



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan ware of Indian evil designs, says Asim Iftikhar

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Relations with China on the move: Tarar

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Yousaf Gilani for stronger role in budget plans

Detailed News On Page-02

Russian envoy lauds Pakistan's balanced role on Ukraine issue

Khorev also criticized what he called the "double standards" of Western governments and international organizations, accusing them of ignoring civilian casualties in Starobils while swiftly condemning Russia's retaliatory strikes

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: At an extraordinary briefing held at the Russian Embassy on June 9, Ambassador A.P. Khorev strongly condemned recent attacks in Starobils and other regions, describing them as "terrorist acts" by the Kyiv regime. He



said the tragedy in Starobils, where dozens of students lost their lives, had become a turning point in Russia's military response. While outlining Moscow's position on the conflict, Ambassador Khorev took special note of Pakistan's approach. He lauded Islamabad's role, saying that Pakistan has adopted a balanced and sensitive stance on the Russia-Ukraine issue. "Pakistan understands the sensitivity of the matter and has shown a constructive, neutral position. Russia values its relations with Pakistan and appreciates this responsible approach," the envoy remarked. The Ambassador emphasized that Russia had formally communicated its warnings to foreign missions, including Pakistan, regarding the security situation in Kyiv. He praised the seriousness with which Islamabad received these warnings, underscoring that Pakistan's diplomacy reflects prudence and maturity. Khorev also criticized what he called the "double standards" of Western governments and international organizations, accusing them of ignoring civilian casualties in Starobils while swiftly condemning Russia's retaliatory strikes. He noted that Moscow had invited foreign journalists, including representatives from Pakistan, to witness the aftermath of the Starobils attack firsthand. The envoy further highlighted Russia's commitment to maintaining safe operations at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant despite repeated drone attacks. He warned that provocations against nuclear safety posed risks not only to the region but to the entire world. Ambassador Khorev concluded by reaffirming Russia's desire to strengthen ties with Pakistan, particularly in the context of evolving global alignments. "Our relations with Pakistan are based on mutual respect and shared understanding. We see Pakistan as a valued partner in the region," he said.

Imran sisters denied meeting again

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Sisters of Imran Khan and PTI leaders were again not allowed to meet the former premier in Adiala Jail on Tuesday. The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has allowed the incarcerated ex-premier to have twice-a-week meetings — on Tuesdays and Thursdays — with his family, lawyers and other associates. Despite the order, Imran has been restricted from meeting visitors for several months. Imran's sisters — Aleema Khan, Uzma Khan and Noreen Niazi — along with lawyers Awais Younis and Faisal Malik, and leaders Zafar Gondal, Seemab Tahir, Usman Jaura, Nadia Khattak, Sadaf Abbasi and others were present outside the jail. Aleema, speaking to the media, claimed that during the past three years, Pakistan had been in turmoil as Imran remained in jail.

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US judge blocks Trump's \$100,000 fee for H-1B visas

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: A United States federal judge has blocked a controversial Trump administration rule that would have required a \$100,000 fee for each new H-1B visa application, it emerged on Tuesday. US President Donald Trump had ordered the annual fee be added to H-1B skilled worker visas in September 2025. H-1B visas allow companies to sponsor foreign workers with specialised skills — such as scientists, engineers, and computer programmers — to work in the US, initially for three years, but extendable to six years.

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UK, allies condemn settler violence

DNA

LONDON: DUK and allies condemn settler violence in West Bank amid 'deteriorating' situation Britain and the foreign ministers of Australia, Canada, France and Norway said on Tuesday they had taken coordinated action to hold extremist Israeli settlers accountable in response to what they described as a deteriorating situation in the West Bank. After issuing new sanctions earlier on Tuesday, the group of countries warned that they stood ready to take further measures if the Israeli government failed to take urgent steps to address

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RAWALPINDI: General Rodolphe Haykal, Commander-in-Chief of the Lebanese Armed Forces, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, COAS & CDF, at General Headquarters (GHQ). — DNA

Amidst Middle East tension

Field Marshal, Lebanese army chief discuss security environment

Both sides explore ways to expand military cooperation and training, says military's media wing

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Lebanese Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief General Rodolphe Haykal discussed the evolving regional security environment and defence cooperation during a meeting at General Headquarters (GHQ) on Tuesday. Upon his arrival at GHQ, General Haykal was presented a guard of honour by a smartly turned-out tri-services contingent, according to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). During the meeting, the two military leaders exchanged views on matters of mutual interest, the regional security situation, defence cooperation and prospects for enhancing bilateral military relations. The discussions focused on strengthening professional interactions, training cooperation and institutional linkages between the armed forces of Pakistan and Lebanon. Field Marshal Munir reaffirmed the importance Pakistan attaches to its longstanding and cordial relations with Lebanon

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Bahraini commander lauds Pak role

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The commander of the Bahrain National Guard on Tuesday praised Pakistan's Armed Forces' contribution towards regional peace and stability, expressing interest in further cooperation in training and capacity-building initiatives. The remarks came as General Shaikh Mohammad Bin Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa called on the tri-services chiefs separately during his visit to Pakistan, according to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). The Bahraini commander met Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Asim Munir

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Day of Portugal in Islamabad celebrates growing ties

Portugal's Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Paulo Guedes Domingues, honored Luís de Camões, the literary giant

