative recipient of US foreign assistance, receiving well over \$300 billion (adjusted for inflation) in economic and military aid. Nearly 70 percent of Israel's imported weaponry originates in America. Moreover, Washington remains Israel's principal diplomatic defender in international institutions, particularly at the UN Security Council.

• Yossi Mekelberg is a professor of international relations and an associate fellow of the MENA Program at Chatham House.

How Pakistan Became Israel's Primary Target (Part-I)

Qamar Bashir



The diplomatic achievements of Pakistan—including its instrumental role in stopping the wars in Lebanon and Gaza—have made it a major thorn in the eye of Israel. What Pakistan achieved diplomatically is perhaps greater in value and impact than what Iran achieved through its military confrontations with the United States and Israel. This remarkable ascent has transformed Pakistan from a peripheral player into a central actor in the Middle Eastern power equation, and with that transformation has come the inevitable...

THE geopolitical sands of Southwest Asia have shifted dramatically in recent months. In a stunning reversal of roles, Pakistan—once viewed as a struggling state battling internal insurgencies and economic instability—has emerged as a pivotal power broker on the world stage. Through its successful mediation between the United States and Iran and its efforts to avert a global economic crisis, Islamabad has positioned itself as a formidable voice in international diplomacy. This diplomatic ascendancy, however, has come at a considerable cost. By challenging the established order and offering a counterbalance to Israeli power in the region, Pakistan has inadvertently painted a target on its own back. The result is a new and dangerous proxy war being fought on Pakistani soil, leveraging the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan and the Balochistan Liberation Army as tools to bleed the nation from within. The calculus of power in the Middle East has been fundamentally upended. As the only nuclear-armed Muslim state with a growing arsenal, Pakistan is increasingly viewed by regional actors as a necessary counterweight to Israel's unbridled military might and expansionist ambitions. The narrative in Islamabad and across many Middle Eastern capitals is that Israel, guided by a maximalist ideology and backed by its own nuclear capabilities, seeks to redraw the map of the region.

The perceived Greater Israel project, aiming to control territory from the Nile to the Euphrates, necessitates the destruction or fracture of all regional power structures. Under this worldview, Israel's strategy is to create chaos, foster fractured governments, and use nuclear blackmail to cow its adversaries. In this context, Pakistan's nuclear umbrella is seen as the ultimate deterrent against Israeli aggression. By providing a potential shield for nations like Turkey, Egypt, and Iran, Pakistan has become a primary obstacle to Israel's regional ambitions. This is the crux of the new animosity. Israel has recognized that it cannot neutralize Iran, Turkey, or other regional rivals without first neutralizing the threat from Pakistan.

The diplomatic achievements of Pakistan—including its instrumental role in stopping the wars in Lebanon and Gaza—have made it a major thorn in the eye of Israel. What Pakistan achieved diplomatically is perhaps greater in value and impact than what Iran achieved through its military confrontations with the United States and Israel.

This remarkable ascent has transformed Pakistan from a peripheral player into a central actor in the Middle Eastern power equation, and with that transformation has come the inevitable attention of adversaries who view its rise as a direct threat to their interests. To counter this emerging threat, Israel is purportedly pivoting to a strategy of asymmetric warfare, exploiting Pakistan's internal vulnerabilities through a classic playbook: find, fund, and arm proxy

actors to destabilize a state from within, avoiding a direct and costly conventional confrontation.

The first prong of this strategy involves the TTP. Pakistan has long differentiated between the good Taliban in Afghanistan and the bad Taliban at home, but this distinction has become dangerously moot. The Afghan Taliban, now in power in Kabul, has provided safe havens, training camps, and logistical support to the TTP, allowing them to operate with near impunity across the porous border.

Now Israel in collaboration with India and elements within the Afghan government, is providing arms, ammunition, financial incentives, and operational guidance to the TTP. This financing and advanced training are intended to motivate TTP operatives to intensify their attacks on Pakistan's military and civilian power centers, creating a constant state of insecurity that weakens the state from within.

The second, equally dangerous prong involves the separatist movements in Balochistan. The Balochistan Liberation Army and other ethnic insurgent groups are waging a war for independence, and while these movements have deep-rooted local grievances, they have become receptive to external manipulation. The exiled Baloch leaders have expressed a willingness to align with Israel, viewing it as a potential guarantor of their independence. This creates a perverse alliance of convenience. India's Research and Analysis Wing has a well-documented history of fomenting unrest in Balochistan to destabilize Pakistan, with the arrest of Indian naval officer Kulbhushan Jadhav in 2016 serving as a key example.

Now, Israel is reportedly deepening this cooperation, offering advanced intelligence, satellite reconnaissance, and perhaps even technological assistance to these separatist groups. In return, the BLA and its affiliates are promising to act as Israel and India's stooges in a post-conflict scenario, leveraging whatever remains of a fractured Pakistan. The goal is to cripple the Pakistani state, potentially allowing external actors to seize control of the strategic Gwadar port and neutralize Pakistan's nuclear assets.

Beyond the proxy war, there is an immediate and visceral threat that Pakistan must contend with: Israel's technological prowess in targeted assassinations. Israel has a documented history of using sophisticated, often commercially available technology to track and eliminate high-value targets across the globe. This includes the use of advanced surveillance software, remote-controlled weaponry, and even cyber-enabled sabotage of critical infrastructure. Pakistan, with its community of nuclear scientists, military strategists, and political leaders, is vulnerable to such tactics. The threat is not merely hypothetical. Pakistan must ensure that the technology used by Israel for assassinating marked rivals and people of high political, scientific, and military value cannot be

successfully deployed within its borders. This demands a comprehensive overhaul of Pakistan's internal security protocols, including strict monitoring of digital communications, protection of supply chains from cyber-tampering, and rigorous vetting of personnel with access to sensitive information. Failure to address this vulnerability could result in the loss of the nation's most valuable minds and a catastrophic blow to its strategic capabilities. Passive defense, however, is no longer sufficient. The current situation demands a proactive and offensive strategy. Pakistan cannot simply wait for an attack to occur; it must act to deter it. The core recommendation emerging from strategic analysts is the creation of a counter-spy network in Israel. This is not merely an intelligence-gathering operation; it is a strategic necessity that would provide Islamabad with two critical advantages. First, a counter-network would provide Islamabad with powerful leverage, as knowing that Pakistan possesses the capability to respond in kind within Israeli territory would raise the stakes for any Israeli-initiated action in Pakistan.

Second, the doctrine of proportional response is central to this strategy. If Israel engages in sabotage, assassination, or support for proxy militancy within Pakistan, Islamabad must be prepared to reply in the same coin, delivering a proportional, measured, and effective response inside Israel itself. The goal is not escalation, but the creation of a credible deterrent that ensures the cost of aggression is too high to be borne. This is where the expertise of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence becomes paramount. The ISI has decades of experience in covert operations, counterinsurgency, and intelligence gathering in Afghanistan and against Indian targets.

These accumulated skills must now be refocused on the Israeli threat. Pakistan has shown its diplomatic capability to de-escalate major international conflicts; now it must demonstrate its resolve to defend its sovereignty and nuclear assets against covert infiltration and sabotage.

The agency must evaluate the situation from all angles and place security mechanisms that are not only defensive but also offensive in nature. Pakistan should use all the deceptive and intelligence-gathering methods that Israel has employed to weaken countries within their own borders and apply them in Israel itself, creating a countervailing power that ensures proportional and responsible retaliation for any aggression. If this is not done now, it will be too late, and Pakistan will have to face the consequences of inaction. To be continued.....

