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Pakistan vulnerable to climate change, says UK HC Jane

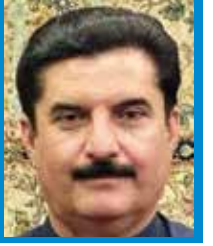
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Middle East issue

EU imposes curbs on Iranians over maritime threats

Kallas said the measures were aimed at safeguarding international shipping routes, though she did not immediately provide further details on the specific individuals or organizations targeted

CENTRELINE REPORT

DNA/NICOSIA: The European Union has announced fresh sanctions against Iranian individuals and entities accused of threatening the freedom of maritime traffic. EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas made the statement on Monday while addressing reporters at a meeting of EU defence ministers in Cyprus. Kallas said the measures were aimed at safeguarding international shipping routes, though she did not immediately provide further details on the specific individuals or organizations targeted. The sanctions reflect growing European concerns over maritime security, particularly in strategic waterways where tensions have escalated in recent months. The EU has consistently emphasized the importance of protecting global trade routes, which are vital for energy supplies and international commerce. By imposing restrictions on Iranian actors, Brussels seeks to deter actions that could disrupt shipping and undermine regional stability. While the announcement did not specify the nature of the sanctions, such measures typically include asset freezes, travel bans, and restrictions on financial dealings. Analysts note that the EU's move underscores its commitment to collective security and its willingness to act against perceived threats to freedom of navigation. The development comes amid broader geopolitical strains between Iran and Western powers, with maritime incidents increasingly drawing international attention. Kallas reiterated that the EU remains firm in defending

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Trump asks Iran, Israel to stop shooting

NEWS DESK

TEL AVIV/DUBAI/NEW BRUNSWICK, New Jersey: US President Donald Trump on Monday urged Iran and Israel to cease hostilities as both countries engaged in tit-for-tat attacks, seriously threatening talks for a deal to end the Middle East war. "Israel and Iran must immediately stop 'shooting'," Trump posted on his TruthSocial account. Iran said Monday that the United States held responsibility for the resumption of fighting with Israel, saying Israel's actions "cannot be separated" from US policy. "Without a doubt, as I said, the actions of the Zionist regime in the region cannot be separated from US policies," foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Bagaee said at a press conference in Tehran attended by AFP. "No one believes that the Zionist regime would carry out any action without prior

Continued on Page 06

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif along with his team arrive at the Presidency to meet President Asif Ali Zardari. - DNA

PPP to support govt on budget

PM greets PPP over GB election victory

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday congratulated the people of Gilgit-Baltistan on the peaceful conduct of elections and felicitated the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) for emerging as the largest political party in the region. The PP is likely to support govt on budget. This agreement was reached during meeting of President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. "PPP deserved congratulations

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India depots nearly 5,000 BD citizens

DNA

NEW DELHI: India has deported nearly 5,000 Bangladeshi citizens since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalist party swept to power in West Bengal last month, according to official statistics. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won a sweeping victory in elections in the eastern border state of more than 100 million people, promising to "detect, delete and deport" illegal migrants.

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Strikes against Israel halted

'Israeli strikes on Iran 'fully coordinated' with US, says Teheran
President Pezeshkian says Iran still at negotiating table but 'will not retreat in face of any threat'

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran said on Monday that a recent wave of Israeli strikes against the country was "fully coordinated" with the United States' forces. Tehran's statement comes after Israel and Iran exchanged attacks for the first time since the shaky ceasefire in the Middle East war took effect on April 8, despite US President Donald Trump calling for restraint. The flare-up, which also drew in other countries in the region, saw Israel striking Iran after the latter targeted it in vengeance for an airstrike on Beirut's southern suburbs. No casualties have been reported so far in either Israel or Iran. "The direct responsibility of the United States for the actions of the Zionist regime is clear, and the consequences of escalating tensions will also fall on the United States," Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Bagaee told a new briefing, according to state news agency IRNA. "No one believes that the Zionist regime would carry out any action without prior coordination and cooperation with the United States," Bagaee said. "It is perfectly natural that the diplomatic process initiated to put an end to this imposed war would be affected," the official observed. Nonetheless, Bagaee said that Pakistan's mediation efforts to end the war with the US were

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Lebanon, Israel talks to resume in US

DNA

DUBAI: American ambassador Michel Issa met Lebanese President Joseph Aoun on Monday to discuss the course of negotiations and efforts aimed at ending Lebanon's current crisis. Speaking after the meeting, Issa said he conveyed Washington's appreciation for positions recently expressed by Aoun in a televised interview, describing them as important in advancing the negotiation process. He also stressed the importance Washington places on Lebanon, saying President Donald Trump follows developments in the country closely and discusses the Lebanese file regularly. Referring to recent developments in the region, the ambassador described events that took place "yesterday" as a political message and said the United States had decided not to allow the confrontation to expand further. Issa said the parties had reached "a point of no return" and that "the ice has

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Briefs

Oil prices climb more than \$3

DNA

LONDON: Brent oil prices jumped more than \$3 a barrel on Monday, initially spooked by Israel's launch of renewed strikes on Lebanon a day earlier, but also gaining further steam after sounds of explosions were heard in Iran. Sounds of blasts were heard in Tehran, Tabriz and Isfahan, local media reported early on Monday, eroding hopes for an imminent end to the wider war and a restart to crude flows through the Strait of Hormuz. Brent crude futures rose \$3.20 or 3.39% to \$96.24 a barrel while US crude futures were up \$2.87 or 3.17% at \$93.41 per barrel as of 0333 GMT. Those gains erased Friday's losses, when prices fell on hopes of a de-escalation in the US-Iran conflict, which has seen oil prices rise over 50% since March. Though Iran on Sunday fired a salvo of missiles at Israeli targets in retaliation, US President Donald Trump insisted that an agreement to end the wider war remains well within reach.

India, US trade deal on the cards

DNA

NEW DELHI: India would also seek an assurance from the US that it will not be subjected to additional tariffs in future after the deal, the official said. India is pushing for preferential new tariffs from the United States as part of talks to finalise an interim trade deal with Washington, an Indian trade official said on Monday. The US and India reached an initial understanding on a trade deal in February, but negotiations slowed after US President Donald Trump's sweeping tariff measures were struck down by the US Supreme Court. The US has since proposed an additional tariff of 12.5% on imports from India, and other countries, due to what Washington says is these countries' use of forced labour. It is also looking at imposing a separate tariff on India.

Support for banned outfits

Pakistan urges UK to caution diaspora, MPs

Referring to the British lawmakers' remarks on the AJK situation, the FO urged the UK government to "educate and caution" those supporting proscribed organisations to refrain from such actions and to respect the democratic process, judicial decisions, and the rule of law as enshrined in the Constitutions of AJK and Pakistan

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad on Monday urged the United Kingdom to caution its members of parliament (MPs) and the Pakistani diaspora in the Britain to refrain from backing banned groups in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, saying their statements on the region reflected "disregard for the historical background" of the issue. In a statement, the Foreign Office took exception to remarks made by members of the Pakistani diaspora in the UK and queries raised by certain British MPs. "We have noted with concern the irresponsible and ill-informed insinuations made by certain members of the

Continued on Page 06

PTI rejects GB election results

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The PTI on Monday rejected the tentative election results for 24 seats of the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly, levelling allegations of rigging and calling for re-election in a constituency in Astore. The preliminary count from Sunday's polls indicates that the PPP is currently leading in 10 constituencies, the PML-N in six, and

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Ambassador Sukotjo highlights enduring friendship (P-1)

Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan, H.E. Chandra W. Sukotjo, gave an exclusive interview to Daily Islamabad POST/Centreline and the Diplomatic News Agency (DNA). Here is first part of the interview

EXCLUSIVE

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

1. Let us begin with the bilateral relations, please your vision with our readers as to how would you like to further strengthen these relations?

Well, the bilateral relations between Indonesia and Pakistan have reached a solid age. Last year, we proudly celebrated the 75 years of diplomatic relations between the two brotherly countries.

The main theme of the celebration was, "Enduring Friendship and Mutual Trust," which has paved the way for further avenues of cooperations in various fields at all levels of engagement.

My vision in advancing the Indonesia-Pakistan bilateral relations does not stand alone, but it is a progressive continuation of the big vision laid down by our respective founding fathers; President Sukarno and Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, deeply rooted in mutual respect and reciprocal support at the regional and global levels.

2. Apart from trade and economy, political relations between Pakistan and Indonesia have also been phenomenal. If you could share some recent developments in this regard?

I think, Indonesia and Pakistan have successfully maintained strong political relations rooted in shared historical solidarity, cultural affinity, and mutual support. Pakistan played a foundational role as one of the five co-sponsors of the historic 1955 Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, which helped nations in Asia and Africa get their independence. The Conference subsequently issued the Bandung Spirit which mainly champions solidarity, anti-imperialism, national sovereignty, peaceful coexistence, and economic cooperation among developing nations. Currently, on bilateral level, the leaderships of the two fraternal countries have shown a very close



bond. Last year, President Prabowo Subianto visited Pakistan for high-level bilateral talks, where he met with President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir. This state visit has opened the doors for further exchange visits on ministerial level and vice-ministerial or state-ministerial levels, as well as military leadership level. On regional and global forum, both countries collaborate closely within the United Nations framework in addressing global issues especially on Palestinian cause. Such close collaboration has also shown by the two countries under the frameworks of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Developing-8 (D-8) which Indonesia is currently the Chair of the Organization.

3. Both countries share strong cultural and religious ties—how can these be further translated into stronger political and economic collaboration?

Indeed. Although geographically distant, Pakistan



and Indonesia are united by shared cultural values and common religious heritage. Indonesia is a home to the majestic Borobudur, the largest Buddhist temple in the world. Moreover, Pakistan also hosts a Gandhara civilization as a major center for Buddhist culture, acting as a historical crossroads for trade, learning, and religious harmony. Indonesia and Pakistan are the two largest Muslim-majority countries in the world. Both also have pluralistic societies with different religions and faiths. I returned from a visit to Multan a few days ago. I witnessed that Sufism has strong roots in Pakistan, just as it does in Indonesia. I believe that the culture and religion are more people-based approaches. So, both will definitely reflect in people-to-people (P-to-P) relations between the two brotherly countries.

When the government-to-government (G-to-G) relations supported by P-to-P relations, the bilateral ties will go forward by attracting other sectors of cooperation including economic collaboration.



4. Excellency, could you give us examples of cultural and religious ties between the two countries?

Well, huge similarities have been found in the Indonesian and Pakistani cultures, ranging from language, art, taste, fashion, and many more. There are some terms in Urdu, similar or almost similar to the Indonesian language. Such as anggur, roti, kursi, lemari, kamus, ijazah, and many more. Moreover, Pakistan also has a wonderful Arabic or Urdu calligraphy. But when we speak about it, there is an Indonesian bamboo Qalam in excellent calligraphy works. Regarding both taste and fashion, I see more than similarities. Both can be potentially monetized as sources of collaboration. I also see the potentials of collaboration through fashion. Indonesia is a global hub for modest fashion, driven by rising international demand for Muslim clothing. I think, Pakistani unique design on fashion can be part of it.

- To be continued

Governor KP urges removal of wheat movement restrictions

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has called for the immediate removal of restrictions on the movement of wheat to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, warning that the province is facing a significant wheat shortfall that could adversely affect food security and public livelihoods. In a tweet on X on Monday, the Governor said an analysis of wheat storage and capacity in the province revealed a shortfall of 3.675 million metric tons, placing considerable pressure on the availability of the staple commodity for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He expressed concern over continued restrictions on wheat transportation, saying such measures were creating unnecessary hurdles at a time when the province needed uninterrupted access to wheat supplies. Faisal Karim Kundi said Article 151 of the Constitution guarantees free trade and commerce across Pakistan and emphasized that policies restricting the movement of wheat were inconsistent with the spirit of constitutional provisions.

PML-N emerges as largest bloc with 11 seats: Hafeez

GILGIT: Former Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan and President of Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) Gilgit-Baltistan Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman, has said that with the inclusion of two independent candidates who won with the party's support, the total number of seats held by PML-N in the 24-member Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly stands at 11. Speaking to the media in Gilgit Hafeezur Rehman said discussions were also underway with other independent candidates. He noted that the election had produced a mixed mandate, making it difficult at this stage to determine the final numerical strength of each political party in the assembly.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits the residence of senior politician Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan .