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Portugal in Islamabad commemorated the Day of Portugal, Camões and Portuguese Communities with a spirited tribute to the nation's history, language, and global diaspora, while underscoring the deepening ties between Portugal and Pakistan. Chinese business insights In a statement marking the occasion, Portugal's Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Paulo Guedes Domingues, honored Luís de Camões, the literary giant whose work embodies Portugal's legacy of openness, discovery, and intercultural dialogue. The Ambassador extended special gratitude to Portuguese citizens living abroad, noting that their talent and dedication serve as valuable bridges between peoples and nations. "Through their dedication,

talent and commitment, they strengthen Portugal's presence in the world," he said. Celebrating the day in Pakistan held particular significance, Ambassador Domingues noted, as the two countries share a rich, though geographically distant, history of exchanges. He highlighted the growing human dimension of the relationship, pointing to a rising number of Portuguese citizens of Pakistani origin who are making meaningful contributions to Portuguese society. "Their presence reflects the close links that unite our countries and serves as a living bridge between Portugal and Pakistan, strengthening mutual understanding and friendship," the Ambassador stated. Kashmir conflict analysis According to the Ambassador, bilateral relations have expanded positively in recent years across political dialogue,

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Briefs

At least 8 killed in Lebanon

DNA

BEIRUT: At least eight individuals have been killed in Lebanon's southern city of Tyre on Tuesday, Al Jazeera reported, after the Israeli military for first time warned the entire city to evacuate ahead of strikes. "Enemy warplanes launched a heavy strike on Tyre," the state-run National News Agency said. A correspondent in the city had earlier seen remaining residents fleeing and heavy traffic heading north. Earlier, at least four people have been killed in Israeli strikes in southern Lebanon, Al Jazeera reported, citing the country's NNA. Imad Ahmad Yassin (owner of Yassin Poultry Farms) was killed in an airstrike that targeted his farm in the town of Adshit. Osama Hassan Al-Khaled, a 16-year-old, was killed in a drone strike that targeted him in front of his house in the Al-Sharifa neighbourhood of town of Haboush.

Cross-border terrorism 6 personnel martyred as terrorists attempt to capture Frontier Constabulary post

Islamabad has repeatedly urged the Taliban administration to dismantle terrorist sanctuaries on Afghan soil, particularly those linked to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Officials say those appeals have gone unheeded

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Six Frontier Constabulary (FCN) personnel were martyred and four were injured while responding to an attempt by terrorists to capture a post in Peshawar's Hassan Khel area on Monday, sources told Dawn. The sources said that three FCN personnel were being held hostage by terrorists. Eight terrorists have also been killed in retaliatory action by FCN personnel, and the attempt to capture the post was foiled, according to sources. The sources said that security force personnel also reached the site of the incident, and they have cordoned off the area. The action against terrorists by security forces was ongoing, they said. There has been a resurgence in terrorism in Pakistan since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in Kabul in 2021. Islamabad has repeatedly urged the Taliban administration to dismantle terrorist sanctuaries on Afghan soil, particularly those linked to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

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Fourteen terrorists killed in IBO

Military says vehicles, IEDs being used by Fitna al-Hindustan militants were also destroyed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Security forces neutralised 14 India-backed terrorists during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Balochistan's Basima district, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Tuesday. The IBO was carried out by the security forces in the Naal area of Basima district on June 8, 2026, after receiving reports about the presence of militants belonging to the Indian proxy, Fitna al-Hindustan, the military's media wing said. On receipt of the information, swift action was undertaken by security forces and an IBO was launched to thwart

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RPO directs cops to enhance cleanliness standard

RAWALPINDI: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Rawalpindi Region, Babar Sarfraz Alpa, has directed police officials to improve cleanliness standards at police stations and ensure courteous, citizen-friendly policing during visits to Gujjar Khan and Mandra police stations. Accompanied by relevant officers, the RPO inspected various sections of both police stations, including the buildings, lock-ups, front desks, stores, and other operational facilities. He reviewed administrative and service delivery standards and issued instructions aimed at improving public facilitation. During the inspection, Babar Sarfraz Alpa emphasized that citizens visiting police stations must be treated with dignity, respect, and professionalism. He directed officers to listen to public complaints attentively and ensure timely resolution of their issues. The RPO warned that any rude, inappropriate, or inhumane behaviour towards citizens would not be tolerated under any circumstances. He also instructed officers to further improve cleanliness and maintain a welcoming environment at police stations. In addition, the RPO stressed the need for effective crime control, directing police officers to ensure the arrest of suspects involved in serious crimes and conduct investigations strictly on merit. The visits were part of ongoing efforts by the Rawalpindi Police to strengthen public trust, improve service delivery, and enhance operational efficiency across the region.—APP

Two women over alleged honey-trap network held

ATTOCK: Bahter Police have arrested two women on allegations of filing a false gang-rape complaint and operating a honey-trap scheme allegedly used to blackmail and extort money from citizens, police officials said on Tuesday. According to police sources, the action was initiated after Bahter Police received an emergency call reporting an alleged gang-rape incident. A police team immediately responded to the complaint, reached the scene, and commenced legal proceedings in accordance with standard operating procedures. Investigators subsequently examined available evidence and recorded statements from relevant individuals as part of the inquiry. Police officials stated that the initial allegation was found to be unfounded during the course of a detailed investigation. Further inquiries allegedly revealed that a woman identified as Nabeela Akhtar, along with an accomplice, had been involved in trapping and blackmailing individuals to extort money. Investigators also claimed that the suspects had previously been linked to the registration of similar cases at different police stations. Based on the findings, Bahter Police registered a case against both women and took them into custody. Officials said the accused are being presented before a court along with the evidence collected during the investigation for further legal proceedings.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar with others envoys and SCO members cutting cake to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, alongside resident ambassadors of the SCO member states in Pakistan