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

Terrorism Strikes Again as Pakistan Rises in Global Esteem

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



This Karachi outrage forms part of a larger pattern. In Balochistan, the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and its offshoots have intensified their campaigns, with credible indications of Indian funding, Afghan logistical support, and Israeli provision of intelligence and weaponry to fuel separatism and target Chinese-Pakistani cooperation projects

IN the grand ledger of history, it has repeatedly been witnessed that whenever Pakistan, through the boundless mercy of the Almighty, secures a position of respect and dignity among the nations of the world or draws a breath of relief amid its many challenges, the forces of terrorism are swiftly stirred into renewed frenzy within its borders. The brave custodians of law and order, those steadfast officers and soldiers who stand as the first line of defence, have too often become the primary targets of these insidious attacks. India and its foreign patrons, ever watchful for any opening, spare no effort in exploiting such moments to sow seeds of instability and undermine the unity of this sovereign land. A broader nexus has long been evident, linking Indian designs with safe havens in Afghanistan and, alarmingly, with support from Israel, which has been accused of aiding separatist elements to further regional destabilisation.

Divine wisdom recently elevated Pakistan to the honourable role of mediator between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran. At a time when tensions threatened to engulf the region in further conflict, Pakistan stepped forward as a trusted bridge for dialogue, facilitating understanding and contributing meaningfully to the pursuit of peace. This diplomatic achievement, which enhanced Pakistan's stature on the global stage, proved intolerable to certain circles in New Delhi. Unable to accept Pakistan's rising influence, they resorted once more to their familiar tactics, activating a network of proxies that draws strength from Afghan territory and aligns with external agendas, including those attributed to foreign backing of insurgent factions.

Through agents and proxies, they orchestrated yet another cowardly strike against Pakistan's law enforcement agencies in the commercial heart of the

country, Karachi. On the fateful evening of June 27, a band of heavily armed militants launched a spineless assault upon the Sindh Rangers headquarters in Karachi. The attack commenced with a suicide bomber ramming an explosive-laden vehicle into the main gate of the compound, producing a powerful blast that shattered the calm of the night.

Immediately thereafter, gunmen attempted to breach the perimeter and storm the facility. In the fierce gun battle that followed, three valiant Rangers embraced martyrdom, while four others sustained injuries as they defended their post with exemplary courage and professionalism. The security forces responded with swift determination, neutralising the majority of the attackers on the spot and foiling what might have become a far more devastating outrage.

Among those apprehended was an injured terrorist whose confession has peeled back the layers of this conspiracy. The suspect, identified as Usman Ali and linked to the banned Jamaat-ul-Ahrar group—a faction widely regarded as an Indian proxy—revealed that he and his accomplices had infiltrated Pakistan from Afghanistan's Jalalabad region roughly a week prior to the assault. They had undergone specialised training in Afghanistan, including preparation for suicide missions, before crossing the border with weapons reportedly sourced from troubled areas. His companions were eliminated during the operation. This testimony stands as compelling evidence, aligning with previous intelligence that has repeatedly shown how terrorism is nurtured across the Afghan frontier at the instigation of external powers hostile to Pakistan. This Karachi outrage forms part of a larger pattern. In Balochistan, the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and its offshoots have intensified their campaigns, with credible indications of Indian funding, Afghan logistical support, and Israeli provision of intelli-

gence and weaponry to fuel separatism and target Chinese-Pakistani cooperation projects. Similar elements have been activated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where TTP remnants exploit border sanctuaries, as well as in parts of Azad Kashmir, aiming to stir unrest and stretch Pakistan's security apparatus across multiple fronts. Such coordinated efforts reveal a calculated nexus designed to weaken Pakistan internally while it contributes to regional peace.

Such incidents lay bare a persistent campaign aimed at weakening Pakistan from within. The world community can no longer turn a blind eye to this pattern of cross-border terrorism, training camps, and covert support networks that seek to destabilise a nation striving for progress and peace. Pakistan, as a responsible sovereign state, reserves the unquestionable right to defend itself and to take all necessary measures to safeguard its territory and its people.

Yet in the face of every adversity, the people of Pakistan, along with their valiant Army and dedicated law enforcement agencies, display an unshakeable resolve. United by faith, patriotism, and an indomitable spirit, they remain ever ready to protect every inch of the homeland—from its rugged mountains to its vibrant cities. The blood of martyrs does not weaken the nation; rather, it nourishes the roots of national unity and determination. As Pakistan continues to expose these nefarious designs before the international forum, it calls upon the global conscience to acknowledge the truth and support efforts to dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism. For ultimately, falsehood and malice cannot prevail against a people armed with truth, courage, and the blessings of the Almighty. Pakistan shall endure and advance, its flag flying high despite the storms unleashed by its adversaries. The sacrifices of today will pave the way for a safer and more prosperous tomorrow for generations yet to come.

Briefs

IWT issue
matter of
national...

FROM PAGE 01

Kashmir's Pahalgam that killed 26 tourists – an incident New Delhi blamed on Islamabad without evidence. For its part, Pakistan strongly denied the allegations and called for a neutral investigation. The treaty and its status remain a point of contention between the two sides since, with an Indian minister recently saying that they were working to stop the flow of water into Pakistan, and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar later assailing 17 projects by India on Indus waterways as "tools for hydro-hegemony".

Dar urges
India to...

FROM PAGE 01

the killing of 26 people in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir in April 2025. New Delhi accused Islamabad of orchestrating the deadly militant attack, an allegation that Pakistan denied. He said long-term peace was possible only through mutual respect and state sovereignty. "If Pakistan is deprived of its water rights, it will have serious consequences", DPM Dar warned. Recalling the past attempts to resolve issues with India through dialogue, the DPM said: "We in all sincerity are ready to talk on all issues, but we call for composite dialogue, but it takes two to tango."

At least 14
children...

FROM PAGE 01

the tuition centre when the roof collapsed. Police said construction work was underway on the upper floor of the building, while children were attending classes on the ground floor at the time of the incident. Authorities have taken five people into custody, including the owner of the building, as an investigation into the roof collapse incident continues. Following the incident, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed grief over the loss of lives and extended his condolences to the bereaved families.

CM Maryam
Nawaz...

FROM PAGE 01

incident, and through a swift rescue operation, 20 children were safely evacuated. She lamented that a loss of 14 precious lives is an extremely tragic and irreparable calamity; and those responsible for this tragedy deserve no concessions, and will be brought to the clutches of law. She directed the authorities concerned to conduct a complete, transparent, and impartial investigation into the incident; and individuals found guilty of negligence or carelessness will be brought to justice as per law.

Fund
created...

FROM PAGE 01

necessary arrangements regarding collection for the fund. It further stated that all amounts deposited in the fund will be transferred to the federal government's Public Account of the Federation, while a special account head and object code have been allocated for the fund. The rules and regulations for the fund will be jointly prepared by the Ministry of Finance, the Petroleum Division and the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) in view of the legal and financial requirements, the ministry said.

PM Shehbaz
to visit Iran

FROM PAGE 01

ceremonies in Tehran and another in the holy city of Qom. His son Mojtaba Ali Khamenei survived – although reportedly with injuries – and took over as supreme leader. He has yet to make a public appearance. Meanwhile, following the visit to Iran, the premier is also expected to travel to Türkiye, which was among the countries which backed Pakistan-mediated efforts to halt the war against Iran.

Morocco in Stage 16 after
penalty shootout win
over the Netherlands

Morocco hold nerve in penalty shootout and advance to the last 16 to face co-hosts Canada

DNA

MEXICO: Morocco beat the Netherlands 3-2 on penalties on Monday to reach the World Cup last 16 after their Round of 32 tie ended 1-1 following extra time, setting up a meeting with co-hosts Canada.