SECP eases licensing process for companies

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), in a major facilitation measure, has allowed companies with foreign sponsors or directors to submit licensing applications on the basis of a self-declaration undertaking instead of obtaining prior security clearance of foreign directors from relevant departments. Under the revised framework, SECP will process licensing applications without requiring security clearance at the application stage, said a press release issued by the SECP here on Monday. However, the appointment of foreign directors will remain subject to clearance by the relevant authorities. Applicants will be required to provide an undertaking that any proposed director whose security clearance is denied will be replaced accordingly. The measure is expected to reduce procedural delays, improve regulatory certainty, and facilitate foreign investment in Pakistan's regulated financial services sector. The revised framework will benefit companies operating in capital markets, non-banking finance, insurance, and other regulated financial services sectors. _APP

Pakistan calls for action to protect oceans

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC) on Monday called for urgent national action to protect Pakistan's marine ecosystems from the growing impacts of climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. Marking World Oceans Day 2026, observed globally under the theme "Reimagine: Beyond the world we know, a new relationship with our ocean", the ministry highlighted the critical role oceans play in regulating the climate, producing oxygen, sustaining biodiversity and supporting livelihoods. In an exclusive talk with the ministry, it warned that the degradation of marine ecosystems posed increasing risks not only to coastal communities but also to food security, economic stability and climate resilience. Citing United Nations assessments, it noted that oceans generate at least half of the oxygen humans breathe, absorb nearly a quarter of global carbon dioxide emissions and help regulate weather systems worldwide. However, rising ocean temperatures, acidification, plastic pollution and overexploitation are placing marine ecosystems under severe stress. The statement said around 90 per cent of large fish populations worldwide had been depleted, while nearly half of the world's coral reefs had disappeared. Pakistan's 1,050-kilometre coastline and diverse marine ecosystems – including mangrove forests, fisheries and coastal wetlands – were becoming increasingly vulnerable to sea-level rise, marine pollution, coastal erosion, extreme weather events and warming seas, it added. The ministry said these challenges directly threatened the livelihoods of millions of people dependent on fisheries, coastal resources and maritime trade. "World Oceans Day is a reminder that oceans are not distant ecosystems; they are the foundation of human survival, climate stability and economic prosperity," said Mohammad Saleem Shaikh, spokesperson for the ministry and a climate policy advocacy expert. "For too long, humanity has treated the ocean as an inexhaustible resource. Today, we are being called upon to reimagine our relationship with the ocean – from passive beneficiaries of its generosity to active guardians of its future," he told APP. Saleem Shaikh said Pakistan remained committed to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity and was contributing to international efforts through the Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ). - APP

CM orders transparent probe into Wahdat Colony tragedy

QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti has taken strict notice of the tragic incident in Wahdat Colony, Quetta, where a man, identified as Asif Ali, allegedly killed five family members before attempting suicide. The Chief Minister has ordered an immediate, transparent and impartial investigation into the case. According to Shahid Rind, Assistant to the Chief Minister for Political and Media Affairs, Sarfraz Bugti directed all relevant institutions to thoroughly examine every aspect of the incident and

ensure that facts are established without delay. He emphasized that the inquiry must be conducted with professionalism and complete transparency. Shahid Rind revealed that, based on the video message recorded by the deceased Asif Ali before his suicide attempt, two government employees have been taken into custody. He added that the scope of the investigation has been expanded, with further evidence, witness statements, and forensic analysis being collected to uncover the truth. The

Chief Minister has demanded a prompt report from the concerned authorities, instructing that the investigation be carried out without discrimination and brought to its logical conclusion. Sarfraz Bugti reiterated that the rule of law will prevail, and no individual or official is above accountability. "If evidence emerges against any person, strict legal action will be taken," Shahid Rind assured that once the investigation is complete, all facts will be made public to eliminate ambiguity or speculation. - APP




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جون

11-10

2026

صبح 11 بجے

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JUNE

- June 02/Italy National/Independence Day
- June 04/Finland Armed Forces Day
- June 06/Sweden National Day
- June 10/Portugal Portugal Day (National Day)
- June 10/Jordan Arab Revolution & Army Day
- June 11/United Kingdom Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth
- June 12/Philippines Independence Day
- June 12/Russian Federation Day of Sovereignty of the Russian Federation(National Day)
- June 13/Zambia Armed Forces day
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DJ Adil's tribute strengthens Pak-China friendship

This is a powerful song that serves as a reminder that friendship is not just a matter of policies and agreements, but also one of cultural expression, shared emotions and the universal language of music. "Friendship is more than just policies and agreements, it is about sharing emotions, expressing culture and singing a universal language"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Renowned Pakistani singer and cultural ambassador DJ Adil Khan has once again captured public attention with the release of a special song dedicated to the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China. The song has been released as part of the celebrations for the historical occasion in bilateral relations and has quickly become a hit on social media platforms with millions of views and many users in both countries expressing their joy over the performance. The 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China is being celebrated and symbolizing an "iron-clad friendship" and a model for mutual trust, respect and strategic co-

operation. DJ Adil Khan's musical homage is one of the most popular cultural offerings for the occasion. The song, which combines contemporary musical styles and a sincere message of friendship, conveys the sense of continuity and unity among the people of Pakistan and China. The production focuses on the themes of mutual respect, cultural harmony and hopes for peace and development. A few days after launching, the song started to grow momentum on social media with Pakistani and Chinese users sharing it in great number. Listeners appreciated the singer for the way he has made music a medium of conveying the message of Pakistan-China friendship and explained it in a creative and inspiring way. The audience gave positive feedback on the message, song and emotional impact of

the song. This is not the first time when DJ Adil Khan promoted the people to people ties between Pakistan and China through his art. In the years passed, he has produced a few songs and cultural works on the various milestones of bilateral relations, which have been welcomed by the audience, cultural and friendship organizations of both sides. In all of his previous writings, he has emphasized on the historical, cultural and emotional ties underlying Pakistan-China partnership. According to the observers, cultural diplomacy has also become one of the key elements of the relations between Pakistan and China. Cooperation in trade, infrastructure, technology and regional connectivity is complemented by music, art, education and people-to-people exchanges. Several musical events have

been held on the occasion of the various anniversaries with the goal of fostering greater awareness and cultural identity among the peoples of the two countries. More than ever before, artists can make an impact in promoting international friendship and understanding, as proved by the success of DJ Adil Khan's latest song. It is the singer that brought the message of diplomacy into the hearts of the people, turning it into one of the world's most enduring bilateral relationships into a celebration. This is a powerful song that serves as a reminder that friendship is not just a matter of policies and agreements, but also one of cultural expression, shared emotions and the universal language of music. "Friendship is more than just policies and agreements, it is about sharing emotions, expressing culture and singing a universal language."

Kundi, US Charge d'Affaires discuss investment coop in KP

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi Monday met with United States Charge d'Affaires Natalie

including minerals, tourism, energy, health and education. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on promoting foreign



Baker here and discussed opportunities for investment and development cooperation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa across key sectors

investment in the province and enhancing economic cooperation between Pakistan and the United States. Kundi highlighted

that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is rich in valuable and rare mineral resources, offering vast opportunities for international investors. The discussions also focused on expanding educational scholarship opportunities for youth from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the merged tribal districts. Both sides agreed on the importance of strengthening development cooperation and encouraging investment to support sustainable economic growth in the province. Kundi emphasized the role of the private sector and international investment in achieving long-term development goals, while both delegations explored new opportunities in energy, tourism, and human resource development. Natalie Baker expressed interest in supporting modern training and skill development initiatives for the province's youth. Kundi invited American investors to explore opportunities in the minerals, tourism, energy, and healthcare sectors of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

The meeting also included an exchange of views on the overall law and order situation in the province, as well as the promotion of sports talent. Kundi informed the US diplomat that the Khyber Cricket League is scheduled to be held in July. Highlighting the importance of stronger commercial ties, Governor Kundi said that the exchange of trade delegations between Pakistan and the United States was essential for increasing bilateral trade volume. He also expressed concern over the closure of the US Consulate in Peshawar. Meanwhile, Natalie Baker congratulated Kundi on the Pakistan Peoples Party's victory in the Gilgit-Baltistan elections. Governor Kundi attributed the party's success to the effective election campaign led by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, and party workers. Later, Governor Kundi hosted a luncheon in honor of the US Charge d'Affaires.

NDMA issues warning of heat, rain & flood risks

ISLAMABAD :The National Disaster Management Authority's National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) warned on Sunday that between June 7 and 12 Pakistan will face intense heat in southern provinces, intermittent rain and thunderstorms in northern and hilly areas, and an elevated risk of landslides and flash floods from rapidly melting glaciers. NDMA directed federal and provincial disaster agencies to accelerate preparedness, and urged the public to avoid non essential travel and follow official safety advice. The advisory says Sindh, southern Punjab and the plains of Balochistan will experience an increase in heat intensity, with severe conditions likely to persist in central and southern districts of Punjab where temperatures are expected to remain above normal. Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Islamabad and northern Punjab are also expected to see higher than usual heat from June 7-10. Rain and thunderstorms are forecast for parts of Islamabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and northern Punjab on June 11-12, with Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Sialkot and Lahore specifically flagged for rain and strong winds. Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir are expected to receive intermittent rainfall during the period. In northeastern Balochistan (Zhob and Musa Khel) light rain with thunderstorms is possible on June 11-12, while the plains

of Balochistan will remain hot and dry. Most of Sindh including Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Larkana, Mirpurkhas and Tharparkar is forecast to experience hot, dry weather. NDMA's bulletin highlights a growing hazard in the northern highlands, where rising temperatures are accelerating glacier melt in Gilgit-Baltistan, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Kashmir. The agency warned that rapid melting increases the likelihood of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), landslides and flash flooding in downstream valleys. Areas at particular risk include Hunza, Ghizar, Diamer, Astor, Ghanche, Shigar, Chitral, Dir, Swat and Kohistan. NDMA also named valleys and localities including Darkot, Lasht, Ration, Boni, Bad Swat, Shisper, Gulgin, Hinarchi, Roshan and Kamrat which could face flooding if glacial lakes breach. Landslides may close key routes such as Shigar Valley Road, Skardu Road, Deosai Road and sections of the Karakoram Highway, the advisory said. The authority has instructed all concerned agencies to activate emergency measures immediately and advised provincial Disaster Management Authorities to step up pre-emptive protective actions in vulnerable districts. NDMA also asked officials to intensify monitoring of glacial lakes, pre position rescue and relief assets, and maintain round the clock river and weather monitoring.—DNA

Over 2,300 children enrolled in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad's 'No Child Left Behind' initiative has enrolled 2,328 out-of-school children, marking early progress in a campaign aimed at ensuring every child in the federal capital gains access to education. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the initiative, launched by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training in March 2026, seeks to identify, enroll and retain out-of-school children in formal and non-formal education institutions across Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). According to the document, a door-to-door survey conducted under the campaign has identified 22,057 out-of-school children. Of these, 2,328 have already been enrolled, while efforts continue to bring the remaining identified children into the education system. The campaign is being implemented through a union council-wise carpet coverage strategy involving household surveys, community mobilisation and real-time monitoring. Survey work has been completed in 31 union councils, while activities are still underway in five others. The first phase targets 36 rural union councils out of ICT's 50 union

councils during the April-June 2026 period. The document stated that children aged between five and 16 years are the primary focus for enrolment, with the campaign aiming to bring 25,000 out-of-school children into education during its first phase. To support the enrolment drive, authorities are prioritising admissions in schools operating under the Federal Directorate of Education. Non-formal education centres and community schools are also being utilised in underserved areas, while some children are being referred to the Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority for admission to private schools. The document highlighted that school supplies, uniforms, teaching and learning materials, and teaching kits are being provided to support students entering the education system. More than 1,100 qualified individuals have also been engaged as teachers and provided with comprehensive training. Data collected through the campaign is being integrated into the Non-Formal Education Management Information System, an online platform used to track identified children and monitor enrollment progress.—DNA

FCCP adjourns hearing on Nai Gaj Dam

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court adjourned the hearing regarding delays in the construction of the Nai Gaj Dam project until June 11, following the conclusion of arguments from both WAPDA and the project contractor. A two-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court Justice Aminuddin Khan, presided over the hearing on Monday. During the proceedings, the counsel for WAPDA contended that the initial budget for the Nai Gaj Dam project was set at Rs26 billion. He alleged that the contractor has already received an additional Rs36 billion beyond the original estimate, yet less than 50 percent of the project has been completed. The WAPDA counsel further informed the court that the Sindh High Court had previously provided a specific timeframe for the contractor to complete the work, but the construction targets were not met within the stipulated period. Conversely, the contractor's counsel, Masood Khan, argued that it was previously stated to the Supreme Court in 2019 that 50 percent of the project had been completed. He asserted that the Supreme Court's own ruling had identified the lack of funding as the primary cause for the delays. The contractor's counsel maintained that both federal and provincial governments failed to provide the required funds, which hindered the project's progress. He further noted that the contractor has been forced to halt work on the site since 2024 due to the continued unavailability of funds. Following the conclusion of arguments from both sides, the court adjourned the case until June 11. Additional Attorney General Aamir Rehman is expected to present his arguments at the next hearing.—APP



DNA

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COVERAGE



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Briefs

National Savings
secures Rs1.32t

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has mobilized Rs1.32 trillion in investments during the first eleven months of fiscal year 2025-26, achieving about 97.1 percent of its annual savings target and reflecting strong public confidence in government-backed savings schemes. Official sources told APP on Monday that CDNS collected Rs1.32 trillion from July 1, 2025 to June 5, 2026, against its annual savings mobilization target of Rs1.36 trillion for the current fiscal year. The sources said the robust inflows indicate growing investor trust in national savings instruments and an increasing tendency among citizens towards prudent financial planning and secure investments. To further diversify its portfolio, CDNS has allocated Rs50 billion for Islamic savings instruments during FY2025-26. The move is aimed at promoting Shariah-compliant investment avenues and supporting the growth of Pakistan's Islamic finance industry. Officials said the directorate had earlier set an ambitious savings target of Rs1.65 trillion for FY2024-25, including Rs170 billion for Islamic finance investments, to enhance financial inclusion and expand investment opportunities for a broader segment of the population. They noted that CDNS has consistently demonstrated strong performance in recent years. During FY2023-24, it exceeded its target by mobilizing Rs1.742 trillion against a goal of Rs1.7 trillion, while it successfully achieved its Rs1.6 trillion target in FY2022-23.—APP

PM
congratulates
GB people

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday extended congratulations to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan on the successful, transparent, peaceful and politically vibrant conduct of the general elections held on Sunday. The prime minister, in a statement, congratulated the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), including President Asif Ali Zardari and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, for emerging as the majority political party in the Gilgit-Baltistan elections. He congratulated the successful candidates of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) who put up strong competition, besides praising the party's team for their hard work and dedication. Felicitating all other winning candidates across GB, Prime Minister Shehbaz appreciated the people for their enthusiastic and full participation in the political activities. Calling the peaceful and transparent elections and active political engagement the "beauty of democracy", he praised the Election Commission for ensuring a fair and impartial electoral process.—APP

Peace
committees
held on
Muharram
security

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza held an important meeting with organizers of Muharram processions and Majalis, procession commanders and representatives of peace committees to review security arrangements for Muharram-ul-Haram An official told APP on Monday that SSP Security Operations Suleman Zafar and ADCG Sahibzada Muhammad Yousaf also attended the meeting, which focused on ensuring peaceful observance of Muharram across the federal capital. SP Headquarters Pari Gul Tareen, zonal SPs and other senior police officers were also present during the meeting. According to the official, participants reviewed security arrangements, traffic management plans, route clearance measures and inter-agency coordination mechanisms for Muharram processions and religious gatherings. The meeting also provided an opportunity for organizers, procession commanders and peace committee representatives to share their views and discuss issues related to security and facilitation.—APP

APJCCI, Kasur Chamber join hands to
boost Pak-Azerbaijan trade, investment

At the end of the ceremony, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Patron-in-Chief APJCCI, presented shield of APJCCI to Kashif Naeem Khokhar, President Kasur Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Kashif also presented Gifts to Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Azerbaijan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce & Industry (APJCCI) and Kasur Chamber of Commerce & Industry signed Memorandum of Understanding in Islamabad to strengthen institutional cooperation, promote trade and investment linkages, and explore new business opportunities between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Patron-in-Chief APJCCI, welcomed the delegation of Kasur Chamber and said that APJCCI is committed to promoting trade, investment, business linkages, joint ventures and economic cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. He said that a large number of Pakistani companies are now showing interest in Azerbaijan, particularly in the areas of trade, tourism, food products, FMCG, cutlery, towels, leather, footwear, rice, agriculture, logistics and services. He emphasized the need to create genuine two-way business between Pakistan and Azerbaijan and said that APJCCI would extend full support in connecting Pakistani companies with potential buyers, importers, distributors, chambers and relevant business organizations in Azerbaijan.