Gilani calls for stronger Senate role in budget oversight

The Senate chairman highlighted the upper house's role in reviewing budgetary matters and said constitutional limitations should be viewed as an opportunity to improve institutional effectiveness

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Tuesday called for stronger parliamentary oversight of public finances, saying an effective scrutiny of the budget was essential for transparency, accountability, and democratic governance. Addressing a knowledge-sharing seminar on strengthening the Senate's budgetary review, organised by the Senate of Pakistan in collaboration with Forum of Federations and Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services, he said the "power of the purse" remained Parliament's oldest and most important respon-

sibility. Referring to the historical foundations of parliamentary financial oversight, Gilani stressed that public resources must be managed transparently and in the public interest. The Senate chairman highlighted the upper house's role in reviewing budgetary matters and said constitutional limitations should be viewed as an opportunity to improve institutional effectiveness. He added that the Senate's recommendations on Money Bills played an important role in providing policy guidance and strengthening fiscal oversight. Recalling the "Eighteenth Constitutional Amendment", introduced during his tenure as prime minister, Gi-

lani said the reform strengthened the federal spirit of the Constitution and enhanced the Senate's institutional role. He also stressed the need for stronger committee oversight, timely access to reliable fiscal data, and greater technical support for lawmakers. Referring to international best practices, he cited parliamentary budget oversight models he observed during visits to Austria and Ireland.

Gilani expressed confidence that the seminar would help improve the Senate's budget review process, strengthen committee performance, and enhance parliamentary scrutiny to promote better governance and public trust.

Seminar on China-Pak joint contributions to global governance initiative held

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with Xinhua News Agency, on Tuesday hosted a commemorative seminar titled "75 Years of Friendship: China-Pakistan Joint Contributions to the Global Governance Initiative and CPEC" here. The seminar brought together federal ministers, senior diplomats, scholars, media representatives, and practitioners from Pakistan and China to mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations and to reflect on the evolving trajectory of the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, said a press release. In his video message, Mr. Fu Hua, President of Xinhua News Agency, extended felicitations to Pakistan and China on the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations and reaffirmed the enduring strength of the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership. He noted that both countries have consistently supported each other through changing international circumstances, setting a model of state-to-state relations based on mutual trust, solidarity, and shared interests. He emphasized that the Global Governance Initiative (GGI), as envisioned by President Xi Jinping, promotes a more equitable and inclusive international order, and highlighted CPEC as a practical embodiment of these principles through infrastructure development, connectivity, energy cooperation, and regional prosperity. He also underlined the important role of media and think tanks in enhancing mutual understanding and strengthening people-to-people ties. In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG ISSI, described Pakistan-China relations as an all-weather strategic cooperative partnership anchored in mutual trust, sovereign equality, and consistent support for each other's core interests. He emphasized that the partnership has become an important pillar of regional peace and stability. Highlighting CPEC as a flagship project of Belt and Road cooperation, he noted its major contributions to Pakistan's energy security, infrastructure development, and connectivity. He further stated that CPEC Phase-II will focus on industrial cooperation, agricultural modernization, SEZs, green development, innovation, and people-centric socio-economic uplift. The Chief Guest, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, in his keynote address, described Pakistan-China relations as a unique and exemplary strategic partnership built on trust and mutual support. He highlighted CPEC as the most visible manifestation of this friendship and a key driver of Pakistan's socio-economic transformation, contributing to energy security, infrastructure modernization, and enhanced regional connectivity. He outlined CPEC Phase-II priorities under five strategic corridors: Growth, Livelihood, Innovation, Green Development, and Opening-Up and Regional Connectivity, emphasizing high-quality and inclusive development. Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar, also addressed the occasion. H.E. Jiang Zaidong, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, in his keynote address, termed the 75th anniversary a major milestone in bilateral relations, underscoring sustained high-level exchanges and deepening strategic trust.—DNA

RCCI delegation, DG CCRA discuss business opportunities

The meeting concluded with a mutual commitment to continue collaboration and engage stakeholders in promoting innovation, investment, and economic diversification in Pakistan

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A delegation of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), led by President Usman Shaukat and Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi, met with Director General of the Cannabis Control and Regulatory Authority (CCRA), Major General (Retd.) Zafarullah Khan, to discuss opportunities for investment and economic growth in emerging sectors. Director Operations CCRA, Asif Haroon, along with his team, was also present during the meeting. The discussions focused on exploring business opportunities in the cannabis and other

emerging sectors, promoting investment, strengthening regulatory cooperation, and initiating collaborative efforts aimed at supporting Pakistan's economic development. Both sides emphasized the importance of creating awareness regarding the regulatory framework governing the sector and highlighted the need to organize seminars, workshops, and awareness sessions across the country to facilitate informed policymaking and stakeholder engagement. The participants agreed that the development of new economic sectors through an effective regulatory framework, active private-sector participation, and investor-friendly policies can significantly

contribute to economic growth, attract investment, and generate employment opportunities. Speaking on the occasion, RCCI President Usman Shaukat reiterated the Chamber's commitment to supporting initiatives that promote economic development, investment, and sustainable business growth. He assured the CCRA of the business community's full cooperation in advancing emerging industries and creating a conducive environment for investors. The meeting concluded with a mutual commitment to continue collaboration and engage stakeholders in promoting innovation, investment, and economic diversification in Pakistan.