Ismael Saibari converted the winning spot kick after Yassine Bounou saved Crysencio Summerville's penalty, sending Morocco through after a dramatic contest in which they had forced extra time with a stoppage-time equaliser. Morocco's Neil El Aynaoui and Dutch substitute Justin Kluijver missed their attempts before Bart Verbruggen appeared to save Soufiane Rahimi's effort, only for the ball to squirm underneath him and trickle over the line.

Netherlands' Crysencio Summerville misses a penalty during the shootout as Morocco defeat the Netherlands to qualify for the Round of 16 of the Fifa World Cup at Estadio Monterrey, Monterrey, Mexico, June 29, 2026. Quinten Timber then put the ball wide with the Dutch side's fourth kick, Achraf Hakimi struck the post with the chance to seal victory before Saibari kept his nerve to send Morocco through. The shootout capped a gripping encounter in Monterrey that swung repeatedly in both teams' favour, with Cody Gakpo's emotional second-half opener cancelled out by Issa Diop's stoppage-time header before neither team could find a winner in extra time. Morocco fashioned the better chances before the break, with goalkeeper Verbruggen



producing a series of outstanding saves to deny Ayoub Bouaddi's close-range header and Neil El Aynaoui's powerful effort. At the other end, Bounou was finally called into action to parry Micky van de Ven's long-range strike. Hakimi rattled the crossbar and forced another save from Verbruggen as the Dutch struggled to contain the full back's runs from deep before Ronald Koeman's introduction of Wout Weghorst gave his side a much-needed focal point in attack. The substitute's impact was immediate as he won a flick-on that released Summer-

ville, whose persistence created the opening for Gakpo to sweep a first-time finish beyond Bounou in the 72nd minute. Playing days after he and his partner lost their unborn son during pregnancy, Gakpo broke down in tears as teammates rushed to embrace him. The Netherlands looked increasingly comfortable, with captain Virgil van Dijk producing a crucial intervention to deny Saibari as Morocco threw numbers forward in search of an equaliser. But just as the Dutch appeared set to see out the victory, substitute Chemsidine Tal-

bi delivered a pinpoint cross from the left and Diop rose above Van Dijk to power a stoppage-time header beyond Verbruggen, sending the match into extra time. Momentum swung from end to end, with the Netherlands threatening on the counter as Morocco chased the game, but could not make their pressure count in open play. Having weathered Gakpo's emotional opener and survived Hakimi's missed chance to settle the shootout, Morocco held their nerve when it mattered most to keep their World Cup dream alive and book a date with Canada in Houston on Saturday.

Martinelli to the rescue as Brazil
edge Japan 2-1 in last 32

DNA

HOUSTON: Brazil survived a World Cup last-32 scare when they fought back to beat Japan 2-1 after Gabriel Martinelli squeezed in a shot at the far post deep in stoppage time on Monday. Brazil, who will next face Norway or Ivory Coast in New Jersey on Sunday, improved after the break with Japan taking an early lead and shacking the attack of the five-times champions for much of the opening period. Martinelli's winner in the 95th minute came at the end of a tense match and was the latest winning goal in normal time of a World Cup knockout game since 1966. Brazil players

and staff hugged each other on the pitch after the match as the Japanese players watched on in disbelief. "I can't explain how I feel," Martinelli said. "It'll only really sink in a while. Thank God I managed to score the goal today. I'm so happy for the team, who gave it their all. I'm lost for words." Japan's Kaishu Sano stunned Brazil after 29 minutes when he intercepted Danilo's misplaced pass before driving toward goal and rifling a shot past goalkeeper Alisson Becker to send the outnumbered Samurai Blue fans into delirium. Japan put on a first-half defensive masterclass as they sucked up pressure with defenders flying around the pitch, breaking up passes

and closing down space any time a Brazilian player had the ball. Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti must have said something at halftime as his players came out with a sense of urgency and created a number of chances, pushing forward at a faster pace and loading the box. "We didn't lose our patience, we had a lot of resources on the pitch and on the bench," Ancelotti said. "Japan isn't an easy opponent. It's very organised and intense. "I was saving Neymar for extra time. He was going to enter the pitch on minute 105 if we hadn't scored the second goal. I didn't want to change the structure because the team was playing well." Brazil, however, did not need

their all-time leading scorer and equalised when Casemiro, who had missed a golden chance moments earlier, out-jumped his marker to nod in a far-post header in the 56th minute from a Gabriel Magalhaes cross. Vinicius Jr looked like he had found the winner when his mazy run ended with Japan goalkeeper Zion Suzuki brilliantly pushing a shot on to the post much to the disbelief of a sea of yellow-clad supporters in the packed stadium. Japan players regrouped and kept Brazil at bay until Bruno Guimaraes received the ball on the edge of the box before hesitating and then slipping it through to Martinelli who made no mistake with a clinical finish.

Germany dumped out
by Paraguay in seismic
World Cup shock

FOXBOROUGH: Germany crashed out of the World Cup at the hands of Paraguay in the last 32 after losing 4-3 on penalties following a 1-1 draw in Foxborough on Monday. It marks the first time that Germany have ever lost a penalty shootout at a World Cup. Julio Enciso headed Paraguay into a shock lead before half-time, but Kai Havertz levelled for Germany on 54 minutes with his third goal of the tournament. Jonathan Tah saw a goal disallowed after a VAR review in extra time, before Paraguay held on to shock Germany in a wild, nerve-jangling shootout as the momentum swung back and forth. Paraguay goalkeeper Orlando Gill saved from Havertz and Nick Woltemade, but his teammates blew two chances to win it before Jose Canale blasted in the winning spot-kick after Tah had blazed his effort over the bar. It marked another premature exit for Germany who were playing in their first knockout-stage appearance since winning the 2014 World Cup. Paraguay celebrated arguably their greatest win at the tournament, but they face the daunting prospect of running into an informal France next should Les Bleus beat Sweden. Julian Nagelsmann handed Deniz Undav his first start of the tournament, after the Stuttgart striker scored three times in the opening two games as a substitute. – APP

PHF announces
schedule for PM
National Women's
U-21 Hockey C'ship

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has announced the official match schedule for the Prime Minister National Women's Under-21 Hockey Championship 2026, commencing from Thursday at Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium, Islamabad. Sponsored by Alaska Batteries, PTCL, and PARCO, the eight-day championship will feature 13 teams divided into four pools. The PHF said match timings had been revised due to the ongoing heatwave and extreme weather conditions across the country, with the updated schedule to be issued after consultation with team managers. Pool A comprises Punjab-A, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Star Women Academy-B; Pool B includes KPK-A, Sindh-B, Mardan, and AJK; Pool C consists of Sindh-A, KPK-B and Islamabad; while Pool D features Punjab-B, Star Academy-A and Olympic Zakir Academy. In the opening match, Mardan will take on AJK. Other fixtures on the opening day include Gilgit-Baltistan versus Star Academy-B, KPK-A against Sindh-B and Punjab-B facing Star Academy-A. – APP