Kashif Naeem Khokhar, President Kasur Chamber of Commerce & Industry, said that Kasur is an important industrial and agricultural district, famous for agriculture, rice, food products, leather, footwear, textiles and other sectors. He said that Kasur Chamber would work closely with APJCCI to promote exports, identify business opportunities and strengthen trade relations with Azerbaijan. He said that Kasur needs to be made more export-oriented and that the Chamber wants to develop Kasur as an

industrial hub. He said that Kasur Chamber has established a Business Resource Center to facilitate local enterprises. He also shared that there are more than 150 cold storage facilities and many opportunities exist for collaboration in storage, distribution, food supply chains and value-added exports. Haji M. Akram Zaki, Senior Vice President Kasur Chamber, said that Kasur has strong export potential in towels, khams, rice and other quality products. He also discussed the scope of hoteling, tour-

ism and hospitality opportunities in Baku and stressed the need to explore new areas of cooperation for the business community of Kasur.

Junaid Husnain, Vice President Kasur Chamber of Commerce & Industry, gave a detailed presentation and said that Kasur has strong industrial, agricultural and tourism potential. He said that Kasur has major leather and shoe industries, more than 100 tanneries, over 600 small shoe manufacturing units and around 1,000 to 1,500 cottage industry units. He further said that Kasur has more than 150 rice mills, major packaging units, food industries, and export potential in rice, spices, turmeric, Kasuri methi, red chilli, leather, shoes and agriculture-based products. He said that Pattoki is one of the biggest flower markets, but its export potential needs to be properly developed. He also highlighted opportunities in tourism, including Changa Manga Forest, religious tourism linked with the shrine of Baba Bulleh Shah and other cultural assets. At the end of the ceremony, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Patron-in-Chief APJCCI, presented shield of APJCCI to Kashif Naeem Khokhar, President Kasur Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Kashif also presented Gifts to Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari.

PM visits
Ch Nisar's
residence

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday visited the residence of senior political leader Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan to condole over demise of his mother-in-law. The prime minister prayed for peace for the departed soul and strength for the bereaved family to bear the loss. During the visit, the prime minister also inquired after the health of Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan. Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar accompanied the prime minister.—APP

ANF arrests
seven suspects

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) arrested seven suspects, including two Afghan nationals and seized 137.85 kilograms(kgs) of narcotics worth more than Rs 29.1 million in seven operations conducted across various cities of the country. According to an ANF spokesperson on Monday, in an international drug interdiction operation at Islamabad International Airport, ANF officials recovered 1.15 kg of methamphetamine (ice) from the luggage of a passenger travelling to Bahrain and arrested the accused. During an inter-provincial operation near the Islamabad Toll Plaza, ANF seized 81.6kg of hashish, 12kg of methamphetamine and 500 grams of heroin from a vehicle and arrested two Afghan nationals. In another operation at the same location, officials recovered 11.05 kg of heroin, two pistols, five magazines and 70 rounds of ammunition from a vehicle and took one suspect into custody. In Rawalpindi, ANF recovered 13.2 kg of hashish from a suspect near a petrol pump and arrested the accused. Authorities seized 12 kg of hashish from a vehicle near Kuchlak Bypass in Balochistan and apprehended the suspect involved. In Sukkur, ANF recovered 6 kg of hashish from a suspect near a bus terminal and arrested the individual. Meanwhile, ANF officials recovered 600 ecstasy tablets weighing 345 grams from two parcels at a courier office located at Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore. The spokesperson said that cases had been registered.

SC reduces sentence of
woman

ISLAMABAD: In a significant verdict addressing the intersection of domestic violence and economic coercion, the Supreme Court of Pakistan has reduced the life imprisonment sentence of Afshan Sahar, a woman convicted for the murder of her husband, to 14 years of imprisonment. A three-member bench, headed by Justice Hashim Kakar, heard the appeal against the conviction. During the proceedings, defense counsel Prince Rehan argued that the deceased husband was unemployed and had subjected his wife to persistent physical abuse, frequently coercing her to demand money from her parents. The court was informed that the convict, a mother of four, had relied on her mother for financial support. However, on the day of the incident, when her mother refused further financial assistance, the husband initiated a violent assault on the appellant. The prosecutor stated that during the altercation, the woman struck her husband on the head, which resulted in his death. During the hearing, Justice Hashim Kakar observed the unique nature of the case, remarking that while domestic violence cases typically involve husbands accused of murdering their wives, this instance presented the inverse scenario. He inquired whether the convict had confessed to the crime in her statement. Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim noted that the woman's two brothers had also been named in the case but were subsequently acquitted. Justice Kakar remarked that had the court relied strictly on the prosecution's evidence, all three accused might have been acquitted. While the defense counsel argued that the appellant had acted in self-defense to protect her honor and safety, Justice Kakar questioned the circumstances, asking, "After having four children, was her honor still at risk?" The defense counsel further highlighted that Afshan Sahar has been incarcerated since 2016, having already served approximately ten years of her sentence. Following the completion of arguments, the Supreme Court issued the order to commute the life sentence to a 14-year term.—DNA

Aleem felicitates PPP on
victory in GB elections

ISLAMABAD: President of the Isteqam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Abdul Aleem Khan on Monday congratulated the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on emerging as the largest political party in the Gilgit-Baltistan general elections. In his congratulatory message, Abdul Aleem Khan stated, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan have high expectations from the new Government and expressed the hope that the PPP, after forming the Government, will effectively address the public's issues. Said a press release. Encouraging the candidates of the Isteqam-e-Pakistan Party, Abdul Aleem Khan said that the Party nominees were running a vigorous and dedicated election campaign and deserved appreciation for their efforts. He noted with satisfaction that IPP emerged as the third largest political party in Gilgit-Baltistan in terms of vote share. Abdul Aleem Khan thanked the people of the northern region for placing their trust in the Isteqam-e-Pakistan Party and paid tributes to the voters and party workers who worked tirelessly to strengthen the party's vote bank. He reaffirmed that IPP

would continue to play its role in promoting the development and prosperity of Gilgit-Baltistan. He further assured that the IPP would maintain close and continuous engagement with the people of the region. Abdul Aleem Khan explained that, due to his responsibilities as a federal minister, he was unable to participate directly in the election campaign. However, he emphasized that he remains fully aware of the challenges facing Gilgit-Baltistan and will continue working through effective coordination, sustained engagement, and comprehensive planning to help address these issues. Expressing his gratitude once again to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, Aleem Khan appreciated the warm response received by IPP ticket holders during the elections. He noted that in several constituencies, IPP candidates narrowly missed victory by only a small margin of votes. President of the Isteqam-e-Pakistan Party also extended his best wishes to the party organization and encouraged party workers to remain active and continue contributing to the welfare and development of their respective areas.—DNA

Senate exceeds savings
target by 500%

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Senate of Pakistan has surrendered savings of Rs. 1.436 billion to the national exchequer through a comprehensive austerity and expenditure rationalisation programme implemented across the Senate Secretariat under the directions of Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani. The savings exceed the target prescribed by the Finance Division by 500% and constitute 15.9% of the Senate's total budget for FY 2025-26, setting a new benchmark for fiscal discipline, institutional responsibility, and prudent stewardship of public resources. Guided by the principle that public office is a sacred fiduciary trust, the Chairman of the Senate initiated austerity measures from his own office before extending them across the Secretariat. A comprehensive framework of expenditure controls and efficiency measures was introduced, ensuring that financial discipline became an institutional practice rather than a symbolic exercise. Among the most significant

measures was the suspension of 17 out of 18 procurement projects approved by the Senate Finance Committee, resulting in substantial and immediate savings. Recruitment and other non-essential expenditures were rationalised, administrative overheads reduced, and operational costs brought under strict scrutiny. The official transport fleet was substantially grounded, fuel allocations were strictly capped, and usage was subjected to enhanced oversight. The provision of refreshments at official meetings and functions was discontinued, while committee proceedings were increasingly shifted to digital and virtual platforms to reduce logistical and hospitality costs. Likewise, all non-essential foreign visits were suspended in line with the broader objective of expenditure restraint. Significantly, despite the availability of Rs. 60 million under the budgetary allocation for the purchase of official vehicles during the current financial year, not a single vehicle was procured, reflecting the Senate leadership's commitment to prioritising national interest over institutional convenience.

BISP to launch digital wallet
payments nationwide

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Senator Rubina Khalid on Monday announced that all BISP payments would be made through digital wallets from July 2026, saying the initiative would enhance transparency, eliminate unauthorized deductions and strengthen the economic empowerment of beneficiary women. She also regretted the spread of misinformation about the programme, describing BISP as a globally recognized model of financial inclusion and social protection that continues to support more than 10 million deserving families across Pakistan. Addressing a press conference at BISP Headquarters regarding the introduction of digital wallets and distribution of Benazir SIMs, she said the programme reflected the vision of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and enjoyed the full confidence of the President and Prime Minister of Pakistan. She added that several countries and international organizations were studying and learning from the BISP model. The Chairperson stated that both the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of Pakistan have full confidence in the programme. As evidence of this trust, she stated that the Prime Minister's Ramadan Relief Package has been successfully delivered through BISP's digital payment mechanisms for the past two years. She stressed that any humiliation or disrespect towards poor and hardworking citizens is unacceptable and called upon those who have undermined the dignity of beneficiary fam-

ilies to apologize. Senator Rubina Khalid highlighted that BISP continues to introduce reforms aimed at strengthening transparency and empowering women beneficiaries. She stated that the Digital Wallet initiative has been launched to provide greater financial autonomy to women and improve the efficiency of payments. More than 8 million free Benazir SIMs have already been distributed among women beneficiaries, and digital wallets are being opened in their names to eliminate unauthorized deductions and unnecessary difficulties in accessing payments. She further informed that BISP has introduced an Interoperability System, enabling beneficiaries to withdraw their payments through multiple banking channels according to their convenience. She announced that beginning in July 2026, all BISP payments will be made exclusively through digital wallets. Women facing biometric verification issues or those whose fingerprints cannot be verified will also be able to access their funds through bank accounts. The Chairperson stated that BISP has introduced a re-certification mechanism to further strengthen transparency. Under this system, beneficiary households are reassessed every three years to ensure that only genuinely deserving families continue to receive support, while households whose economic conditions have improved can be replaced by newly eligible families. She said that BISP's National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) is regarded as a credible and reliable database across the country.—DNA

Sherry
congratulates
PPP

ISLAMABAD: Vice President of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Senator Sherry Rehman has congratulated the successful PPP candidates and party workers on the party's impressive performance in the Gilgit-Baltistan elections. In a statement, Sherry Rehman paid tribute to First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for their dynamic and effective election campaign, stating that their active public engagement and leadership played a significant role in the party's success. She said that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan had rejected the politics of hatred and division and instead voted for an agenda of development, democracy, and public service. The election results reflect the continued support of the people for the democratic, progressive, and pro-people vision of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, she added. Sherry Rehman further stated that the outcome also demonstrates public confidence in the democratic vision and political struggle of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. She reaffirmed that the PPP would work with renewed commitment to meet public expectations and promote the development and prosperity of Gilgit-Baltistan. At the same time, the PPP leader expressed deep concern over reports of alleged manipulation and delays in election results in certain constituencies. She said that reports regarding GBLA-16, GBLA-17, and GBLA-20, where results were allegedly delayed or differed from public expectations, raise serious questions about the transparency of the electoral process. Sherry Rehman noted that allegations of irregularities are not only being raised by the PPP but have also been highlighted in media reports. She added that unnecessary delays and ambiguity in constituencies where the PPP enjoyed clear public support are further increasing concerns. "Any interference in the electoral process amounts to a violation of the democratic rights of the people and the sanctity of the vote," she said. She called upon the Election Commission to immediately announce the results of all pending constituencies in a transparent manner and take steps to restore public confidence. He also urged the Chief Election Commissioner to take immediate notice of the situation and address all concerns related to the electoral process. Sherry Rehman demanded that legal action be taken against any individuals found responsible for undermining public trust in the election process.—DNA

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Climate action will define future of oceans and ecosystems

HASSAN ALZAIN

WORLD Environment Day and World Ocean Day 2026 arrive at a defining moment for the planet. Climate signals are intensifying across ecosystems, oceans, and communities worldwide, while momentum toward cleaner energy and environmental resilience continues to accelerate. The defining challenge is no longer whether climate change is occurring, but whether climate action can advance rapidly enough to protect the systems that sustain human well-being, economic stability, and environmental resilience.