Olive oil sensory panel training launched at NARC

ISLAMABAD: In a major step toward strengthening Pakistan's presence in the global olive industry following its accession to the International Olive Council (IOC), the inaugural session of a five-day Master Training on Olive Oil Sensory Evaluation and Panel Tasting was held at the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC), Islamabad. The training programme marks the beginning of a strategic initiative aimed at establishing Pakistan's first Olive Oil Sensory Evaluation and Tasting Panel, enhancing the country's capacity to assess olive oil quality in line with internationally recognized standards. Addressing the inaugural session, Italian Ambassador to Pakistan Mariolina Armellini reaffirmed Italy's commitment to supporting the development of Pakistan's olive sector. Referring to Pakistan's recent accession to the IOC, she emphasized the importance of building local expertise and adopting internationally accepted quality standards to strengthen the country's position within the global olive community. A significant highlight of the event was the presentation of the recently approved Pakistan National Olive Value

Chain Policy along with its Implementation Strategy and Road Map to Ambassador Armellini. The policy, developed through extensive consultations and technical support from the OliveCulture Scale-Up Project, represents a major milestone in the sustainable development of Pakistan's olive industry. The policy provides a comprehensive framework for governance, quality assurance, research, value addition, and market development, and is expected to play a key role in enhancing the long-term growth, competitiveness, and international recognition of Pakistan's olive sector. Additional Secretary, Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Alia Shahid, also attended the event and praised the remarkable progress achieved by the olive industry. She acknowledged the longstanding partnership between Pakistan and Italy, noting that continued collaboration and institutional support have been instrumental in strengthening technical capacities and creating new opportunities for sustainable growth across the olive value chain. The five-day training programme, conducted in

accordance with IOC standards, has brought together participants from across Pakistan representing a wide range of institutions and technical backgrounds. The initiative seeks to transform Pakistan's first National Reference Laboratory for Olive Oil Sensory Analysis into a fully operational centre of excellence while establishing a sustainable foundation for national sensory panels and quality assurance systems. Through the development of a highly qualified pool of sensory experts, the programme aims to promote olive oil knowledge and culture while enabling Pakistan to meet internationally recognized quality benchmarks. With stronger institutions, advanced technical expertise, and internationally aligned quality systems, Pakistan's olive sector is entering a new phase of development. The training programme is being viewed as another milestone in the enduring partnership between Pakistan and Italy, one that is increasingly translating scientific cooperation into economic opportunities and enhanced global competitiveness.—DNA

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

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
- June 17/Iceland National Day
- June 18/Seychells National Day
- June 25/Croatia National Day
- June 25/Mozambique National Day
- June 26/Azerbaijan Army Day

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- RGH.....9290301-7
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Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Italian ambassador pays farewell call on FM Dar

During the meeting, Senator Dar congratulated Ambassador Armellini on a successful tenure and commended her efforts to strengthen Pakistan-Italy relations

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Italian Ambassador Marilina Armellini paid a farewell call on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in Islamabad on June 9, 2026. During the meeting, Senator Dar congratulated Ambassador Armellini on a successful tenure and commended her efforts to strengthen Pakistan-Italy relations. He highlighted the growing cooperation between the two countries in trade, investment, education, and labour mobility, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to further elevate bilateral ties. Ambassador Armellini expressed her gratitude for the support extended during her stay in Pakistan and appreciated the progress achieved in bilateral relations. The meeting concluded with Senator Dar extending his best wishes to Ambassador Armellini for her future endeavours.



Seminar on Pak-Russia bilateral ties held at ISSI

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with the University of World Civilizations, Moscow, organized a high-level webinar titled "Pakistan-Russia Bilateral Relations at the Cusp of a Shifting Global Order," on Tuesday. The webinar brought together senior policymakers, diplomats, scholars, media professionals, and strategic experts from Pakistan and Russia to examine the evolving trajectory of bilateral relations and explore avenues for enhanced cooperation in an increasingly multipolar world. Delivering the inaugural remarks, Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director, Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP), ISSI, highlighted the significance of Pakistan-Russia engagement amid rapidly changing regional and global dynamics. She emphasized that the objective of the webinar was not only to deepen strategic understanding between the two countries but also to

strengthen public diplomacy, academic exchanges, media cooperation, and people-to-people contacts. The Chief Guest of the event, Federal Minister for Energy, Sardar Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari, described Pakistan-Russia relations as a steadily strengthening partnership that has made significant progress over the past two decades. He noted that this progress has taken place against the backdrop of a rapidly evolving global landscape characterized by shifting power dynamics, technological advancements, geopolitical competition, and the emergence of new economic centres. He highlighted the expansion of bilateral cooperation across energy, trade, industry, defence, education, science and technology, and people-to-people exchanges, supported by increasing high-level engagements and the work of the Pakistan-Russia Intergovernmental Commission. The Minister also emphasized growing coordination between the two countries through the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, welcomed

discussions on Pakistan's participation in the International North-South Transport Corridor and its possible connection to Gwadar Port, and noted the importance of the Programme of Economic Cooperation between Pakistan and Russia up to 2030. He concluded that both countries are well placed to promote regional stability, economic integration, and a more balanced international order. In his keynote address, Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Pakistan's Ambassador to the Russian Federation, described the current period as a defining moment in international politics. He underscored the growing importance of Moscow in shaping emerging geopolitical and economic trends and highlighted the increasing diplomatic engagement between Pakistan and Russia. He expressed confidence that connectivity projects, economic cooperation, and political coordination would continue to strengthen bilateral relations and contribute to a more inclusive and balanced regional order.