Morocco 'unstoppable' says coach
after Netherlands thriller

MONTERREY, Mexico: Morocco coach Mohamed Ouabhi believes his team is primed to make a deep run at the World Cup, declaring that the Atlas Lions could be "unstoppable" if they play to their potential. The Moroccans, beaten semifinalists at the 2022 World Cup, advanced to the last 16 on Monday after winning a thrilling battle with the Netherlands on penalties in Monterrey. It was another stylish display by the African champions, who dominated for long periods in a match that finished 1-1 after extra-time. Ouabhi said Moroccan football is now reaping the benefits of the 2022 team's groundbreaking exploits in becoming the first African team to reach the World Cup semifinals. "The World Cup in Qatar changed the mentality of the Morocco team, and I'm well placed to

talk about this," said Ouabhi, who last year coached Morocco to a momentous victory at the Under-20 World Cup in Chile. "Moroccan players in Morocco believe in themselves, the supporters, the fans believe in us as well. It's so important. They're demanding, but it's because they know just how far we can go," he said. Morocco face co-hosts Canada in the last 16, with a potential quarter-final meeting with France looming on the horizon. Ouabhi said there would be no question of complacency against Canada. "We know that it's game after game, and people think that it's kept to be easy for us, it's going to be a walk in the park for Morocco, which is not the case. Canada is a team that is going to be difficult for us." But Ouabhi said Morocco could go even further

than the 2022 team if they fired on all cylinders. "What we need to be telling ourselves is no one can stop us," he said. "We're unstoppable if we play the football that we know how to play. "But nobody is unbeatable. And I tell my guys that as well. If we get things wrong, we'll go home, and we need to ensure that we have all the tools that we're using, the tools in our arsenal to go as far as we can, and that's the mentality that we want all of our players in Morocco to have." Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman meanwhile said Morocco's emergence reflected the quality of African football. "It's very clear watching this World Cup that African teams have greatly improved in tactical sense, and also in the way they play their matches," Koeman said. – APP

New Zealand thrash England to deny
Stokes a fairytale finish

NZ win three-match campaign 2-1, their fourth series success in England in 20 attempts

DNA

LONDON: An injury-hit New Zealand overwhelmed England by 160 runs in the third Test at Trent Bridge on Monday as Ben Stokes's last match in international cricket ended with a thumping defeat.

Victory meant New Zealand won a three-match campaign 2-1 – just their fourth series success in England in 20 attempts and only the second time they had triumphed after being 1-0 down following their 1999 success in England. This was also England's seventh defeat in nine Tests and a first series loss at home in three or more Tests since 2012. The Test was upstaged by England captain Stokes dramatically announcing his retirement from international duty on Sunday. The 35-year-old all-rounder said he felt "burnt out" after four years as England skipper, although Stokes added he would continue to play for county side Durham. His decision came after he had returned to England action after being omitted from a

crushing 253-run defeat in the second Test, having broken a midnight curfew following the hosts' win in the series opener.

"It would have been great to go out with a series win, that's in a perfect world," Stokes told the BBC. "But I'm very happy with what I've managed to achieve as a player and a captain. "There's quite a few emotions knowing you're not going to be doing this anymore." New Zealand's win was just reward for their professional application, the Black Caps outplaying England in all departments in Nottingham.

Their approach was summed up by Daryl Mitchell, named player of the match, for a gutsy second-innings 100 not out where he was repeatedly struck painful blows by England's pace attack. "This is very special for our group," said Mitchell.

"We came over with the goal of winning the series. It's really cool." Stokes opened England's run-chase even though he is normally a middle-order batsman, with the hosts set a stiff target of 373 to win. He blazed his way to 30 off 20 balls, including two sixes, before he holed out, with his

exit meaning he had no on-field role on Monday, his last day in international cricket. England had dramatically chased down a target of 299 to beat New Zealand at Trent Bridge four years ago, right at the start of the team's aggressive 'Bazball' era under Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum with Jonny Bairstow scoring a blistering century. But the current New Zealand attack held their nerve, with England losing three more wickets before Sunday's close to be in dire straits at 103-4. And they were in even worse trouble at 116-6 after losing two wickets in five balls early in Monday's play. Nathan Smith had Emilio Gay caught behind for 10 and then Joe Root, one of England's greatest batsmen, was superbly run out for 18 by Henry Nicholls's brilliant direct hit from backward point. New Zealand lost a bowler just 35 minutes into Monday's play when Will O'Rourke suffered a hamstring injury. Gus Atkinson, also back after breaking curfew alongside Stokes, and Jamie Smith kept New Zealand at bay with a stand of 75 before Atkinson was lbw for 19 to left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner.

Jamie Smith went to a fifty when he punched Santner for four after lunch. But another excellent direct hit run-out did for tailender Josh Tongue, with Santner on target this time, before Jamie Smith (60) was caught in the deep by Nathan Smith to seal a well-deserved success for the Black Caps. "We put a lot of work in on our fielding, the two run-outs today showed guys are engaged and showing everything they've got," said Mitchell. This match was a triumph for several New Zealand players, with captain Tom Latham (151) and Devon Conway (157) sharing an opening stand of 317 in a first-innings total of 438. New Zealand came into this match without injured paceman Matt Henry, their 11-wicket hero at the Oval, and in-form towering quick Kyle Jamieson, rested as a fitness precaution. And in Nottingham, Blair Ticker could only manage three overs before pulling out with concussion suffered when hit by a Jofra Archer bouncer when batting. But Zak Foulkes, New Zealand's first concussion substitute, performed superbly to take six wickets in the match.

Can
Afghanistan
move...

FROM PAGE 01

After graduating from Kabul University, he pursued higher studies at Columbia University in the United States, taught at leading universities, and later worked for years as a senior economist at the World Bank. Following 2001, he returned to Afghanistan and, as finance minister, laid the foundations for a new financial system, banking reforms, and revenue modernization. After the disputed 2014 elections, he became president and led Afghanistan until 2021. During his tenure, significant progress was made in regional connectivity, electricity projects, TAPI, CASA-1000, the Lapis Lazuli Corridor, digital governance, and infrastructure development. However, during the same period, the conflict intensified, corruption remained a major criticism of his administration, and the peace process failed to achieve the expected results. On August 15, 2021, when the Taliban entered Kabul, Ghani left the country. This decision remains the most controversial chapter of his political career. His opponents consider him primarily responsible for the collapse of the republican system, while Ghani has consistently maintained that he left Kabul to prevent a large-scale civil war and the possible deaths of thousands of people. Since leaving office, he has maintained a limited political presence. However, over the last two years, he has repeatedly called for national consensus, Afghanistan's international neutrality, and the normalization of relations with the wider world. In his latest message, Ghani says he is prepared to contribute to an Afghan national consensus and Afghanistan's reintegration into the international community without seeking any personal privilege or political gain. He warns that time does not stand still and that every moment creates new realities. According to him, any delay in achieving national understanding and international engagement could have consequences that may not be easy to reverse, and responsibility for such outcomes would rest with those who obstruct the collective will of the Afghan nation. Yet an important question remains: are Afghanistan's current rulers, political leaders, tribal elders, civil society activists, and international stakeholders prepared for such a broad national consensus? It is also a fact that during Dr. Ashraf Ghani's second term, his relations with many prominent leaders, including former President Hamid Karzai, were far from cordial. While Hamid Karzai and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah remain inside Afghanistan, their channels of communication with the Taliban exist, although many critics argue that the Taliban lack both political maturity and a commitment to civic values. At the same time, many influential Afghan leaders are not only outside the country but are also deeply divided among themselves. Until these fragmented leaders can sit together at one table, Afghanistan's problems are unlikely to be resolved. While such attacks may have fostered a sense of unity among Afghans, they have also benefited the Taliban by pushing their internal disagreements into the background. If Pakistan genuinely seeks a friendly Afghanistan as its neighbor, it should introduce positive changes in its policies and provide Afghan leaders with an opportunity to rebuild their country. Further experimentation in Afghanistan would only deepen existing challenges. The experience of the past four decades demonstrates that neither war nor isolation has solved Afghanistan's problems or brought lasting stability. Any political process that lacks broad Afghan participation, national legitimacy, and international engagement is likely to encounter serious difficulties in the long run.

bi delivered a pinpoint cross from the left and Diop rose above Van Dijk to power a stoppage-time header beyond Verbruggen, sending the match into extra time. Momentum swung from end to end, with the Netherlands threatening on the counter as Morocco chased the game, but could not make their pressure count in open play. Having weathered Gakpo's emotional opener and survived Hakimi's missed chance to settle the shootout, Morocco held their nerve when it mattered most to keep their World Cup dream alive and book a date with Canada in Houston on Saturday.