The scientific indicators remain significant. According to the UN Environment Program, global greenhouse gas emissions reached about 57.7 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2024, a 2.3 percent increase from 2023 levels. Atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations continued climbing, with peak monthly levels surpassing 430 parts per million during 2025-26. Scientists warn that the remaining carbon budget aligned with limiting warming to 1.5°C is narrowing rapidly if emissions remain near current levels.

The climate impacts are becoming increasingly visible across regions and sectors. The 2023-2025 period marked the first three-year average in recorded history to exceed the 1.5°C warming threshold above pre-industrial levels, according to Copernicus data. At the same time, global mean sea levels are rising at roughly 4.5 millimeters annually in recent years – approximately double the rate observed during the 1990s. Heatwaves, flooding, droughts and wildfires are placing growing pressure on infrastructure, food systems, water security, and public well-being worldwide. Oceans are at the center of the climate challenge. Scientists estimate that oceans absorb more than 90 percent of the excess heat trapped by greenhouse gas emissions and remove nearly one-quarter of global carbon dioxide emissions annually. While this has slowed atmospheric warming, it has also intensified marine heatwaves, ocean acidification, coral bleaching and sea-level rise. Climate monitoring agencies confirmed that global ocean heat content reached another record high in 2025, continuing a long-term warming trend that has accelerated significantly since 2000.

The environmental implications extend far beyond coastlines. Oceans regulate climate systems, influence rainfall patterns, and support food security and livelihoods for billions of people. More than 3 billion people globally rely on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods, while fisheries remain a major protein source worldwide. Yet marine ecosystems continue facing pressure from warming waters, pollution, habitat degradation, and unsustainable resource use, weakening resilience at



a time when environmental systems are already under mounting stress. The public health implications are equally important. Climate-related risks – including heat exposure, air pollution, food insecurity and water stress – are notably affecting vulnerable populations globally. International health estimates indicate that air pollution contributes to millions of premature deaths annually. In the Middle East and other climate-vulnerable regions, rising temperatures and water scarcity are increasing pressure on urban resilience, healthcare systems, and environmental well-being. Coastal populations are also becoming more exposed to flooding, extreme weather events, and infrastructure disruption. At the same time, global climate momentum continues strengthening. Renewable energy deployment reached another historic milestone in 2024, with approximately 585 gigawatts of renewable power capacity added globally in a single year, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency. Clean energy investment now consistently exceeds spending on conventional energy systems, reinforcing the growing economic competitiveness of low-carbon technologies, resilience infrastructure, and sustainable development pathways. In the Middle East, environmental transformation is also becoming highly observable. Saudi Arabia continues advancing ecosystem restoration, renewable energy expansion, and mangrove rehabilitation efforts through Vision 2030 and the Saudi Green Initiative. Across the region, climate adaptation, biodiversity protection, and environmental resilience are being integrated into broader economic diversification and sustainability strategies, reflecting growing recognition that environmental stewardship is central to strategic prosperity and societal well-being. The 2026 environmental agenda appropriately emphasizes climate action as an interconnected global challenge. Oceans, ecosystems, energy systems, infrastructure, public health, and economic resilience are no longer separate policy discussions. They are interconnected systems that collectively shape advanced stability and sustainable development.

Importantly, the most effective climate solutions are those capable of delivering environmental, economic, and social benefits simultaneously. The path forward is clear and achievable. First, governments should integrate climate resilience, ocean protection, and ecosystem restoration directly into national economic and infrastructure planning, ensuring measurable environmental and public health outcomes. Second, investment should continue accelerating toward clean energy, resilient infrastructure, marine conservation, and nature-based solutions that strengthen both mitigation and adaptation capacity.

Third, industry should embed environmental stewardship and climate resilience into operational strategies, moving beyond compliance toward systems that improve long-term operational efficiency, financial sustainability, and business resilience. Fourth, societies should strengthen scientific collaboration, environmental education, and community participation, ensuring climate action is supported by credible evidence and scalable implementation. Ultimately, World Environment Day and World Ocean Day 2026 deliver the same message. Oceans and ecosystems are absorbing growing climate pressures while continuing to sustain human well-being and economic stability. The defining challenge is whether climate action can advance rapidly enough to protect those systems and support a more resilient and sustainable future.

Jeremy Bentham's Theory of Utilitarianism and Pakistan

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The principle of utility also has implications for legal and administrative reform.

Bentham was a strong critic of outdated laws and inefficient institutions. He believed that legal systems should serve the practical needs of society rather than preserve historical privileges.

Pakistan's governance challenges often stem from bureaucratic inefficiencies, procedural delays and regulatory complexities.

Reforms that simplify administrative processes and improve public access to services would align closely with Bentham's vision of effective governance

POLITICAL ideas often travel far beyond the societies in which they were first conceived. Some survive because they offer practical guidance for governments grappling with complex challenges. The philosophy of utilitarianism, developed by the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century, is one such idea. Though rooted in a different age and context, Bentham's emphasis on public welfare, efficient governance and the greatest good for the greatest number continues to resonate in contemporary debates about statecraft. For a country like Pakistan, where questions of governance, public service delivery and economic justice remain central, utilitarianism offers a useful lens through which to examine public policy. Bentham's central proposition was deceptively simple. Governments, laws and institutions should be judged not by tradition, ideology or inherited privilege, but by the extent to which they promote the well-being of society. He argued that human beings naturally seek pleasure and avoid pain. Therefore, the purpose of public policy should be to maximise collective happiness and minimise suffering. This principle became known as "the greatest happiness of the greatest number."

At first glance, the idea appears straightforward. Yet its implications for governance are profound. It shifts attention away from political slogans and towards measurable outcomes. A government's success is not determined by the promises it makes but by the tangible improvements it brings to the lives of ordinary citizens. Better healthcare, accessible education, affordable housing, reliable infrastructure and economic opportunity become the real indicators of effective governance.

Pakistan's political history reveals the continuing relevance of this perspective. Since independence, successive governments have pursued different ideological visions, ranging from developmental nationalism to economic liberalisation and welfare-oriented programmes. However, public expectations have remained remarkably consistent. Citizens seek security, employment, affordable necessities and access to essential services. In utilitarian terms, the legitimacy of state institutions depends largely on their ability to meet these expectations.

The challenge becomes particularly visible in the sphere of public expenditure. Pakistan, like many developing countries, operates under severe fiscal constraints. Resources are limited while demands are extensive. Bentham's philosophy would suggest that public spending should be directed toward policies that generate the greatest social benefit. Investments in primary healthcare, public education, clean drinking water and poverty reduction often yield broader social returns than projects designed primarily for political visibility. This debate is not merely theoretical. Every budget re-

flects choices about whose interests are prioritised and which sectors receive support. A utilitarian approach would encourage policymakers to evaluate these decisions based on their impact on the largest number of citizens. Programmes that reduce poverty, improve literacy and expand access to healthcare would rank highly because they directly enhance collective welfare.

The healthcare sector illustrates this point clearly. Millions of Pakistanis continue to face difficulties in accessing quality medical services. Rural populations often suffer from inadequate facilities, shortages of trained personnel and limited access to medicines. From a utilitarian standpoint, strengthening public healthcare would not only reduce suffering but also contribute to economic productivity and social stability. Healthier populations are better able to participate in economic life and contribute to national development.

Education presents a similar case. Pakistan has made notable progress in expanding school enrolment, yet significant disparities persist. Millions of children remain out of school, while concerns about educational quality continue to affect outcomes. Bentham's philosophy would view investment in education as one of the most effective means of increasing long-term social welfare. Education enhances individual opportunity, promotes social mobility and contributes to economic growth. It benefits not only the individual but society as a whole.

The principle of utility also has implications for legal and administrative reform. Bentham was a strong critic of outdated laws and inefficient institutions. He believed that legal systems should serve the practical needs of society rather than preserve historical privileges. Pakistan's governance challenges often stem from bureaucratic inefficiencies, procedural delays and regulatory complexities. Reforms that simplify administrative processes and improve public access to services would align closely with Bentham's vision of effective governance.

At the same time, utilitarianism raises important questions about justice and minority rights. Critics have long argued that a strict focus on majority welfare can sometimes overlook the interests of vulnerable groups. If policies are judged solely by the benefits they provide to the majority, there is a risk that smaller communities or disadvantaged populations may be neglected.

This concern is particularly relevant in diverse societies. Pakistan is home to multiple ethnic, linguistic and religious communities. A successful public policy framework must therefore balance collective welfare with constitutional protections and principles of equality. Modern interpretations of utilitarianism recognise this challenge and emphasise that long-term social happiness depends on fairness, inclusion and respect for fundamental rights.

Economic policy offers another area where Bentham's ideas remain relevant. Pakistan continues to face inflationary pressures, unemployment concerns and recurring fiscal challenges. Policymakers frequently confront difficult trade-offs between economic stabilisation and social protection. A utilitarian perspective would encourage decision-makers to assess not only macroeconomic indicators but also the human consequences of policy choices. For instance, economic reforms may improve fiscal stability in the long run, but they can also impose short-term hardships on vulnerable groups. Utilitarian reasoning would require governments to consider mechanisms that mitigate these hardships, ensuring that the overall benefits of reform are broadly shared rather than concentrated among a limited segment of society.

The growing importance of evidence-based policymaking also reflects Bentham's intellectual legacy. He believed that governments should rely on observation, measurement and practical outcomes rather than abstract assumptions. Contemporary public administration increasingly emphasises data-driven decision-making, policy evaluation and performance assessment. These approaches echo Bentham's conviction that effective governance requires systematic evaluation of what works and what does not. Yet utilitarianism should not be viewed as a complete solution to every political challenge. Human societies are guided by values that extend beyond material welfare alone. Questions of identity, dignity, freedom and justice often shape political life in ways that cannot be measured solely through calculations of utility. The challenge for modern states is to integrate welfare-oriented governance with broader ethical and constitutional principles.

For Pakistan, the enduring significance of Bentham's philosophy lies not in its eighteenth-century origins but in its practical message. Governments exist to improve the lives of citizens. Public institutions derive legitimacy from their capacity to reduce suffering and expand opportunity. Policies should be evaluated not by their rhetoric but by their results. In a country where demands for better governance, social justice and economic opportunity continue to dominate public discourse, Bentham's principle of the greatest good for the greatest number remains a useful benchmark. It reminds policymakers that the ultimate purpose of the state is not merely to exercise authority but to serve society. The measure of success is found not in political narratives but in the everyday realities of the people whose welfare governments are entrusted to protect.

– The writer is Assistant Professor Pakistan Studies ICBS Lahore Email: akramzaheer86@yahoo.com

Divorce: A Lawful Act Disliked by Allah

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Official figures reveal that in 2021, approximately 80,000 divorce and khula decrees were issued in Punjab, rising to 82,000 in 2022, 90,000 in 2023, 100,000 in 2024, and reaching 175,000 in 2025. The Punjab Women Protection Authority reported 25,000 violence-related cases in the final year alone, underscoring the fear and helplessness that have infiltrated many households

IN the divine wisdom of the Almighty, mankind has been bestowed with comprehensive guidance through the Holy Quran for leading a righteous and harmonious life. Allah has clearly delineated the boundaries of the halal and the haram, unveiling the secrets and codes essential for social existence. Particularly in the sacred bond of marriage, He has illuminated the paths by which husbands and wives may dwell together in tranquility, each fulfilling their responsibilities with grace and equity. The mutual duties in this relationship are expounded with clarity, as are the means to guard against discord and the sorrow of separation. Should the union falter despite earnest efforts, the Quran addresses the solemn matter of divorce, its procedures, and the obligations that persist, especially upon the husband. Yet divorce, though permissible, remains among those lawful acts which Allah Himself dislikes, a concession born of necessity rather than preference.

The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, through his exemplary conduct and the noble traditions of Hadith, elaborated upon all that the Quran left implicit, thereby perfecting the guidance for humanity. Moreover, the avenue of ijthad stands open for scholars to interpret and apply these eternal principles to evolving circumstances. In our age, however, a troubling tide of marital dissolution has risen, driven in no small measure by social illiteracy and the unchecked influences of modernity. The revolutions wrought by information technology have brought convenience and connectivity, yet the unrestrained freedoms and examples paraded upon social media have often inflamed domestic unrest. Parents and guardians, swayed by these currents, frequently neglect the foundational teachings of faith. Consequently, during and after separation, innocent children suffer profound mental degradation and psychological distress, their tender spirits scarred by the fractures in the home that should have been their sanctuary. Recent years have borne witness to an alarming escalation in such cases across the land. In Punjab, economic and social crises have contributed to a roughly five percent increase in divorce and khula proceedings. The principal causes cited in court records include the per-

vasive use of social media and mobile phones, demands for separate housing, meager incomes, drug addiction, unemployment, interference by in-laws, domestic violence, and infidelity. According to the media reports over five years, some 347,000 divorce cases were recorded, alongside 114,000 khula applications initiated by women. Overall, divorces constitute about seventy-five percent of terminations, with khula accounting for the remainder. Urban centers bear a heavier burden than rural districts, with Lahore leading, followed by Faisalabad and Sheikhpura. Even villages, once bastions of enduring familial bonds, now witness this disquieting trend. Official figures reveal that in 2021, approximately 80,000 divorce and khula decrees were issued in Punjab, rising to 82,000 in 2022, 90,000 in 2023, 100,000 in 2024, and reaching 175,000 in 2025. The Punjab Women Protection Authority reported 25,000 violence-related cases in the final year alone, underscoring the fear and helplessness that have infiltrated many households. While the state demonstrates resolve in safeguarding women, societal silence on deeper weaknesses may yet prove more damaging. Where once families endured hardships for the sake of reputation and the well-being of daughters, tolerance has waned. Marriages now dissolve with distressing ease, while sustaining them grows arduous. Children increasingly favor solitary paths, a development that portends grave consequences for the moral fabric of society. Psychologists attribute this surge to shifting family structures, economic pressures, unemployment, addiction, and a diminishing spirit of forbearance.