Dialogue among civilizations imperative for peaceful resolution

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Tuesday said that fostering mutual respect, tolerance and constructive engagement among diverse cultures, civilizations, and nations was indispensable for global peace, stability and shared prosperity. He said that in the prevailing global scenario, dialogue, diplomacy and mutual cooperation, rather than confrontation were the need of the hour for the peaceful resolution of differences and disputes. He made these remarks in his message issued on the occasion of the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations, observed worldwide on June 10 each year. Ayaz Sadiq emphasized that Pakistan has consistently championed the cause of global peace, interfaith harmony, tolerance and mutual respect at the international level. He said that contemporary security, economic and environmental challenges facing the global community could only be effectively and sustainably addressed through collective efforts, parliamentary diplomacy and constructive engagement. Ayaz Sadiq said that parliaments, being the true representatives of the people, could play a pivotal role in promoting harmony, respect and cordial relations among nations. He highlighted that the 103 Parliamentary Friendship Groups established in the National Assembly were actively contributing to strengthening ties with parliaments around the world, enhancing mutual understanding, fostering trust and respect, and advancing shared development and sustainable peace. Referring to Pakistan's diplomatic role, Ayaz Sadiq said that during recent tensions in the Middle East, Pakistan, as a responsible and peace-loving state, played a constructive and proactive role in promoting dialogue and understanding between East and West.—APP

Crackdown intensified on quackery, illegal syringe sales

RAWALPINDI: District Health Authority (DHA) Rawalpindi has intensified its crackdown against quackery and the illegal sale of syringes. A coordinated "one team" approach will be implemented to strengthen enforcement against unlawful medical practices. The decision was taken at a high-level meeting held at the DHA office in line with directives of the Punjab Chief Minister and the Health and Population Welfare Department. The meeting was chaired by Tahira Aurangzeb, MNA who stressed that public health protection remained the government's top priority and said that no compromise would be made on illegal medical practices. She observed that strict and transparent enforcement was essential to safeguard citizens, adding that relevant departments must ensure effective field coordination to eliminate quackery from the district. CEO Health Dr Ehsan Ghani said that action against illegal practitioners was being intensified across Rawalpindi and said that detailed data of ongoing enforcement operations had been presented before the participants.—APP

Air crash amounts to culpable homicide, not murder: SC

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has ruled that an air crash caused by negligence or a technical malfunction, resulting in loss of life, falls within the category of culpable homicide rather than murder, as such incidents lack the intention or knowledge (mens rea) required for a charge of murder. A two-member bench comprising Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan and Justice Shakeel Ahmad allowed an appeal in a case relating to the 2012 Bhoja Air Flight B4-213 crash and set aside the judgment of the Islamabad High Court in its written verdict, the court noted that following the crash of Bhoja Air Flight B4-213 on April 20, 2012, cases were registered at Korla Police Station, Islamabad, under various provisions of the Pakistan Penal Code, including Section 302 (murder). However, after receiving the challan, the trial court first examined the legal question of whether the allegations constituted murder or culpable homicide.—APP

Martial Arts Get PMYP backing in youth uplift push

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) and the Pakistan Mixed Martial Arts Federation (PMMAF) on Tuesday signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) at the Prime Minister's Office to promote youth development through sports, particularly Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), with the aim of creating new opportunities for young Pakistanis at national and international levels. The agreement was signed during a meeting chaired by PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan and attended by PMYP Deputy Director Amsal Zaman, PMMAF President Babar Qayyum Raja and representatives of both organisations. Under the partnership, PMYP and PMMAF will collaborate

to strengthen the country's sports ecosystem by identifying and nurturing young talent, organising national MMA championships, conducting training camps and capacity building programmes, and supporting athletes for international competitions. Speaking on the occasion, Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan said sports play a vital role in channeling the energy of youth towards discipline, leadership, fitness and national service. He said the initiative aligns with the government's commitment to empowering young people through the PMYP's four pronged framework of Education, Employment, Engagement and Environment. The two organisations also agreed to launch aware-

ness campaigns promoting healthy lifestyles and anti drug initiatives, while encouraging greater youth participation in structured and internationally recognised sporting activities. As part of the collaboration, PMMAF will support government led initiatives, including Bunyan-ul-Marsoos, and undertake community engagement programmes aimed at fostering patriotism, social responsibility and national pride among young people. PMMAF President Babar Qayyum Raja, who is designated as the focal person for MMA-related matters under the agreement, said the partnership would help provide a professional pathway for aspiring athletes.—APP

PUBLIC NOTICE



I, Ali Sher Janjua, son of Muhammad Azeem Janjua, hereby state that my father's name has been mistakenly recorded as "Muhammad Azeem Janjua" in my educational records, whereas his correct and complete name is "Muhammad Azeem Janjua".

My age is 19 years. I have passed my Matriculation examination from the Rawalpindi Board under Roll Number 124182 in the year 2022 (First Annual). And I have passed my Intermediate examination under Roll Number 817182 in the year 2024 (Second Annual).