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PHF announces schedule for PM National Women's U-21 Hockey C'ship

Court Notice
THE COURT OF SHAMA YASEEN
JUDGE CIVIL/Family
COURT RAWALPINDI
Petition u/s 25 of the Guardian and Ward act 1890 Quaiser Rasheed versus Mst. Sidra etc. Notice to (1) Mst. Sidra D/o Ata Ullah (2) Zainab quaiser both R/o House No. DD-1556 Street No. 6, Jhanda Chichi, Rawalpindi. The service through ordinary means failed, so you are informed to attend the court personally, through counsel or attorney on 08-07-2026 at 8 am avoid ex-parte proceeding.

Briefs

PSX turns
bullish, gains
over 1,886
points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 1,886.91 points, a positive change of 1.06 percent, closing at 180,301.70 points against 178,414.80 points on the last trading day. During the session, the ready market recorded a trading volume of 703.687 million shares with a traded value of Rs38,813 billion, compared to 869,381 million shares valuing Rs43.946 billion in the previous session. The market capitalization increased to Rs20,198 trillion from Rs20,020 trillion a day earlier. Out of 492 active companies in the ready market, 301 advanced, 162 declined and 29 remained unchanged. Pak International Bulk Terminal topped the volume chart with 58,252 million shares, followed by Kohinoor Spinning with 38,743 million shares and Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited with 24,056 million shares.—APP

Rupee gains 01
paise against
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 01 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.16, down from the previous day's closing of Rs 278.17. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 279.00 and Rs 279.20, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 0.32 and closed at Rs 316.92 from the previous day's closing of Rs 317.24, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.71, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of Rs 0.41 and closed at Rs 368.02 compared to the previous day's Rs 367.61. The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham came down by 01 paise to close at Rs 75.73, while the Saudi Riyal stood stagnant and closed at Rs 74.06.—APP

Gold prices
decline by Rs
4,100 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold witnessed a decline in the local market on Tuesday, with 24-karat gold per tola decreasing by Rs4,100 to settle at Rs424,836, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold fell by Rs3,515 to Rs364,228, whereas 10 grams of 22-karat gold declined by Rs3,223 to Rs333,887. In the international market, the price of gold decreased by \$41 to \$4,024 per ounce. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola increased by Rs25 to Rs6,349, while the price of 10 grams of silver rose by Rs22 to Rs5,443. The price of silver in the international market also increased by \$0.25 to \$58.70 per ounce, the association reported.—APP

SECP reforms
leads to
1,374% surge
in motor
insurance

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan's (SECP) reforms to enforce third party motor insurance have increased third-party motor insurance coverage in Sindh by 1,374%, with active policies rising from 11,200 in March 2026 to 165,064 by the end of June, significantly expanding financial protection for road users. The Sindh Government, with the active support of the SECP, made third-party motor insurance mandatory through amendments to the Provincial Motor Vehicles Act, 2026, said a press release issued by the SECP here on Tuesday. Under the revised law, every registered vehicle in Sindh must carry valid third-party insurance. Vehicles without insurance cannot be registered, transferred, or pay annual token tax, strengthening compliance and consumer protection. Third-party motor insurance is a basic and affordable policy that provides financial protection to victims of road accidents by covering damage to property, bodily injury, or death caused to another person.—APP

Call for aligning China's GDI
with 5Es thru green growth

Chinese Deputy Chief of Mission Shi Yuanqiang said the Global Development Initiative, proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping, had become an important platform for promoting inclusive global development and now enjoyed the support of more than 100 countries and international organizations

ISLAMABAD: Policy experts have called for aligning China's Global Development Initiative with Pakistan's national development agenda through institutional reforms, private sector-led investment, technology transfer, green industrialization and innovative financing mechanisms to achieve sustainable economic growth. The demands were made at a high level conference, titled: "China's Global Development Initiative (GDI) and Pakistan's 5Es Framework: Strategic Synergy for Pakistan's Economic Transformation", organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here on Tuesday. Opening the conference, Ambassador Shafiq Kakakhel, Chairman SDPI Board of Governors, said Pakistan should move beyond viewing international initiatives as diplomatic opportunities and instead translate them into bankable projects, credible institutions and measurable development outcomes. He said the convergence of China's GDI and Pakistan's 5Es framework, i.e. Exports, E-Pakistan, Environment, Energy, and Equity, offered a timely opportunity to drive structural economic transformation under CPEC 2.0. He stressed that the next phase of Pakistan-China cooperation should focus on industrial upgrading, export competitiveness, technology transfer, skills development, agricultural modernization, green transition and livelihood creation rather than infrastructure alone. Mr Kakakhel recommended identifying priority sectors, including industrial parks, renewable energy, grid modernization, electric mobility, agricultural technology, digital public infrastructure, vocational training, climate adaptation and green finance. He also called for a coordinated institutional mechanism to align Chinese cooperation

with national and provincial priorities, placing technology transfer and capacity building at the centre of bilateral cooperation, promoting climate-resilient development, expanding digital cooperation, ensuring equitable development and creating a pipeline of environmentally compliant business-to-business investment projects. Chinese Deputy Chief of Mission Shi Yuanqiang said the Global Development Initiative, proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping, had become an important platform for promoting inclusive global development and now enjoyed the support of more than 100 countries and international organizations. He said China was ready to deepen the alignment between the GDI and Pakistan's development priorities, particularly under the 5Es framework. He emphasized expanding Pakistan's export-oriented industries, encouraging greater Chinese private investment, strengthening cooperation in agriculture, industry and artificial intelligence, and implementing both major CPEC projects and "small and beautiful" livelihood initiatives. The Chinese envoy highlighted several Chinese investments in Pakistan's industrial sector, saying they would create thousands of jobs while strengthening industrial cooperation and supporting Pakistan's export-led growth. Earlier, SDPI Research Fellow Dr. Khalid Waleed said URAAN Pakistan programme that aimed to build a US\$ three trillion techno-economy by 2047, was aligned to GDI. He proposed four innovative financing instruments, including the China-led mBridge central bank digital currency platform and RMB settlement, Panda Bonds combined with debt-for-climate swaps, carbon markets under Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement, and

the Coal-to-Clean Credit Initiative. Dr. Waleed stressed that Pakistan's highest priority should be directing finance towards industrial technology, describing sodium-ion battery manufacturing as a major CPEC 2.0 opportunity that Pakistan should localize instead of merely importing. He urged policymakers to develop foreign exchange-neutral financing in local currencies, establish smooth regulatory pathways, create a pipeline of bankable projects and strengthen South-South cooperation. Former Chairman of Board of Investment, Haroon Sharif proposed establishing a dedicated GDI Secretariat in Pakistan, supported by a concessional financing window for structural reforms, technical assistance and industrial innovation. He recommended transferring China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) management to an independent professional entity with stronger private sector participation, rather than relying solely on government institutions, while also creating a strategic communication organization to improve public awareness. He stressed that GDI required practical implementation mechanisms extending beyond government-to-government cooperation. Representing the International Institute of Green Finance, Dr. Shen Wei, described GDI as a concrete mechanism enabling developing countries to access development finance and advanced technologies. He said Pakistan and China should deepen cooperation in green energy, renewable energy localization, grid modernization, solar manufacturing, battery production and off-grid energy solutions. He noted that Pakistan's growing demand for clean energy technologies made local manufacturing commercially viable while closer cooperation