A parallel crisis unfolds in the federal capital, where family courts brim with cases at a pace that strains judicial resources. On average, thirty-eight divorce-related petitions arrive each working hour, with more than 45,000 registered since the year's commencement, according to the reports. Daily filings exceed three hundred, monthly totals surpass nine thousand, and the three-year trajectory shows steady growth from 85,000 in 2023 toward over 100,000 in 2025. Court marriages continue—more than thirty daily—yet many unions falter within weeks or months. Young couples, often entering matrimony by

choice, soon confront financial hardship, joblessness, and, lamentably, substance abuse. Senior practitioners observe these themes recurring with painful regularity, reflecting the broader urban realities of elevated expectations colliding with material constraints.

The Quran tenderly counsels spouses: "And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them—perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good" (Surah An-Nisa, 4:19). This verse reminds believers that affection and mercy are divine signs placed between mates, as affirmed in Surah Ar-Rum (30:21): "And among His signs is that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your hearts." The Prophet, peace be upon him, reinforced this ethos when he declared, "The best of you is the one who is best to his wife," and taught that "A woman is married for four reasons: her wealth, lineage, beauty, or religion; choose the religious one, may your hands be blessed." In matters of discord, the sacred text urges arbitration: appoint arbiters from each family so that, if reconciliation is desired, Allah may mend what was broken (Surah Nisa Ayat 4:35).

Divorce, when unavoidable, must follow prescribed paths of dignity and justice, preserving rights and protecting the vulnerable, particularly children and women in their waiting periods. Yet the Hadith warns solemnly: "The most hated of permissible things to Allah is divorce." This declaration underscores that while the door remains open for relief from intolerable unions, every effort at preservation aligns more closely with divine pleasure. To stem this rising flood, authorities and communities must act with foresight. Pre-marital counseling, family guidance centers, and programs addressing mental health and financial stability are urgent necessities. By reviving the Islamic emphasis on mutual respect, patience, and fulfillment of rights, society may yet restore the home as a cradle of peace and moral upbringing. The Quran and the Prophetic example offer not merely rules, but a luminous path toward enduring felicity—if only we possess the wisdom and will to tread it. In neglecting these treasures, we imperil not only individual happiness but the very foundations upon which stable nations are built.

Briefs

Trump asks Iran, Israel to stop...

FROM PAGE 01

coordination and cooperation with the United States," he added. "It is perfectly natural that the diplomatic process initiated to put an end to this imposed war would be affected," Baqaei said. Israel said on Monday it hit a petrochemical plant in Iran's southwest, along with strikes elsewhere on military targets, after Trump reportedly told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to refrain from further attacks. In the first hit on an energy site inside Iran since the April 8 ceasefire, Israel said it struck targets at the Mahshahr petrochemical complex, while a provincial official told Iran's semi-official Fars news agency parts of the plant were damaged. The Israeli army also said it struck and dismantled air defense capabilities that Tehran had been deploying to restore its defenses. Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they responded to Israel's attack on the petrochemical plant by launching a missile on similar plant in Haifa, Tasnim reported. The Israeli army said Iran had fired nearly 30 missiles at Israel since Sunday night.

Pakistan urges UK to caution...

FROM PAGE 01

diaspora in the UK regarding Azad Jammu and Kashmir," the FO said. It advised the individuals to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Pakistan and AJK, saying they "would do well to contribute positively to their country of residence". The statement comes after four law enforcement personnel were martyred and more than 20 police and security officials injured after activists of the banned Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) opened fire in Rawalakot, Azad Kashmir police said. The incident followed last week's decision by the AJK government to declare the JAAC as a proscribed organisation under anti-terrorism laws ahead of its planned protest on June 9.

PTI rejects GB election results

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independent candidates in five. Addressing a press conference, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said PTI was barred from campaigning in the days leading up to the election, alleging that it was part of a "planned arrangement aimed at eliminating the party from the polls". He said that out of the region's 24 seats, PTI-backed candidates were leading in two constituencies — Naik Karim in Hunza and Sohail Abbas in Gilgit — while their ally Majlis Wahdati-Muslimeen's Muhammad Kazim was ahead in Skardu. However, Gohar claimed PTI-backed candidates were "winning 100 per cent" in a total of eight constituencies — one seat from Astore, one from Diamer, two from Nagar, and one from Ghizer.

India depots nearly 5,000 BD citizens

FROM PAGE 01

India shares a long and porous border with Muslim-majority Bangladesh, where migration has historically been driven by economic hardship and longstanding family links. On taking power, the new West Bengal government ordered the establishment of detention centres for undocumented Bangladeshis and Rohingya refugees, a mainly Muslim people who fled persecution in Myanmar. State Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, speaking in the capital Kolkata on Sunday, said nearly 5,000 Bangladeshi citizens had been deported across the border. "We have started the work of deporting Bangladeshi infiltrators who do not fall under the purview of the Citizenship Amendment Act," Adhikari said, saying the government had "established holding centres in all districts of the state" in May.

Complete schedule of Football World Cup 2026

DNA

LONDON: Full World Cup 2026 fixture schedule for 48-team tournament in Mexico, USA and Canada with UK kick-off times; Mexico host South Africa in June 11 opener; Final is on Sunday July 19; Watch 'World Cup Breakfast' on Sky Sports News from 7am to 10am every day of the World Cup. With all 48 teams now qualified for the 2026 World Cup, here's your day-by-day breakdown of the 37-day tournament, which kicks off in Mexico on June 11 with 103 matches leading up to the World Cup final at the MetLife Stadium on July 19. All the kick-offs for the 2026 World Cup are listed in UK time.

World Cup key dates

- Group stage: June 11-27
- Round of 32: June 28 to July 3
- Round of 16: July 4-7
- Quarter-finals: July 9-11
- Semi-finals: July 14-15
- Third-place play-off ('Bronze final'): July 18
- Final: July 19

Full 2026 World Cup schedule by day

Thursday, June 11

- Group A: Mexico vs South Africa, kick-off 8pm – Mexico City, Mexico
- Group B: Canada vs Bosnia & Herzegovina, kick-off 8pm – Toronto, Canada

Saturday, June 13

- Group D: USA vs Paraguay, kick-off 2am – Los Angeles, USA
- Group B: Qatar vs Switzerland, kick-off 8pm – Santa Clara, USA
- Group C: Brazil vs Morocco, kick-off 11pm – New Jersey, USA

Sunday, June 14

- Group C: Haiti vs Scotland, kick-off 2am – Foxborough, USA
- Group D: Australia vs Turkey, kick-off 5am – Vancouver, Canada
- Group E: Germany vs Curacao, kick-off 6pm – Houston, USA
- Group F: Netherlands vs Japan, kick-off 9pm – Arlington, USA
- Scotland's World Cup Group C games
- Haiti vs Scotland – Sunday June 14, Boston, 2am (UK time)
- Scotland vs Morocco – Friday June 19, Boston, 11pm (UK time)
- Scotland vs Brazil – Wednesday June 24, Miami, 11pm (UK time)

Monday, June 15

- Group E: Ivory Coast vs Ecuador, kick-off 12am – Philadelphia, USA
- Group F: Sweden vs Tunisia, kick-off 3am – Guadalupe, Mexico
- Group H: Spain vs Cape Verde, kick-off 5pm – Atlanta, USA
- Group G: Belgium vs Egypt, kick-off 8pm – Seattle, USA
- Group H: Saudi Arabia vs Uruguay, kick-off 11pm – Miami, USA

Tuesday, June 16

- Group G: Iran vs New Zealand, kick-off 2am – Los Angeles, USA
- Group I: France vs Senegal, kick-off 8pm – New Jersey, USA
- Group I: Iraq vs Norway, kick-off 11pm – Foxborough, USA

Wednesday, June 17

- Group J: Argentina vs Algeria, kick-off 2am – Kansas City, USA
- Group J: Austria vs Jordan, kick-off 5am – Santa Clara, USA
- Group K: Portugal vs DR Congo, kick-off 6pm – Houston, USA
- Group L: England vs Croatia, kick-off 9pm – Arlington, USA
- England's World Cup Group L games
- England vs Croatia – Wednesday June 17, Dallas, 9pm (UK time)
- England vs Ghana – Tuesday June 23, Boston, 9pm (UK time)
- Panama vs England – Saturday June 27, New York-New Jersey, 10pm (UK time)

Thursday, June 18

- Group L: Ghana vs Panama, kick-off 12am – Toronto, Canada
- Group K: Uzbekistan vs Colombia, kick-off 3am – Mexico City, Mexico
- Group A: Czech Republic vs South Africa, kick-off 5pm – Atlanta, USA
- Group B: Switzerland vs Bosnia & Herzegovina, kick-off 8pm – Los Angeles, USA
- Group B: Canada vs Qatar, kick-off 11pm – Vancouver, Canada

Friday, June 19

- Group A: Mexico vs South Korea, kick-off 2am – Zapopan, Mexico
- Group D: USA vs Australia, kick-off 8pm – Seattle, USA
- Group C: Scotland vs Morocco, kick-off 11pm – Foxborough, USA

Saturday, June 20

- Group C: Brazil vs Haiti, kick-off 1.30am – Philadelphia, USA
- Group D: Turkey vs Paraguay, kick-off 4am – Santa Clara, USA
- Group A: Netherlands vs Sweden, kick-off 6pm – Houston, USA
- Group E: Germany vs Ivory Coast, kick-off 9pm – Toronto, Canada

Sunday, June 21

- Group E: Ecuador vs Curacao, kick-off 1am – Kansas City, USA
- Group F: Tunisia vs Japan, kick-off 5am – Guadalupe, Mexico
- Group H: Spain vs Saudi Arabia, kick-off 5pm – Atlanta, USA
- Group G: Belgium vs Iran, kick-off 8pm – Los Angeles, USA
- Group H: Uruguay vs Cape Verde, kick-off 11pm – Miami, USA

Monday, June 22

- Group G: New Zealand vs Egypt, kick-off 2am – Vancouver, Canada
- Group J: Argentina vs Austria, kick-off 6pm – Arlington, USA
- Group I: France vs Iraq, kick-off 10pm – Philadelphia, USA

Tuesday, June 23

- Final: July 19
- Group I: Norway vs Senegal, kick-off 1am – Toronto, Canada
- Group J: Jordan vs Algeria, kick-off 4am – Santa Clara, USA
- Group K: Portugal vs Uzbekistan, kick-off 6pm – Houston, USA
- Group L: England vs Ghana, kick-off 9pm – Foxborough, USA

Wednesday, June 24

- Group L: Panama vs Croatia, kick-off 12am – Foxborough, USA
- Group K: Colombia vs DR Congo, kick-off 3am – Zapopan, Mexico
- Group B: Switzerland vs Canada, kick-off 8pm – Vancouver, Canada

Thursday, June 25

- Group B: Bosnia & Herzegovina vs Qatar, kick-off 8pm – Seattle, USA
- Group C: Morocco vs Haiti, kick-off 11pm – Atlanta, USA
- Group C: Scotland vs Brazil, kick-off 11pm – Miami, USA

Friday, June 26

- Group A: South Africa vs South Korea, kick-off 2am – Guadalupe, Mexico
- Group A: Czech Republic vs Mexico, kick-off 2am – Mexico City, Mexico
- Group E: Curacao vs Ivory Coast, kick-off 9pm – Philadelphia, USA
- Group E: Ecuador vs Germany, kick-off 9pm – New Jersey, USA

Saturday, June 27

- Group F: Tunisia vs Netherlands, kick-off 12am – Kansas City, USA
- Group F: Japan vs Sweden, kick-off 12am – Arlington, USA
- Group D: Turkey vs USA, kick-off 3am – Los Angeles, USA
- Group D: Paraguay vs Australia, kick-off 3am – Santa Clara, USA
- Group I: Norway vs France, kick-off 8pm – Foxborough, USA
- Group I: Senegal vs Iraq, kick-off 8pm – Toronto, Canada

Sunday, June 28

- Group H: Cape Verde vs Saudi Arabia, kick-off 1am – Houston, USA
- Group H: Uruguay vs Spain, kick-off 1am – Zapopan, Mexico
- Group G: New Zealand vs Belgium, kick-off 4am – Vancouver, Canada
- Group G: Egypt vs Iran, kick-off 4am – Seattle, USA
- Group L: Panama vs England, kick-off 10pm – New Jersey, USA
- Group L: Croatia vs Ghana, kick-off 10pm – Philadelphia, USA