No brother or sister of mine has any objection to this correction in my father's name from "Muhammad Azeem Janjua" to "Muhammad Azeem Janjua". In the future, my father's name should be written, recorded, and addressed as "Muhammad Azeem Janjua" in all educational records and documents.

Name: Ali Sher Janjua
Residential Address: Mohallah Ibrahim Town, Ibelum

PUBLIC NOTICE



I, Usama Azeem Janjua, son of Muhammad Azeem Janjua, hereby state that my father's name has been mistakenly recorded as "Muhammad Azeem" in my educational records, whereas his correct and complete name is "Muhammad Azeem Janjua".

My age is 18 years. I have passed my Matriculation examination from the Rawalpindi Board under Roll Number 132626 in the year 2023 (First Annual). And I have passed my Intermediate examination under Roll Number 710565 in the year 2025 (First Annual).

No brother or sister of mine has any objection to this correction in my father's name from "Muhammad Azeem" to "Muhammad Azeem Janjua". In the future, my father's name should be written, recorded, and addressed as "Muhammad Azeem Janjua" in all educational records and documents.

Name: Usama Azeem Janjua
Residential Address: Mohallah Ibrahim Town, Ibelum



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Briefs

Diabetes cases rising due to lifestyle changes

ISLAMABAD: Experts on Tuesday expressed concern over the rising burden of diabetes in Pakistan, attributing it to lifestyle changes and low physical activity, while acknowledging government efforts to improve prevention and healthcare response. Speaking to PTV News, diabetes expert Dr Maryum Aziz warned that its rapid rise is strongly linked to unhealthy lifestyle habits, including poor diet, physical inactivity, and stress. She said the growing burden of diabetes has placed the country among the top three nations globally, with nearly 33 million people currently affected, adding that the situation demands urgent attention as cases continue to rise across all age groups. She urged people to adopt healthier lifestyles, including regular physical activity and balanced nutrition, and emphasized that early screening and awareness are essential to control the spread of the disease and reduce long-term health complications. Renowned Consultant Physician in Diabetes and Endocrinology, Dr Asjad Hameed, said that diabetes continues to be a growing health challenge that requires collective efforts for effective control and management. He noted that the government is making sincere efforts to address the disease burden by providing free-of-cost treatment facilities under the Sehat Sahulat Program, enabling patients to access quality healthcare services without financial pressure.—APP

Call for societal change to end acid attacks

ISLAMABAD: Experts on Tuesday emphasized the urgent need for collective action to promote respect for women and strengthen awareness, noting that acid attacks not only cause severe physical injuries but also deep mental health trauma and long-term psychological suffering. While speaking to a local media outlet, experts demanded an urgent and uncompromising shift in social behaviour to curb acid attacks and the severe psychological trauma faced by victims, including Dr Mahnoor and other acid attack survivors. Masarrat Misbah, Founder of Smileagain Foundation, said prevailing societal attitudes toward victims, including Dr Mahnoor and other acid victims, remain deeply disturbing, adding that survivors are often met with judgment, blame and insensitivity instead of support.—APP

Police check 645 individuals in grand combing operations

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police checked 645 individuals and shifted 17 suspicious persons to police stations for further verification during grand search and combing operations conducted in multiple areas of the federal capital. An official told APP on Tuesday that the large-scale operations were launched on the direction of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi to further strengthen security and maintain law and order across the city. The official said search operations were conducted in the jurisdictions of Khanna, Karachi Company, Sumbal, Noon, Shahzad Town and Lohi Bher police stations under the supervision of the respective zonal SPs. Lady police officials also participated in the operations, he added. During the search operations, police checked 645 individuals, 251 households, 28 hotels and 114 shops in different areas of the capital. The official said 176 motorcycles and 89 vehicles were also inspected, while 17 suspicious individuals and 18 motorcycles were shifted to the relevant police stations for further verification. According to the official, special checking points had been established at entry and exit routes of the city to ensure effective monitoring and security screening.—APP

Pakistan-China friendship reaches new heights: Tarar

President Xi's Global Governance Initiative offers roadmap for peace, stability: Ahsan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday said that Pakistan-China friendship had reached new heights following Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to China, reaffirming Pakistan's unwavering commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation and advancing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Addressing a ceremony, the minister said it was a matter of great pride for the government and the people of Pakistan that the two countries were celebrating 75 years of an unbreakable bond. He said Pakistan and China shared a unique relationship that went beyond conventional diplomatic ties. "Many countries describe their relations as brotherly, friendly or cordial, but Pakistan and China have the distinct honour of being iron brothers," he remarked. Paying tribute to the leadership and peoples of both countries, Tarar said a renewed commitment to Pakistan-China friendship had emerged from the recent visit to China and provided fresh motivation to transform the shared vision of cooperation into reality. He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit had taken bilateral friendship to new heights, adding that Pakistan-China friendship was a legacy passed down through generations and inherited from elders who had witnessed decades of mutual trust and cooperation. The minister said Pakistan and China



not only shared a common border but also mountains, rivers, and a bond that would continue to be cherished for generations to come. Expressing Pakistan's support for the Global Governance Initiative under the leadership of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Tarar said the initiative had started producing positive results across the world within a short span of time. He said the initiative was contributing towards increasing the representation of the Global South while helping improve the lives and livelihoods of people in developing countries. Referring to Federal Minister for Planning and

Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal's role as a strong advocate of CPEC, Tarar said the flagship project had brought the peoples of Pakistan and China closer together over the years. He recalled Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Islamabad as a landmark event that launched a journey of progress and prosperity for the people of both countries. The minister said cultural exchanges, people-to-people contacts, and media cooperation could play a vital role in further strengthening bilateral relations and deepening the strategic partnership between Pakistan and China. Highlighting the

enduring nature of bilateral ties, he said the past 75 years had demonstrated that Pakistan-China friendship was all-weather and time-tested. Despite changes in governments and the passage of different decades, he said, the friendship had continued to grow stronger and gain greater momentum with each passing year. Sharing his personal experience, Tarar said he himself was an example of the benefits of people-to-people exchanges between Pakistan and China. He said that as a young officer in the Punjab government, he had the opportunity to be part of several delegations that visited China and witnessed extensive exchanges between his political party and the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC). Such exchanges, he added, had proven to be fruitful and productive and could contribute towards a brighter future for the people of both countries. Concluding his address, the minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to its friendship with China, the advancement of CPEC and the promotion of the Global Governance Initiative. Speaking on behalf of his ministry, the prime minister and the government, Tarar said Pakistan firmly believed in the enduring friendship with China and remained fully committed to implementing shared initiatives. "You will always find us one step ahead in the implementation of these initiatives," he said. The minister concluded his remarks with the slogan, "Pak-China dosti zindabad."

Drying Namal Lake forces flamingoes to relocate

ISLAMABAD: The drying of Namal Lake in Mianwali district has forced migratory flamingoes to seek alternative habitats at Jhlar Lake in the Soon Valley that has drawn attention to the growing threats facing Pakistan's wetlands and the urgent need for stronger conservation measures. Recent footage released by WWF-Pakistan and captured by wildlife photographer Umer Bin Khalid documented hundreds of flamingoes gathering at Jhlar Lake after their traditional seasonal refuge at Namal Lake largely dried up. While the arrival of flamingoes has delighted birdwatchers and conservationists, environmental experts warn that the migration reflects a troubling ecological reality. "Namal Lake has historically served as an important wetland ecosystem supporting migratory birds, aquatic life and local communities. Its shrinking water levels are a stark reminder of the pressures imposed by climate change, water mismanagement and ecosystem degradation," said Hamid Naqvi Khan, Director General of WWF-Pakistan. According to WWF-Pakistan's wetland conservation studies, Pakistan lies on the Central Asian Flyway and hosts millions of migratory birds annually that makes the protection of wetlands crucial for regional biodiversity and ecological stability. A World Environment Day awareness campaign titled "Save Namal Lake" described the wetland as a "natural treasure of Mianwali" that supports biodiversity, sustains local livelihoods and provides habitat for migratory birds. The campaign warned that "a dry Namal Lake today means a water crisis tomorrow" and called for urgent action to conserve water, protect biodiversity, support local communities and restore degraded ecosystems. Dr. Abid Qayyum Suleri, Executive Director of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), has repeatedly highlighted in climate policy discussions that Pakistan's wetlands are among the country's most undervalued natural assets and that their degradation directly threatens biodiversity, water security and community livelihoods. Research by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Ramsar Convention Secretariat shows that nearly 35 percent of the world's wetlands have been lost since 1970 that makes wetland loss one of the fastest rates of ecosystem decline globally. Similar trends have been observed across South Asia, where increasing temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns and unsustainable land-use practices are placing additional pressure on freshwater ecosystems.—APP

Peaceful GB polls reflect people's verdict in favour of PPP: Qamar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Qamar Zaman Kaira stated that the Gilgit-Baltistan elections were held peacefully and transparently, asserting that the PPP's majority position entitles it to form the next government, while the second-largest political party should sit in opposition and play its democratic role. While speaking to a private news channel, PPP Kaira said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has acknowledged the PPP's majority in the Gilgit-Baltistan elections, while noting that the electoral process is still ongoing in some constituencies where re-polling is being conducted. He stated that once the remaining polling and related procedures are completed, the final picture of the electoral outcome will emerge in accordance with the mandate given by the people. Kaira expressed confidence that the PPP would emerge as the leading political force and would be in a position to form the government in Gilgit-Baltistan, reflecting its electoral strength and public support. He further said that the party remains committed to serving the people as promised during its election campaign, adding that since the era of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the PPP has consistently focused on public service and the welfare of the common man. Kaira added heartfelt congratulations to the leadership, workers and people of Gilgit-Baltistan on what he termed the historic victory of the Pakistan Peoples Party. While responding to a question regarding political alliances, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Qamar Zaman Kaira said that past experience in Azad Jammu and Kashmir regarding coalition politics was not very encouraging. He stated that this time, the PPP, having secured a majority would be in a position to form the government in Gilgit-Baltistan in accordance with the public mandate and democratic norms. He added that the party securing the second position would play its due and constructive role in the opposition, in line with parliamentary traditions and respect for the people's vote. Kaira further said that all political parties should uphold democratic values, respect the public mandate and remain accountable to the people through their performance in governance.—DNA