could reduce energy losses, improve grid reliability and create a more transparent energy market. Former Pakistan ambassador to China Ambassador Mo'in ul Haque said the success of GDI implementation in Pakistan would depend on sustained political support, institutional continuity and stronger private sector partnerships. He stressed that future Pakistan-China cooperation should increasingly be driven by business-to-business collaboration, technology partnerships and innovation. Referring to recent Chinese investment in Pakistan's digital infrastructure, he said the government must provide consistent policy support for technology zones and innovation ecosystems if Pakistan was to realize its ambition of becoming a multi-trillion-dollar technology economy. Former Commercial Counsellor in China, Dr. Arifa Syeda traced the evolution of China-Pakistan cooperation from the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013 to the launch of GDI and the high-quality BRI agenda. She observed that the five cooperation corridors agreed by Pakistan and China closely matched Pakistan's 5Es framework, providing a natural roadmap for CPEC Phase-II. While noting that CPEC Phase-I delivered significant gains in transport and energy infrastructure, she said the next phase must bridge the remaining economic impact gap by promoting industrialization, technology, innovation, trade and private sector investment. Director-General (China) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bilal Mahmood Chaudhary, said Pakistan's 5Es framework and China's 15th Five-Year Plan share common development priorities, creating a strong foundation for deeper bilateral cooperation under the Global Development Initiative (GDI).—

Iraq judiciary
seizes over
\$14m in
anti-graft
campaign

BAGHDAD: Iraq's judiciary said on Monday it seized over \$14 million from an oil official who was arrested a day earlier, along with others, as part of a government-led anti-corruption campaign. Iraq's Supreme Judicial Council said "initial investigations" into deputy oil minister for distribution affairs Ali Al-Bahadli "resulted in the seizure of \$11 million and four billion Iraqi dinars," equivalent to over \$3 million. Several properties have been seized and the investigation continues, the council added. The seizure marks the initial result of Prime Minister Ali Al-Zaidi's anti-corruption campaign, which began early Sunday when Iraqi security forces raided Baghdad's Green Zone and other neighborhoods, detaining officials. Iraq's news agency INA quoted senior officials Sunday as saying that 47 suspects had been arrested, including members of parliament, as well as Al-Bahadli. But government spokesman Haidar Al-Aboudi said Monday that only 21 officials were arrested. Like all his predecessors, Al-Zaidi has vowed to fight corruption and mismanagement that have plagued Iraq for decades. Corruption is especially rampant across the country's public institutions, but convictions typically target mid-level officials or minor players and rarely those at the top of the power hierarchy. Earlier this month, authorities seized more than \$85 million in a graft case against oil ministry official Adnan Al-Jumali, who was arrested last month.—APP

Military leadership,
decision-making
process unified

MARIB: Lt. Gen. Sagheer bin Aziz, Yemen's chief of the General Staff and commander of joint operations, said the country's military leadership and decision-making process have been unified as part of efforts to bring all military formations under the umbrella of the Ministry of Defense. He said Yemen's Armed Forces have completed about 80 percent of their operational and administrative arrangements since the 2022 truce began, adding that the military has continued over the past several years to rebuild its units, improve combat readiness, and strengthen its capabilities in confronting the Iran-backed Houthis. Speaking to Ashraq Al-Awsat from Marib, Bin Aziz said the effort included reorganizing military units, defining their sectors and missions in line with military standards, training and qualifying large numbers of Armed Forces personnel, and restructuring administrative systems in accordance with the Armed Forces Service Law. "Since the truce began in 2022, we have made excellent progress in both operational and administrative arrangements. We reorganized military units, their sectors, and their missions in accordance with military standards. We also trained and qualified large numbers of Armed Forces personnel and restructured the administrative framework of military units in line with the law," he said.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Managing Director of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Senator Capt. Shaheen Khalid Butt and TIKA's Country Head, Ms. Saliha Tuna exchanging signed MoU documents to establish a Centralized Kitchen dedicated to serving humanity, at BPM Headquarters. The ambassador Türkiye in Pakistan, Dr. Irfan Neziroglu also present on occasion.

SBP unveils new official
website effective July 1

ISLAMABAD: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) is pleased to announce the launch of its redesigned official website, which will go live on Wednesday July 1, 2026, and will be accessible to all stakeholders at www.sbp.gov.pk. The revamped website will provide a faster, easier and user-friendly digital experience for citizens, businesses, financial institutions, researchers, journalists and other stakeholders. Designed as a modern, secure and inclusive digital platform, the new website will provide easier access to SBP's information. Its launch marks an important milestone in SBP's digital transformation agenda and reflects continued commitment to transparency, innovation and meaningful stakeholder engagement. Developed following extensive research and stakeholder consultations, the website has been comprehensively redesigned to better serve the diverse needs of its users. It features an intuitive interface with simplified navigation, enabling visitors to find information more quickly and efficiently. Enhanced search functionality and filtering options make it easier to locate data, circulars, regulations, publications, press releases and other official content. The website shall be fully responsive

across desktops, smartphones and other devices, ensuring a seamless browsing experience. To promote greater inclusivity and wider public outreach, the website offers a bilingual interface in English and Urdu, allowing users to switch between languages according to their preference. It has also been developed in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and incorporates accessibility features that improve usability for persons with disabilities. Behind the improved user experience is a reorganized information architecture that presents key areas such as monetary policy, financial markets data, banking regulations and other SBP functions — in a more logical and intuitive manner, while preserving access to legacy content. The revamped website strengthens SBP's ability to communicate effectively with the public and supports the Bank's broader vision of leveraging technology to deliver efficient, transparent and citizen-centric services. By making reliable information and digital resources more readily available, the website shall augment financial literacy and inclusion, while contributing to informed decision-making and stronger engagement with the financial system among all stakeholders.—DNA

Pak invited to join
the new season of
open Eurasian film
award

DNA

MOSCOW: The Open Eurasian Film Award Diamond Butterfly is announcing the launch of a new season. For the Pakistani film community this is an opportunity to once again become a part of an International Film Award, present its films to a professional audience, expand creative and industry ties and take part in the dialogue about the future of the cinema. Last year two films from Pakistan were included in the Diamond Butterfly Film Award competition program, and Ms. Sonya Hussyn won the Best Supporting Actress prize. The initiator and driving force behind the creation of the film academy and the film award is Mr. Nikita Mikhalkov. The award was established by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the Russian Cultural Foundation. Pakistan has been a keen supporter of the Eurasian Film Academy and the Diamond Butterfly award since their inception. When the project was presented in Moscow in April 2025, the Pakistani delegation joined representatives from over 20 nations to discuss its future. Then Mr. Muhammad Anwar, representative of Pakistan's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, said: "I hope this Award can truly become an alternative to the Oscars, and that it will open a new opportunity for many countries that face injustice and discrimination, whose values remain unheard, to make themselves heard". Further proof of Pakistan's interest in cooperation was the participation of a Pakistani representative in the international film session "Creativity Unites", organized by the Russian Cultural Foundation as part of the Diamond Butterfly Award together with the international educational project Innopractice School, held at the Mikhalkov's Academy of Cinematic and Theatrical Arts. Ten young filmmakers from eight countries took part in the creative session, including Pakistani director Mr. Mehroz Amin. The session resulted in short films created by the participants under the guidance of leading masters of Russian cinema. The first Award Ceremony took place on November 27, 2025, in Moscow at Mr. Nikita Mikhalkov's Workshop "12". A total of 34 films from 17 countries, including Pakistan, were submitted for consideration. Last year Pakistan's entries in the Diamond Butterfly awards were "Termites", a co-production with Canada, and "Love Guru", a co-production with the United Kingdom. A special moment for Pakistan was Ms. Sonya Hussyn's victory: she received the Diamond Butterfly for Best Supporting Actress for her role in "Termites". The Award was presented to her by actor Mr. Sergey Bezrukov. Accepting the award, she said: "On behalf of Pakistan I want to thank all the Award organizers and the Government of the Russian Federation for the generosity and warm welcome we received here. Our two countries have deep roots of interaction and a shared longing for peace. It is a great honor for me to be part of this cultural and artistic exchange. I want to dedicate this Award to all the girls and women in our country who still do not have the right to receive education, and to all the girls who want to achieve something in life". In 2026, the second ceremony of the Open Eurasian Film Award "Diamond Butterfly" will once again take place in Moscow.—DNA