Monday, June 29

- Group K: Colombia vs Portugal, kick-off 12.30am – Miami, USA
- Group K: DR Congo vs Uzbekistan, kick-off 12.30am – Atlanta, USA
- Group J: Algeria vs Austria, kick-off 3am – Kansas City, USA
- Group J: Jordan vs Argentina, kick-off 3am – Arlington, USA
- Round of 32 – Match 73: Group A runners-up vs Group B runners-up, kick-off 8pm – Los Angeles, USA

Tuesday, June 30

- Round of 32 – Match 76: Group C winners vs Group F runners-up, kick-off 6pm – Houston, USA
- Round of 32 – Match 74: Group E winners vs Group A/B/C/D/F third place, kick-off 9.30pm – Foxborough, USA

Wednesday, June 30

- Round of 32 – Match 75: Group F winners vs Group C runners-up, kick-off 2am – Guadalupe, Mexico
- Round of 32 – Match 78: Group E runners-up vs Group I runners-up, kick-off 6pm – Arlington, USA
- Round of 32 – Match 77: Group I winners vs Group C/D/F/G/H

third, kick-off 10pm – New Jersey, USA

Wednesday, July 1

- Round of 32 – Match 79: Group A winners vs Group C/E/F/H/I third place, kick-off 2am – Mexico City, Mexico
- Round of 32 – Match 80: Group L winners vs Group E/H/I/J/K third place, kick-off 5pm – Atlanta, USA
- Round of 32 – Match 82: Group G winners vs Group A/E/H/I/J third place, kick-off 9pm – Seattle, USA

Thursday, July 2

- Round of 32 – Match 81: Group D winners vs Group B/E/F/I/J third place, kick-off 1am – Santa Clara, USA
- Round of 32 – Match 84: Group H winners vs Group J runners-up, kick-off 8pm – Los Angeles, USA

Friday, July 3

- Round of 32 – Match 83: Group K runners-up vs Group L runners-up, kick-off 12am – Toronto, Canada
- Round of 32 – Match 85: Group B winners vs Group E/F/G/I/J third place, kick-off 4am – Vancouver, Canada
- Round of 32 – Match 88: Group D runners-up vs Group G runners-up, kick-off 7pm – Arlington, USA
- Round of 32 – Match 86: Group J winners vs Group H runners-up, kick-off 11pm – Miami, USA

Saturday, July 4

- Round of 32 – Match 87: Group K winners vs Group D/E/I/J/L third place, kick-off 2.30am – Kansas City, USA
- Round of 16 – Match 90: Match 73 winners vs Match 75 winners, kick-off 6pm – Houston, USA
- Round of 16 – Match 89: Match 74 winners vs Match 77 winners, kick-off 10pm – Philadelphia, USA

Sunday, July 5

- Round of 16 – Match 91: Match 76 winners vs Match 78 winners, kick-off 9pm – New Jersey, USA

Monday, July 6

- Round of 16 – Match 92: Match 79 winners vs Match 80 winners, kick-off 1am – Seattle, USA
- Round of 16 – Match 93: Match 83 winners vs Match 84 winners, kick-off 8pm – Arlington, USA

Tuesday, July 7

- Round of 16 – Match 94: Match 81 winners vs Match 82 winners, kick-off 1am – Seattle, USA
- Round of 16 – Match 95: Match 86 winners vs Match 88 winners, kick-off 5pm – Atlanta, USA
- Round of 16 – Match 96: Match 85 winners vs Match 87 winners, kick-off 9pm – Vancouver, Canada

Wednesday, July 8

- Quarter-final – Match 97: Match 89 winners vs Match 90 winners, kick-off 9pm – Foxborough, USA

Friday, July 10

- Quarter-final – Match 98: Match 93 winners vs Match 94 winners, kick-off 8pm – Los Angeles, USA

Saturday, July 11

- Quarter-final – Match 99: Match 91 winners vs Match 92 winners, kick-off 10pm – Miami, USA

Sunday, July 12

- Quarter-final – Match 100: Match 95 winners vs Match 96 winners, kick-off 2am – Kansas City, USA

Tuesday, July 14

- Semi-final – Match 101: Match 97 winners vs Match 98 winners, kick-off 8pm – Arlington, USA

Wednesday, July 15

- Semi-final – Match 102: Match 99 winners vs Match 100 winners, kick-off 8pm – Atlanta, USA

Saturday, July 18

- Third Place Play-off – Match 103: Match 101 losers vs Match 102 losers, kick-off 10pm – Miami, USA

Sunday, July 19

- Final – Match 104: Match 101 winners vs Match 102 winners, kick-off 8pm – New Jersey, USA

Injury concerns for Morocco ahead of Word Cup

Morocco were surprise semifinalists at the last World Cup and have high hopes of another strong performance at the 2026 finals

HARRISON: Morocco are concerned about injuries to starters Abdessamad Ezzalzouli and Noussair Mazraoui, who could be forced out of their opening game at the World Cup against Brazil on Sunday. Both went off early in Sunday's 1-1 draw with Norway in their last warm-up match before this week's kick-off of the tournament in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Ezzalzouli was replaced at halftime after suffering a leg injury, while Mazraoui departed in the 29th minute with a shoulder problem after a tough encounter in which Morocco took an early lead but Norway equalized with 15 minutes remaining. "We left a good impression despite not winning because we really showed some very good things against a very good opponent," coach Mohamed Ouahbi told reporters. "That's the point of playing against teams like this. When you make so many changes (10 in total), it's difficult for the player but it was important that we managed everyone's playing time. "Two players went off injured. We're waiting to see how serious it is. I'm more concerned about that," the coach added. Morocco were surprise semifinalists at the last World Cup and have high hopes of another strong performance at the 2026 finals. APP

Pakistan U18 hockey team get rousing reception

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Under-18 hockey team received a rousing welcome on their return to Karachi on Monday after claiming the bronze medal at the Men's U18 Asia Cup 2026 held in Kakamigahara, Japan. Senior officials of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) along with the head of PHF Development Committee, legendary Olympian Hassan Sardar were present at Jinnah International Airport to receive the young side. In a touching gesture of honour, customs authorities at the airport also presented a formal salute to the bronze medallists as they arrived home. Pakistan had secured third place with a convincing 3-0 victory over Malaysia in the bronze medal match, producing a disciplined performance to finish their campaign on the podium. – APP

Gilani Announces Cash Rewards for Pakistan Football Team

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) President Syed Mohsen Gilani has hailed the national men's football team's historic qualification for the final of the Diamond Jubilee International Football Tournament, describing it as a landmark moment for Pakistan football after a 64-year wait. To celebrate the achievement, he announced cash rewards for the players, coaching staff and team officials. Pakistan secured their place in the final with a commanding 2-0 victory over Afghanistan in the Maldives on Sunday under head coach Nolberto Solano. The result sent Pakistan into the final of an international football tournament for the first time since the 1962 Merdeka Cup, ending more than six decades of disappointment and marking a major milestone in the country's football revival. "We have waited for this day for over six decades and I would like to congratulate our team for delivering a result that our fans have long been waiting for," Gilani said. He described the achievement as a reflection of the progress being made in Pakistan football and praised the players for their dedication and commitment.



"This is a sign of growth, hard work and determination. Our players and coaching staff have shown tremendous character throughout the tournament. We will continue to strive to ensure that achievements like these become the norm rather than the exception for Pakistan football," he added. In recognition of the team's historic success, Gilani announced cash awards for head coach Nolberto Solano, the players and team officials. Pakistan will now aim to cap off their memorable campaign when they take the field in the tournament final on June 10, with hopes of lifting their first major international trophy in decades.

EU imposes curbs on Iranians...

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the principles of free and safe passage in international waters. This latest step adds to the EU's ongoing efforts to balance diplomacy with deterrence, signaling to Tehran that actions endangering maritime traffic will not go unanswered.

Lebanon, Israel talks...

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been broken," expressing confidence that negotiations are moving in a positive direction despite the likelihood that talks will take time to resolve all outstanding issues. Issa added that the United States would continue supporting efforts to help Lebanon emerge from its crisis and ease the suffering of its people.

'Israeli strikes on...

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continuing even after fighting resumed with Israel. "Diplomatic consultations are naturally continuing in all circumstances," the spokesman said. Baqaei further stressed that it had "been frequently repeated by us together with the Pakistani mediator that Lebanon is part and parcel of the [ceasefire] agreement," according to Al Jazeera. "We cannot allow the Zionist entity or the United States to undermine this part of the part of the deal," he was quoted as saying.

PPP to support...

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for securing the highest number of seats in the elections," the premier said in a statement, extending felicitations to President Asif Ali Zardari and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on the party's performance. His remarks came as the Bilawal Bhutto-led party emerged as the leading political party in the Gilgit-Baltistan general elections.

PHF, PARCO sign Rs 100m partnership for coaching development

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In a major boost for the revival of Pakistan hockey, the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) and Pakistan Arab Refinery Limited (PARCO) have signed a landmark cooperation agreement worth Rs100 million aimed at strengthening coaching development, enhancing grassroots structures and supporting hockey activities across the country. The agreement was signed by PHF President Mohyuddin Wani and PARCO Managing Director Irtiza Qureshi in the presence of Secretary Petroleum Hamid Yaqoob Sheikh, senior officials of both organisations and members of the Pakistan Under-21 hockey team currently attending a national training camp. Under the two-year agreement, PARCO will provide financial support for coaching education programmes, coach development initiatives and nationwide hockey activities, including stipends for

coaches participating in the federation's coaching framework. Speaking at the ceremony, PHF President Mohyuddin Wani termed the partnership a significant step towards rebuilding Pakistan hockey and said all stakeholders must play their

role in restoring the national game to its former glory. "We are taking practical steps for the development and revival of hockey. A nationwide coaches' education programme will be launched to improve coaching standards in line with

modern international requirements," Wani said. He added that the federation was placing special emphasis on junior development and building a strong coaching structure to nurture future generations of players. Wani thanked PARCO and the

Ministry of Petroleum for supporting the national sport and expressed confidence that the initiative would help strengthen hockey from the grassroots to the elite level. Secretary Petroleum Hamid Yaqoob Sheikh described the partnership as an investment in a worthy national cause and expressed hope that Pakistan hockey would regain its lost stature on the international stage. Later, while speaking to the media, Wani said the national team had been provided world-class training and preparation for the FIH Pro League and Hockey World Cup, adding that he was optimistic the investment in player and coach development would translate into improved international results. He said that South Korea's national hockey team is being invited to Pakistan for a series of matches against the country's senior and junior teams, providing valuable international exposure ahead of major upcoming competitions.



Briefs

Pak-Italy trade witnesses over 18% surplus

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's goods and services trade with Italy witnessed a surplus of 18.41 percent during the first ten months of the fiscal year (2025-26) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. Trade surplus during the period under review was recorded at \$555.142 million against \$468.828 million last year, showing 18.41 percent growth. The overall exports to Italy were recorded at US \$969.435 million during July-April (2025-26) year against exports of US \$936.456 million during the same period of last year, showing an increase of 3.52 percent, SBP data revealed. Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, exports to Italy during April 2026 decreased by 3.22 percent from US \$ 92.284 million to US \$ 89.304 million. Month-on-month basis, however, exports witnessed a nominal increase during April 2026 as compared with exports of US \$ 89.296 million in March 2026, the SBP data said. Overall Pakistan's exports to all countries witnessed a decrease of 5.43 percent in ten months, from US \$27.307 billion to US \$25.824 billion, the SBP data said. On the other hand, imports from Italy during the period under review were recorded at US \$414.293 million against US \$467.628 million of last year, showing a decrease of 11.40 percent in July-April (2025-26). Meanwhile, year-on-year imports from Italy during April 2026 decreased by 12.39 percent from US \$39.581 million last year to US \$34.673 million.—APP

Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs278.40 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs278.41. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs278.20 and Rs279.45, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs3.33 and closed at Rs320.67 from the previous day's close of Rs324.00, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paisa to close at Rs1.73, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of Rs3.30 and closed at Rs371.09 compared to the previous day's Rs374.39. The exchange rate of the Emirati Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 01 paisa and 04 paisa to close at Rs75.79 and Rs74.11, respectively.—APP

Gold price declines by Rs 3,094 per tola

ISLAMABAD, Jun 8 (AP-P): The prices of gold witnessed a decline in the local market on Monday, with 24 karat gold per tola decreasing by Rs 3,094 to settle at Rs 452,233 compared to Rs 455,327 on the previous trading day, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 2,785 to Rs 386,987 from Rs 389,772, whereas 10 grams of 22 karat gold went down by Rs 2,524 to Rs 354,919 against Rs 357,443. In the international market, the price of gold decreased by \$30.945 to \$4,297.975 per ounce from \$4,328.920. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola decreased by Rs 94 to Rs 7,173 from Rs 7,267, while the price of 10 grams of silver declined by Rs 86 to Rs 6,116 from Rs 6,202. The price of silver in the international market also decreased by \$0.944 to \$66.941 per ounce from \$67.885.—APP

ICCI hosts Mauritius HC to deepen trade ties

Highlighting the economic strengths of Mauritius, Ambassador Kurrimbaccus described his country as a major economy and a strategic gateway to Africa

DNA

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Mauritius to Pakistan, H.E. Munsoor Kurrimbaccus, paid a visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Monday, where he held a productive and result-oriented interactive session with the Chamber leadership and members of the business community to discuss opportunities for strengthening bilateral trade, investment and economic cooperation. Addressing the gathering, the High Commissioner highly appreciated the role of ICCI as the premier business representative organization of the federal capital and commended its services for the promotion of trade and industry. He said he was deeply impressed by the commitment, determination and proactive approach of the ICCI leadership towards fostering business linkages with countries around the world. Highlighting the economic strengths of Mauritius, Ambassador Kurrimbaccus described his country as a major economy and a strategic gateway to Africa. He showcased the vast potential available in Mauritius in the fields of trade, investment, tourism and hospitality and encouraged Pakistani entrepreneurs to explore



opportunities in these sectors. He emphasized the importance of establishing joint ventures, promoting business-to-business (B2B) linkages and organizing regular exchange of trade delegations to unlock the immense economic potential between the two countries. The High Commissioner observed that joint ventures between Mauritian and Pakistani businesses would not only strengthen bilateral economic relations but would also enable both sides to access wider regional and international markets. He termed Pakistan a peaceful country blessed with some of the

most hospitable, friendly and welcoming people and expressed confidence that stronger commercial engagement would further cement the longstanding relations between the two nations. Emphasizing the need for continuity in engagement, he suggested that such interactions between the diplomatic community and the business sector should be held at least twice a year to ensure effective follow-up and implementation of decisions and proposals emerging from these meetings. Welcoming the distinguished guest, ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that Mauritius enjoys

a unique and special position in Pakistan's engagement with Africa, being the only African country with which Pakistan has a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA). He noted that despite cordial relations and considerable opportunities, bilateral trade remains far below its true potential and requires greater efforts from both public and private sectors. The ICCI President stated that the Chamber is keen to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with leading chambers of commerce and business associations in Mauritius to facilitate direct interaction among entrepreneurs, investors and business

leaders. He expressed the hope that the visit of the High Commissioner would serve as a catalyst for opening a new chapter of economic collaboration, investment partnerships and mutually beneficial commercial relations between Pakistan and Mauritius. Former President ICCI and Chairman ICCI Standing Committee on Diplomatic Affairs, Zafar Bakhtawari, while describing Mauritius as the "Pearl of the Indian Ocean," expressed confidence that bilateral relations between the two countries would witness significant growth during the tenure of the current High Commissioner.

Bangladesh measles outbreak sparks legal action against Yunus

DHAKA: A new legal petition has sought to hold Muhammad Yunus, head of Bangladesh's previous administration, and members of his cabinet, accountable for the ongoing measles outbreak that has killed hundreds of children and overwhelmed the country's health services. Since the 1990s, Bangladesh's vaccination campaigns have been able to contain the highly contagious, airborne disease but the mass immunization drive that should have taken place in 2024-25 was missed. During that period, the country was ruled by a caretaker government led by Nobel laureate Yunus, who took control after student-led protests that ousted the previous administration. The government was in charge for 18 months, until general elections in late February. Shortly after, hospitals in Dhaka started observing a surge in children infected with measles. The outbreak was officially recorded on March 15, and 620 children have since died with the disease's symptoms and over 79,000 have been hospitalized. Blaming the previous administration, Mujibur Rahman Iqbal, a member of parliament, took legal action on Monday, accusing the caretaker government of negligence in duty. "In the petition, we have stated that the previous interim government led by Prof. Yunus did not procure the measles vaccine, neglecting their responsibilities deliberately," Advocate Rafiqul Islam, the petitioner's lawyer, told Arab News. He alleged that the immunization had not taken place "despite the fact that UNICEF had repeatedly warned, in writing, about the consequences." The petition was filed with a local court in Dhaka against Yunus, former health adviser Nur Jahan Begum, and three others. While the court reportedly dismissed the plea on the same day, Islam said he was waiting for the written order to "move a plea for revision." The legal action follows a similar attempt last month, filed by a High Court lawyer under the Public Interest Litigation rule. The current measles outbreak is the deadliest in Bangladesh in recent history. Despite a vaccination drive started by the new government in April, the infection rate does not appear to be slowing. Dr. Be-Nazir Ahmed, former director of the disease control branch at the Directorate General of Health Services, told Arab News that about 1,000 children are being admitted to hospitals with measles symptoms every day. "The numbers of cases are not coming down ... It was not expected — these numbers of cases and deaths — after the vaccination program," he told Arab News. "The government should review the situation, why it is not coming down, and find out the cause." Not all children who should be vaccinated have received the shots, as with the changed vaccination pattern following the missed mass drive, not all mothers may have been aware of it. "For preventing transmission of measles, 95 percent coverage of vaccination is mandatory. It is a very infectious disease," Ahmed said. "In our country, the measles-rubella vaccine is given at the age of nine months and 15 months, but in this campaign, we have been giving the vaccine to children ranging from six months to 59 months. So, it is a different age group and probably many mothers do not know ... that their child needs to be vaccinated."—APP

National Savings secures Rs1.32t

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has mobilized Rs1.32 trillion in investments during the first eleven months of fiscal year 2025-26, achieving about 97.1 percent of its annual savings target and reflecting strong public confidence in government-backed savings schemes. Official sources told APP on Monday that CDNS collected Rs1.32 trillion from July 1, 2025 to June 5, 2026, against its annual savings mobilization target of Rs1.36 trillion for the current fiscal year. The sources said the robust inflows indicate growing investor trust in national savings instruments and an increasing tendency among citizens towards prudent financial planning and secure investments. To further diversify its portfolio, CDNS has allocated Rs50 billion for Islamic savings instruments during FY2025-26. The move is aimed at promoting Shariah-compliant investment avenues and supporting the growth of Pakistan's Islamic finance industry. Officials said the directorate had earlier set an ambitious savings target of Rs1.65 trillion for FY2024-25, including Rs170 billion for Islamic finance investments, to enhance financial inclusion and expand investment opportunities for a broader segment of the population. They noted that CDNS has consistently demonstrated strong performance in recent years. During FY2023-24, it exceeded its target by mobilizing 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 target of Rs1.3 trillion was revised upward to Rs1.4 trillion in view of favorable market conditions and improved resource mobilization efforts. According to officials, sustained growth in savings mobilization has been driven by institutional reforms, enhanced operational efficiency and innovative policy measures that have broadened the outreach and effectiveness of CDNS services nationwide.—DNA

D-8 chief urges global cooperation on energy efficiency

In his address, D-8 Secretary-General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood commended the Government of Türkiye, the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, and the Zero Waste Foundation for organizing the timely event

DNA

ISLAMABAD/DNA/ : D-8 Secretary-General Calls for Enhanced Global Cooperation on Energy Efficiency and Resource Management at Zero Waste Forum 2026. H.E. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Secretary-General of the Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8), participated as a Keynote Speaker in the High-Level Ministerial Session on Energy — titled "Energy Efficiency and Resource Management for a Sustainable Future" — jointly organized by the Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and the Zero Waste Foundation. The Dialogue was chaired by H.E. Alparslan Bayraktar, Minister for Energy and Natural Resources, Republic of Türkiye. The event formed part of the broader Zero Waste Forum 2026, one of the world's largest sustainability gatherings, which attracted more than 5,000 participants from over 180 countries, including more than 120 Ministers and hundreds of senior policymakers and stakeholders. The Zero Waste Forum was organized under the auspices of H.E. Mrs. Emine Erdoğan, First Lady of Türkiye and Patron of the globally-acclaimed Zero Waste Initiative. In his opening remarks, Minister Alparslan Bayraktar emphasized that energy efficiency and zero waste are inseparable pillars of sustainable development, both centered on preventing waste, ensuring responsible use of resources, and strengthening economic resilience. Stressing that the world faces simultaneous energy, climate, and resource challenges, he highlighted Türkiye's nationwide energy efficiency mobilization across industry, transportation, agriculture, and buildings, supported by a USD 20 billion investment target under the country's 2024-2030 Energy Efficiency Action Plan. The Minister un-

derscored the importance of raising awareness at all levels of society and reaffirmed Türkiye's commitment to advancing international cooperation on energy efficiency, renewable energy, circular economy practices, resource security, and sustainable development. He also noted that the Forum would contribute to shaping practical solutions and a forward-looking roadmap ahead of COP31 in Antalya. In his address, D-8 Secretary-General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood commended the Government of Türkiye, the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, and the Zero Waste Foundation for organizing the timely event. He paid rich tribute to H.E. Mrs. Emine Erdoğan for her visionary leadership of the Zero Waste Initiative, which has evolved from a national programme into a globally recognized movement endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly. The Secretary-General underscored that, in view of the new imperatives, the D-8 was steadily integrating sustainability into its overall cooperation agenda — recognizing that energy efficiency, circular economy practices, and sustainable resource management were essential for achieving long-term economic resilience and sustainable development. He highlighted recent D-8 initiatives in these areas, including the first-ever D-8 Virtual Showcase on "D-8 Voices for a Zero-Waste Future," the D-8 High-Level Energy and Urban Dialogue held during the 13th World Urban Forum in Baku last month; and the First Meeting of D-8 Ministers of Energy hosted by Azerbaijan on 1st June 2026, which adopted the comprehensive "Baku Declaration on Energy Cooperation." Referring to the D-8 Energy and Climate Center (D-8 ECC) being established in Baku, Secretary-General Sohail Mahmood noted that the Center would serve as an important institutional platform for fostering dialogue and practical cooperation on

matters related to energy efficiency, mining sector, climate resilience, innovation, and sustainable development among D-8 Member States. The Secretary-General expressed gratitude and appreciation to Minister Bayraktar for Türkiye's active contribution to the success of the First Meeting of D-8 Ministers of Energy in Baku on 1 June 2026. He also welcomed Minister Bayraktar's proposal to convene a D-8 Ministerial Session on the sidelines during COP31 in Antalya, noting that the initiative would provide a valuable opportunity to further strengthen cooperation among D-8 Member States on energy, climate, and sustainable development issues. Looking ahead, the Secretary-General proposed three practical initiatives: (i) the establishment of a Global South Platform on Energy Efficiency and Resource Management; (ii) the launch of a Circular Economy and Zero-Waste Partnership Initiative; and (iii) the development of innovative financing mechanisms, including Green Sukuk and blended finance instruments, to support energy-efficiency, renewable energy, and circular economy projects. The other distinguished speakers and participants included ministers and senior representatives from Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, Guinea, Moldova, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and countries from the region as well as representatives of international and regional organizations, including the World Bank Group, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC), United Nations entities, academia, and leading private-sector institutions. Overall, the discussions during the High-Level Dialogue reaffirmed the importance of strengthening international cooperation, mobilizing investment, and promoting innovation to advance a resource-efficient, resilient.

Indian navy rescues sailors on tanker ablaze off Oman

MUMBAI: Indian navy helicopters airlifted 24 sailors off a tanker on fire off the coast of Oman on Monday, New Delhi officials said, without saying what caused the blaze. India's Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways said a fire was reported at around 1:30 p.m. (0800 GMT) on the MT Marivex, a Palau-flagged tanker. "There has been a fire reported on a vessel, MT Marivex, on which there were 24 Indian seafarers... all Indian seafarers are safe," ministry director Opesh Kumar Sharma told reporters. Images posted on social media by the Forward Seamen's Union of India showed crew members being winched from the vessel by helicopter as thick black smoke billowed from its bridge and accommodation cabins. The tanker's position was shown by ship-tracking service MarineTraffic as being off the coast of Oman, south of the capital Muscat. Indian authorities did not provide details about the extent of the damage to the vessel and did not indicate what may have sparked the fire. Iran has largely blocked shipping through the Strait of Hormuz since the outbreak of war with the United States and Israel on February 28. The vital waterway normally carries about one-fifth of the world's oil and LNG shipments in peacetime.—APP

Lebanon says Israel bombed it nearly 3,500 times during ceasefire

BEIRUT: Israel has carried out nearly 3,500 air strikes on Lebanon and hundreds of controlled explosions since the US announced a ceasefire for the country on April 16, Lebanon's defense minister, Michel Menassa, said on Monday. The US-brokered ceasefire came into effect just after midnight on April 17, with Israeli troops still positioned deep inside southern Lebanon. While it has largely halted air strikes on Beirut and its suburbs, the truce has failed to halt fighting in southern Lebanon between Israel and Iran-backed armed group Hezbollah. During a cabinet meeting, Menassa said that from April 17 to June 7, Israel had carried out 3,491 air strikes, 407 controlled demolitions and six "razing" operations, or demolitions — which have left some entire villages in the southernmost strip of Lebanon entirely flattened. The statistics were later published on X by the office of Lebanon's Prime Minister Nawaf Salam.—APP

Israel intensify actions against Hezbollah

JERUSALEM: The Israeli military vowed to press ahead with its military campaign in Lebanon and said it would step up operations against Hezbollah. "The (Iranian) regime is attempting to establish a new equation through direct attacks on Israeli territory in response to IDF operations in Dahiyeh," military spokesman Brig. Gen. Effie Defrin said, in a televised statement. "We struck in Dahiyeh in response to Hezbollah's relentless attacks on the communities of northern Israel. The IDF will continue to operate throughout Lebanon and will intensify its actions against the Hezbollah terrorist organization." Hezbollah said it had launched a drone at an army post in northern Israel on Sunday, confirming an attack hours after Israel said it had struck Beirut in retaliation for cross-border fire. In a statement, the group said that "in response to the Israeli enemy's violation of the ceasefire and the attacks that struck villages in southern Lebanon ... the fighters of the Islamic Resistance targeted, at 9:30 AM on Sunday, June 7, 2026, a gathering of Israeli enemy soldiers at Doveh Barracks". An Israeli air raid on Beirut's southern suburbs on Sunday killed two people and wounded 20 more, Lebanon's health ministry said. "The Israeli enemy's air strike on the Mreijeh area in the southern suburbs of Beirut resulted in two martyrs and 20 wounded, including 4 children and 4 women," the ministry said, in a statement.—APP