PSX: SLGL, MMBL partner to launch
merchant lending facility

DNA

ISLAMABAD: LogiServe, the fintech arm of SLGTrax (PSX: SLGL), Pakistan's first integrated 4PL platform, has entered into a Lending Facility Agreement with Mobilink Microfinance Bank (MMBL) to enhance access to digital financing solutions for merchants operating within the SLGTrax ecosystem. The signing ceremony was held in Islamabad, attended by Gulraiz Khan, Group CEO, Shakeel-ur-Rehman, CEO, LogiServe, Neghat Qureshi, Head of Marketing and Moneeb Ali Jaffri, Head of Compliance, from SLGTrax, while Atta-ur-Rehman, Chief Business Officer, Abdul Rasheed Khan, Executive Manager VCF and M. Hassan Warraich, Head of SME and Islamic Banking, attended from MMBL. Through this partnership, merchants within SLGTrax's ecosystem will gain access to convenient and digital enabled financing solutions designed to support business growth, improve liquidity management and strengthen working capital availability. Merchants utilizing the SLGTrax Wallet will benefit from working capital financing of up to PKR 250,000, along with exclusive deals across 10,000+ partner vendors and free online OPD consultations. They will also be covered for hospitalization up to PKR 200,000 across 300+ panel hospitals, accidental death or permanent disability, and loss of business premises or structure, each covered up to the outstanding loan amount or PKR 1,000,000, whichever is less.



Briefs

Fire at chemical plant in India

DNA

NEW DELHI: A fire at a petrochemical plant in eastern India injured at least 20 people, five of them critically, police said. The blaze broke out Tuesday in a naphtha pipeline at a facility operated by Haldia Petrochemicals and quickly spread to nearby homes in West Bengal's Purba Medinipur district, about 130 kilometers (80 miles) southwest of the state capital, Kolkata. Firefighters used 12 fire engines to bring the blaze under control, while the injured were rescued and taken to nearby hospitals, police said. The injured included plant workers and at least two security guards. Video from the scene showed firefighters dousing the blaze with water as thick black smoke rose from the burning pipeline. Naphtha is a highly flammable petroleum product used in the production of fuels and other chemicals. The cause of the fire was not immediately known. Haldia Petrochemicals said in a statement it was investigating the incident.

Israeli strike kills 8 in Gaza

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip: Israeli strikes in southern and central Gaza on Monday killed at least eight people, including two children, and wounded at least 20 others, according to health officials and emergency services. In Khan Younis, a strike hit a tent in the Al-Mawasi neighborhood after a warning call, killing a 23-year-old mother and her one-year-old daughter west of Khan Younis, according to Nasser Hospital. Another strike on the town of Qarara, northwest of the city earlier in the day killed a 31-year-old man, according to Nasser Hospital. The hospital said he had married only a few months ago and left behind a pregnant wife. In a separate incident in the same area, a strike hit a tent sheltering displaced people along the coastal area of Khan Younis, killing two people and wounding 13 others, according to Nasser hospital and the Palestinian Red Crescent. The wounded were transferred to a field hospital run by the Palestinian Red Crescent in Al-Mawasi. In central Gaza, a drone strike hit a tent in Deir Al-Balah, killing at least three Palestinians, including an 8-year-old boy and his grandfather, medical officials said. - APP

Ukraine oligarch targeted in Monaco

MONACO: Police were searching for a suspected bomber on Tuesday after three people were wounded by an explosion in the wealthy principality of Monaco which French and Ukrainian media said was an attack on a Ukrainian-born oligarch. A manhunt was under way in Monaco and neighboring France after the explosive device went off on Monday evening in Monaco, which is known for its casino and luxury yachts, its tight security and the luxury lifestyle of its super-rich residents. The suspect was believed to have fled to France, Christophe Mirmand, minister of state of Monaco, told BFM TV. The principality is surrounded by the sea on one side and France on the other, and there are no border checks between the two countries. Italy is also close. The three main victims were still in hospital, Mirmand said, adding that a woman, whom he did not name, was the most seriously hurt. Local newspaper Monaco Matin said part of her lower limbs were blown away by the explosion. French and Ukrainian media said the target of the attack was Vadym Yermolaiev, who was once a real estate developer in the Ukrainian city of Dnipro. He left Ukraine several years ago, renounced his Ukrainian citizenship and became a citizen of Cyprus. - APP

Pakistan can become a global mountaineering hub: Nirmal



ISLAMABAD: Nepali mountaineer Nirmal "Nims" Purja in a group photo with Ambassador of Nepal Dita Dhital and embassy staff on the occasion of a dinner hosted by the Ambassador for the visiting mountaineer. - DNA

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has all the ingredients to emerge as one of the world's leading mountaineering destinations, but it needs greater public awareness, government support and investment in local communities, according to legendary Nepali mountaineer Nirmal "Nims" Purja. Purja shared his views during an exclusive interaction with Islamabad POST/DNA on the sidelines of a dinner hosted in his honour by Nepal's Ambassador to Pakistan, Rita Dhital, in Islamabad. Members of the mountaineering community and distinguished

guests attended the reception celebrating the close friendship between Nepal and Pakistan through their shared Himalayan heritage. Widely regarded as one of the greatest high-altitude climbers in history, Purja said Pakistan occupies a special place in his heart. "I come to Pakistan almost every year," he said with a smile. "I consider Pakistan my second home. Every visit strengthens my bond with the people, especially the wonderful communities of Gilgit-Baltistan." Purja has scaled almost every major mountain in the world, including repeated ascents of Mount Everest and K2, besides conquering all 14 of the world's peaks above 8,000 metres in record time. His extraordinary achievements have inspired climbers across

the globe and were featured in the acclaimed Netflix documentary 14 Peaks: Nothing Is Impossible.

Beyond mountaineering, Purja is also a successful entrepreneur who operates adventure tourism and expedition companies. He believes responsible tourism can transform the lives of mountain communities. "My goal is not just to climb mountains," he explained. "I want the people living in these regions to benefit economically. Whenever possible, I hire local guides, porters and support staff because I believe tourism should directly improve the lives of local families." He praised the hardworking nature of Pakistanis, particularly those living in the northern mountainous regions.

"The people of Pakistan are industrious, honest and dedicated. They have immense potential. Given the right opportunities, they can become leaders in the global mountaineering industry."

Purja said Pakistan possesses some of the most spectacular and technically challenging mountains on Earth. Besides K2, the country is home to Nanga Parbat, Broad Peak, Gasherbrum I and II, and several other iconic summits that attract elite climbers from around the world. He urged the Pakistani government to actively promote mountaineering as both a sport and an economic opportunity. "I believe Nanga Parbat can become the starting point for encouraging more Pakistanis to take up mountaineering. The government should invest in training programmes, safety standards, rescue infrastructure and youth development. Mountaineering can generate employment while showcasing Pakistan's breathtaking natural beauty." Purja also stressed the importance of preserving the fragile mountain environment, saying sustainable tourism must remain at the heart of future development.