Lebanon heritage site damaged by Israeli bombardment

TYRE: Lebanon Culture Minister Ghassan Salame on Monday appealed for historic sites to be spared as AFP correspondents saw damage to a World Heritage site in southern Lebanon's Tyre after Israeli bombardment. One of the oldest cities on the Mediterranean coast, Tyre lies around 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the Israeli border, and its UNESCO World Heritage-listed ruins are located in two main areas of the city. Israel's military has heavily bombed Tyre since the latest war erupted with Hezbollah. On Sunday it did so again after issuing a further evacuation warning that covered districts including one of the archaeological areas, known as the city site, which is home to Roman ruins. "I am launching an appeal to avoid the targeting of archaeological sites in the country... in particular the ruins in Tyre which are part of the heritage of humanity," Salame told AFP. AFP correspondents on Monday saw dust and debris close to ancient columns after the previous day's bombardment, as well as twisted metal and broken tree branches near several stone artefacts. Concrete and metal debris also appeared to have been strewn onto a stone staircase. Ali Badawi, the culture ministry's regional director of archaeological sites for south Lebanon, said Sunday's bombardment had had "the worst impact" on Tyre's ancient areas since the war began. "The amount of debris and damage at the site is high," he said, noting both the direct impact, with the site's administrative office struck, and the indirect impact of debris strewn from nearby bombardment. "Some archaeological artefacts were damaged when rubble fell on them, as debris fell over a large area, impacting a large number of elements at the site — columns, capitals, column bases, mosaics," he said. "This is a civilian site, a World Heritage site, it's not a military site at all, and there are no military activities there," Badawi said. He said a preliminary damage assessment was underway, noting that Tyre's other archaeological area, known as Al-Bass, had been damaged earlier in the conflict. Minister Salame said that authorities would evaluate Sunday's damage "once a ceasefire is in place and we can access the ruins without putting our archaeologists in danger." Israel "does not respect" the Hague convention on the protection of cultural property during armed conflicts, nor the "blue shields" placed for symbolic protection near the Tyre site and others by an organization linked to UNESCO after the latest conflict erupted, he said. Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the Middle East conflict on March 2 when it fired rockets at Israel to avenge the US-Israeli killing of Iran's supreme leader. Israel responded with heavy strikes and a ground invasion, killing more than 3,600 people.—APP

Briefs

Pope says conflicts pushing world into crisis

DNA

MADRID: Pope Leo said on Monday that escalating conflicts and polarization were pushing the world into a "profound spiritual and cultural crisis." In an address to Spain's parliament during a week-long tour of the country, Leo, the first US pope, also firmly reiterated his opposition to increased European military spending — calling it "troubling" — and urged help for the world's migrants. The pontiff also called for a global response to the "tragic drama" of migration, saying there should be a "respectful welcome" for migrants. "The tragic drama of migration ... challenges the conscience of nations and the ethical foundation of the international order today," he said. He told the Spanish parliament that there should be "safe and legal pathways, a respectful welcome and real opportunities for integration."

Maritime affairs minister contradicts Dar on hostages

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Maritime Affairs Minister Junaid Anwar Chaudhry held a telephone call with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Monday regarding the release of Pakistani seamen taken hostage by Somali pirates, a statement by Chaudhry's ministry said. The seamen were taken hostage more than a month ago when armed pirates hijacked the MT Honour 25 off the southeastern coast of Somalia on April 21. There were 11 Pakistanis among the vessel's crew, who remain in the pirates' captivity. A statement by the Maritime Affairs Ministry said that Chaudhry had called Dar and also contacted Pakistan's envoy in Somalia on the matter. "Need to expedite efforts for the fast and safe release of the Pakistani crew was stressed," the statement read.

Talks in Cairo on Gaza ceasefire

DNA

CAIRO: Talks on advancing the fragile Gaza ceasefire have begun in Cairo between mediators and Palestinian factions, a Palestinian source familiar with the meeting told AFP. The discussions, which started Sunday and are set to resume Monday, come as violence continues to plague the territory despite the truce in place since October.

Pakistan highly vulnerable to climate change, says UK HC

Climate finance accelerator supports 11 climate businesses

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Eleven Pakistani businesses have been selected for the 2026 cohort of Climate Finance Accelerator (CFA) Pakistan, a UK-funded programme helping climate-focused businesses access investment and scale solutions that support Pakistan's low-carbon transition. The programme has supported more than 230 projects globally, unlocking over US\$500 million in investment to date, including up to US\$40 million in Pakistan. The businesses were selected for their potential to deliver climate impact while supporting Pakistan's low-carbon transition across energy, transport, waste and circular economy, agriculture, buildings and construction, and financial inclusion. The programme forms part of the UK's wider support for climate resilience, green growth and private sector investment in Pakistan. British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, said: "Pakistan is highly vulnerable to climate change, but it also has the talent and ideas to lead climate innovation. Through the Climate Finance Accelerator, the UK is helping promising Pakistani businesses turn ambition into investment — backing jobs, growth and a cleaner, more resilient future." Each business will receive up to five months of group and one-to-one support from financial, technical and gender equality, disability and inclusion experts to help increase their chances of securing investment. They will also pitch



their projects at an event for climate investors to be held in October 2026, building their network of potential financiers and receiving tailored technical feedback. Since launching in 2022, CFA Pakistan has supported 22 projects towards commercial deal-making, mobilising around US\$40 million in investment, including for Davaam Life, Shams Power, Concept Loop and National Foods. The selected businesses are: Go Seed IT Pvt. Ltd., Biowaste Energy Ventures Pvt. Ltd., Bioenergy Solution Pvt. Ltd., A.S. Enterprises, Trash It, Sahara Recycling Pvt. Ltd., Waste Busters Pvt. Ltd. / EnterTech Labs Pvt., EcoEdge AI, Daewoo Pakistan Express Bus Service Limited, Buscaro Technologies Holding PTE LIMITED, and Akhuwat Islamic Microfinance. Vardah Malik, Team Lead at Climate Finance Accelerator said: "We are delighted to welcome the first cohort of the Climate Finance Accelerator (CFA) Pakistan. The selected businesses showcase the depth of climate innovation emerging across the country and represent a strong mix of startups and growth-stage enterprises operating in sectors critical to Pakistan's sustainable development and climate transition. Through tailored technical assistance on finance, climate and environmental management, and GEDSI, we will support these companies in strengthening their investment readiness and scaling their impact. We are grateful for the support of the UK Government in helping unlock opportunities for innovative businesses that can drive both economic growth and climate action in Pakistan."

Earthquake of magnitude 7.8 strikes off southern Philippine

DNA

MANILA: At least 15 people were feared dead in the southern Philippines on Monday after a powerful magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck off the island of Mindanao, triggering tsunami warnings across several countries. The quake came early in the morning as schools were reopening in the Philippines after a long break, with the tremors felt strongly in a dozen provinces and 420 km (261 miles) away in the city of Manado on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. Tsunami alerts were issued in the southern Philippines, northern Indonesia and the Malaysian state of Sabah on Borneo island after the quake with an epicentre located about 20km (12.4 miles) off Mindanao's Sarangani province. Philippine authorities were assessing the damage from the quake.

PSX falls as Middle East tensions, oil spike hit sentiment

KSE-100 Index touches an intraday low of 168,432.45, falling 2,046.49 points, or 1.2%

DNA

KARACHI: The bourse came under selling pressure on Monday as renewed Middle East escalation pushed crude prices higher, fuelling concerns over Pakistan's external account, interest-rate outlook and pre-budget uncertainty. During the session, Pakistan Stock Exchange's benchmark KSE-100 Index touched an intraday high of 169,360.54, down 1,118.4 points, or 0.66%, and a low of 168,432.45, reflecting a fall of 2,046.49 points, or 1.2%, from the previous close of 170,478.94. "PSX slide over 1% owing to Iran escalation and worsening Middle East tensions," said Ahsan Mehanti, Managing Director and CEO of Arif Habib Commodities. "Pre-budget uncertainty and investor expectations for a surge in global crude oil prices impact the external account, and a possible interest rate hike played a catalyst role in the selling pressure at PSX," he added. Brent oil prices jumped more than \$3 a barrel on

Monday, initially spooked by Israel's launch of renewed strikes on Lebanon a day earlier, before gaining further steam after sounds of explosions were heard in Iran. Local media reported sounds of blasts in Tehran, Tabriz and Isfahan early on Monday, eroding hopes for an imminent end to the wider war and a restart of crude flows through the Strait of Hormuz. Brent crude futures rose \$3.20, or 3.39%, to \$96.24 a barrel, while US crude futures were up \$2.87, or 3.17%, at \$93.41 per barrel as of 0333 GMT. The gains erased Friday's losses, when prices fell on hopes of de-escalation in the US-Iran conflict, which has pushed oil prices more than 50% higher since March. Iran on Sunday fired a salvo of missiles at Israeli targets in retaliation, though US President Donald Trump insisted that an agreement to end the wider war remained within reach. Trump also reportedly told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to refrain from further attacks, telling the Financial Times: "It's not going to have any impact on the deal". Asian stocks also plunged on Monday as investors exited AI-linked shares amid concerns that the bull run had moved too far, too fast, while fresh hostilities in Iran pushed oil prices higher.

Proposed tax relief package awaits IMF approval ahead of FY27 budget

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government is awaiting the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) approval for a proposed package of tax relief measures, including cuts for salaried individuals and businesses, while negotiating new revenue-raising steps ahead of the 2026-27 federal budget. Among the key proposals under discussion are lower income tax slabs for salaried individuals, a two-percentage-point cut in the Super Tax, withdrawal of 1% advance income tax on exporters and substantial incentives aimed at reviving the property sector. At the same time, the policymakers are weighing plans to increase the General

Sales Tax (GST) to the standard 18% rate on solar panels, hybrid vehicles and nearly two dozen other products as part of efforts to boost revenue collection. Pakistan has also approached the IMF to retain the concessional GST regime for electric vehicles (EVs), arguing that the measure supports energy conservation goals and aligns with commitments under the \$1.4 billion Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF) programme. Top officials confirmed that it was becoming harder for the government to undertake number-crunching with the IMF to raise the tax collection target to Rs15,264 billion in the Fiscal Year 2026-27 after revising downward the tax collection target of Rs13,428 billion for the outgoing fiscal year ending on June 30, 2026.

China's Xi in North Korea on a rare visit

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: China's President Xi Jinping hailed an "invincible friendship" with Pyongyang as he arrived in North Korea on Monday, his first trip abroad this year after hosting back-to-back summits in Beijing. China, Washington's chief geopolitical rival, has been North Korea's main trading partner by far for decades and a key source of diplomatic and economic support for the country hit by multiple international sanctions. Military officers lined a red carpet as an Air China plane carrying Xi arrived for his first visit since 2019, video from Xinhua showed. A banner that read "We warmly welcome Comrade Xi Jinping" and hailing the two countries' "unbreakable friendship" hung below Chinese and North Korean flags at the airport. Xi made the trip after hosting US President Donald Trump and Russia's Vladimir Putin separately in Beijing, and as North Korea's nuclear talks with Washington remain deadlocked. The White House said last month that Xi and Trump "confirmed their shared goal to denuclearise North Korea" during their summit in Beijing. However, leader Kim Jong Un's powerful sister said on the eve of Xi's arrival that North Korea's nuclear weapons programme was "the line of no retreat".

Fewer Americans see their country as exceptional

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: As the US prepares for an extravagant celebration of its founding principles, fewer Americans see their country as exceptional, a new poll finds. The survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research highlights many Americans' feeling of unease over the future of its representative government — particularly among young people. It presents a jarring contrast as communities around the country commemorate the nation's 250th anniversary. Only about one-quarter of Americans say the US stands above all other countries in the world, the new poll found, while 44 percent say it's one of the greatest countries in the world, along with some others. About 3 in 10 say there are better countries than the US, an increase from 19 percent in an AP-NORC poll conducted in June 2016. Americans remain divided about whether diversity is an essential feature of the US's identity, and agreement about other aspects of the country's underlying character appears to be eroding, the survey found. Americans are less likely to see a democratically elected government as "extremely" or "very" important to the United States' identity as a nation than they were just a few years ago. About two-thirds of US adults now say a democratically elected government is highly important to the US's identity as a nation, down from 80 percent in 2021. "It's not that the democracy part is not working," said Derricka Wall, 24, of Chickasaw, Alabama. "It's the people that are actually being put in office that is the problem." Wall believes politicians have damaged America's governing system, which was designed to ensure representation and guard against government misuse. America, she said, "is not what it used to be. I feel like our founding fathers would be kind of disappointed with how it is now." Rising belief that democracy is not essential to American identity Young adults are much less likely than older Americans to believe the US is special, compared with other nations, the poll found. About 4 in 10, 44 percent, of US adults under 30 say there are other countries better than the US, compared with 22 percent of US adults ages 60 and older.

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SCAN TO VISIT WEBSITE

Pakistan, Uzbekistan to boost film and media cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Attaullah Tarar met with Uzbekistan's Ambassador Alisher

Tukhtaev to discuss strengthening collaboration in the fields of film production, media, and cultural exchange. During the meeting, both sides explored opportunities for joint projects, including short films,

documentaries, and drama series. Minister Tarar emphasized the importance of involving experienced production houses and highlighted that large-scale projects could be advanced through joint funding initiatives. The Uzbek ambassador praised Pakistan's role in promoting peace in the region, particularly through the Islamabad Peace Talks. Minister Tarar reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to deepening ties with Uzbekistan, noting that the two countries share a rich history and cultural heritage that should be showcased through collaborative efforts. The meeting also underscored the need to enhance cooperation between media organizations, strengthen connections between social media teams, and develop integrated digital promotional strategies. Both sides agreed to facilitate journalist exchange programs, which would serve as an important step in broadening mutual understanding. Minister Tarar reiterated Pakistan's resolve to give new dimensions to cultural and media relations with Uzbekistan, ensuring that the partnership reflects the shared values and heritage of both nations.