"These mountains are a gift from nature. We have a responsibility to protect them for future generations while allowing local communities to prosper." Reflecting on his remarkable journey, Purja said mental resilience is often more important than physical strength. "The biggest mountain we climb is usually inside our own minds. Once you overcome self-doubt, almost anything becomes possible." His inspiring message resonated strongly with the audience, many of whom expressed admiration for his achievements and his deep affection for Pakistan. As Pakistan continues to promote adventure tourism and improve access to its northern regions, voices like Nirmal Purja's reinforce the country's immense potential to become a premier destination for climbers and outdoor enthusiasts from around the world. More importantly, his emphasis on empowering local communities offers a blueprint for ensuring that the benefits of tourism are shared by those who call these majestic mountains home.

US will stand with European allies, says NATO official

VALGA: The United States will stand with its European allies in the defense of the Baltic countries, the American commander of NATO's land forces in Europe said on Tuesday as the alliance assigned an additional headquarters to the region. "You're ready to do more and following words with action, and the United States will be there alongside you," US General Chris Donahue said at a ceremony in the Estonian town of Valga. "That is how deterrence is built: Not with words from a podium, but with boots in the mud." Donahue, who will relinquish his post on Thursday, doubles as chief of the US Army in Europe and Africa. NATO troops in the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and in northern Poland, have until now come under the command of a single multinational headquarters based in the northwestern Polish city of Szczecin. Creating a second command zone allows the alliance to devote more troops to the Baltic states. For now, two multinational divisions in Estonia and Latvia will come under the command of the German Netherlands Corps based in the German town of Muenster. NATO has said Russia, which invaded Ukraine in 2022, could mount a large-scale assault on allied ter-

ritory as early as 2029 if it continues arming as it is now. The Kremlin denies such plans. Pressure on Europe to increase its defenses has mounted following criticism from US President Donald Trump, who accuses the bloc of not pulling its military weight. German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius said the shift in NATO's posture was proof of the alliance's determination to defend every inch of allied territory. "It is a visible and strong demonstration of NATO's unity, readiness, and of our collective determination to defend every inch of Allied territory," he said in Valga. When fully operational, an army corps typically commands three divisions, or 40,000 to 60,000 troops. In peacetime, it normally exists as a skeleton command structure, with specialist functions such as artillery, air defense and medics in place to allow rapid deployment of troops when needed. The Multi-National Corps Northeast in Szczecin has been in charge of the entire region until now. It was set up in 2017, three years after Russia annexed the Crimea region of Ukraine. A second corps in charge of Baltic defense would allow NATO to bring in "mass at speed," a military official said on condition of anonymity. - APP

Terrorists' shoot dead two Guards members in Iran

Separately, "a family's vehicle was sprayed with bullets" on Monday in the southeastern town of Saravan in Sistan-Baluchistan province, killing the father and wounding the mother, state television reported

DNA

TEHRAN: Attackers shot dead two members of Iran's Revolutionary Guards at their home in the western city of Paveh, near the border with Iraq's Kurdistan region, state media reported Tuesday. It was not immediately clear who was behind the shooting but Tehran has frequently blamed Kurdish separatist groups in the area for previous violence, accusing them of links to the United States and Israel. The two IRGC members were killed in "a terrorist and cowardly act," state television said, while two other Guards members were wounded. State television said "exact details of this incident and the measures being taken to identify those responsible are under review." Sepah news, the official media outlet of the Guards, later said the IRGC had dismantled a team working for "anti-government and separatist groups" that had

entered Iran from the northwestern border. The report included blurred photos showing four bodies of people allegedly killed in the operation. Separately, "a family's vehicle was sprayed with bullets" on Monday in the southeastern town of Saravan in Sistan-Baluchistan province, killing the father and wounding the mother, state television reported. The woman later died of her injuries. Authorities did not immediately identify those responsible or provide further details about the victims. But state television said the attack "was carried out by Zionist-American mercenaries," a term Iranian officials commonly use for separatist and militant groups. Sistan-Baluchistan, which borders Pakistan and Afghanistan, has long seen clashes between security forces, insurgents and drug smugglers. One of Iran's poorest provinces, it is home to a sizeable ethnic Baloch population, most of whom are Sunni Muslims in a Shiite-majority nation.

Oil falls as investors focus on potential Iran-US talks in Doha

Brent and West Texas Intermediate crude slip close to pre-war levels

LONDON: Oil prices dipped on Tuesday and were poised for a monthly decline, with investors eyeing potential US-Iran talks in Doha amid a strained interim ceasefire in the four-month-old war. Brent August crude futures, which expire on Tuesday, were down 0.9%, or 64 cents, at \$72.51 a barrel as of 0356 GMT. These levels are around \$20, or 22%, lower than last month's closing. The more actively traded September contract was down 0.4%, or 31 cents, at \$73.6 a barrel. US West Texas Intermediate for August fell 0.6%, or 39 cents, to \$70.36 a barrel. Prices are set for around a \$17 drop, or 19%, from the May 29 closing. Both Brent and WTI prices are almost back at pre-war levels on February 27. "Investors are pricing in hopes of a positive outcome from the Doha talks, even though real normalisation of flows through the Strait of Hormuz is not yet visible," said Tim Waterer, chief market analyst at KCM Trade. "The market is cautiously hopeful but still hedging its bets until we see more tangible signs of de-escalation," Water-

er added. Iranian and Omani experts will start talks on redefining transit paths through the Strait of Hormuz in the coming days, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi told state TV on Monday, adding that his country will try to obstruct vessels outside defined paths. However, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said there will not be any negotiation meetings at any level with the American side in the coming days. "The meeting in Doha is going to be perhaps important, perhaps not. We're going to find out," US President Donald Trump told reporters in the Oval Office. The uncertainty over whether the two sides would meet highlighted the fragility of a June 17 agreement to pause fighting that has disrupted global oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz and posed a political challenge for Trump ahead of November's congressional elections. Weighing further on prices, some analysts were concerned about demand from China. "We wait for more evidence of a rise in Chinese buying but cannot yet bet on a big return to the market from the world's largest crude importer," said Sparta Commodities head of research Neil Crosby. Meanwhile, Middle East producers are pushing ahead with loading oil and LNG despite fresh ship attacks in the Strait of Hormuz and renewed strikes between the US and Iran in recent days, shipping data showed. - APP

Imran confinement: IHC reserves verdict

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday reserved its verdict on the maintainability of petitions challenging the alleged solitary confinement of the jailed PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi. A day earlier, the IHC removed the registrar office's (RO) objections to petitions challenging the alleged solitary confinement and had directed that both petitions be numbered while deferring the question of maintainability to the judicial side. The court had adjourned the proceedings till Tuesday (today). As the hearing resumed on Tuesday, Justice Khadim Hussain Soomro reserved the order after hearing detailed arguments from counsel for the petitioners and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). Barrister Salman Safdar, representing the petitioners, submitted that he would first assist the court on the petition filed by Bushra Bibi's daughter, Mubashara Khawar Maneka. Noting that he also had to appear before a division bench later in the

day, he sought to conclude his submissions expeditiously. Justice Soomro remarked with a smile: "We have also sacrificed our tea." The petitions were filed by Aleema Khan on behalf of the PTI founder and by Mubashara on behalf of Bushra Bibi. Barrister Safdar argued that both the Lahore High Court (LHC) and the IHC had previously relied on the Begum Shamim Afridi case while dealing with issues relating to solitary confinement. Referring to objections raised by the NAB prosecutor during proceedings in the £190 million case appeals, the counsel denied having previously sought any relief specifically regarding solitary confinement. He produced the record of a miscellaneous application filed in those appeals and argued that the application merely sought signatures on a power of attorney. "There is no mention of solitary confinement in that application or in the written order passed that day," he contended, adding that solitary confinement had only been referred to in the grounds of the application as background because applications seeking suspension of sentence were pending at the time.



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