Pakistan, China sign MoU to develop industrial tomato varieties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a major step towards deepening Pakistan-China agricultural cooperation, Beijing Jingwa Agricultural Science and Technology Innovation Center (Jingwa Center) and Pakistan's Iftekhar Ahmed Food and Beverages Pvt. Ltd. have signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. It aimed at developing and introducing high-yield, industrial-grade tomato varieties tailored specifically to Pakistan's agricultural conditions and processing industry. The agreement was signed during the Pakistan-China Information Technology, Telecom, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), and Agriculture Business-to-Business (B2B) Investment Conference held in Hangzhou, China, on the sidelines of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's official visit, according to an official statement. Under the agreement, the Chinese research institution will provide specially developed tomato varieties designed for industrial processing. These varieties possess characteristics highly sought after by food processing industries, including elevated Brix levels, higher solids content, improved pulp yield, and enhanced suitability for producing premium-quality tomato paste, puree, and other value-added tomato products. Officials said the collaboration will initially focus on a comprehensive research and development programme in Sindh, one of Pakistan's key agricultural regions. During this phase, six to seven promising tomato varieties developed by Chinese scientists will undergo extensive field testing and greenhouse trials to assess their

performance under local conditions. Agricultural experts from both countries will work closely together to evaluate the adaptability of the varieties to Pakistan's climate, soil composition, irrigation systems, cultivation methods, and disease pressures. The joint research effort is expected to ensure that only the most suitable and productive varieties are selected for large-scale cultivation. Beyond seed development, the agreement encompasses the transfer of modern agricultural technologies and cultivation techniques from China to Pakistan. Jingwa Center will provide technical assistance, agronomic expertise, and scientific support to help improve productivity, crop management practices, and overall tomato quality. The collaboration also places particular emphasis on promoting year-round tomato production through controlled environment agriculture and modern farming systems. Such measures are expected to reduce seasonal fluctuations in supply, improve productivity, and ensure a stable flow of raw materials to Pakistan's growing food processing industry. Following the successful completion of research trials and adaptation studies, the most promising tomato varieties will be registered in Pakistan and introduced for commercial cultivation. The Chinese side will continue to provide technical support throughout the commercialization process, ensuring effective adoption by local farmers and processors. Speaking on the occasion, the Pakistani side emphasized that the development of locally adapted industrial tomato varieties could substantially reduce Pakistan's reliance on imported tomato paste, helping conserve valuable foreign exchange reserves. According to industry estimates, Pakistan currently spends approximately one million dollars annually on tomato paste imports, a figure that could be significantly reduced through increased domestic production.

Health remains key focus under PM's vision

Khani said the initiative is being pursued under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Health Minister Mustafa Kamal, who have placed special focus on improving public health outcomes through disease prevention, awareness campaigns and wider access to essential healthcare services for citizens across the country

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer of the Prime Minister's Sehat Sahulat Program (Sehat Card), Arshad Qaimkhani on Tuesday said that health remains a top priority of the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, reaffirming the government's commitment to expanding diabetes prevention services and promoting healthier lifestyles across Pakistan in line with the premier's vision. Talking to PTV News, Arshad Qaim Khani said the government, under the Prime Minister's vision, is placing strong emphasis on preventive healthcare and disease awareness, stressing that informed communities are essential for effectively addressing diabetes and hepatitis across Pakistan. He said both diseases pose significant public health challenges in Pakistan

and require a coordinated response involving healthcare institutions, communities and the media. Raising awareness about risk factors, symptoms and preventive measures can help reduce the burden of these illnesses, he added. Khani emphasized that early detection and timely treatment are essential for improving health outcomes and preventing complications associated with diabetes and hepatitis, adding, citizens to undergo regular medical checkups and seek professional healthcare advice whenever needed. Highlighting the benefits of the Sehat Sahulat Program, he said eligible families can avail themselves of quality healthcare services through the Sehat Card at empaneled hospitals across the country. The program is helping

to reduce the financial burden of medical treatment on low- and middle-income households. The CEO underscored the administration's determination to enhance disease prevention efforts, broaden healthcare outreach and enable citizens to access early screening, quality care and medical support through the Sehat Sahulat Program, helping build a healthier society. Khani said the initiative is being pursued under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Health Minister Mustafa Kamal, who have placed special focus on improving public health outcomes through disease prevention, awareness campaigns and wider access to essential healthcare services for citizens across the country.—APP

Ali Gohar Baloch greets victorious candidates

He maintained that public trust can only be earned through performance, consistency, and strict adherence to democratic principles

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) leader Ali Gohar Baloch on Tuesday congratulated all successful candidates and political parties following the Gilgit-Baltistan elections, urging all stakeholders to respect the public mandate, uphold political tolerance, promote national harmony, prioritize public welfare and contribute towards the region's development and prosperity. While speaking to PTV News channel, he said the political party which had earlier levelled allegations of rigging is now expected to accept the election results with satisfaction, adding that the elections were conducted in a peaceful, fair and transparent manner, clearly reflecting the will of the people. He stressed that all parties should demonstrate political maturity and accept the outcome in the spirit of democracy. He further noted that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has already extended congratulations to the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on behalf of the PML-N leadership, underscoring the importance of political harmony and mutual respect among all stakeholders. Responding to a query regarding government formation, he said that if the party is required to sit in opposition, it will perform its democratic role responsibly. Ali Gohar added that the final decision regarding government formation rests with independent candidates, whose choices will be decisive in the evolving political situation. He further stated that if Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, as the leader of a single majority party, seeks to form the government in Gilgit-Baltistan, it is his democratic right. He said that PML-N firmly believes in the public mandate and does not fear any political party, adding that the party remains confident in its democratic strength. He also criticized Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), stating that it has failed to deliver on its promises and meet public expectations. He maintained that public trust can only be earned through performance, consistency, and strict adherence to democratic principles.—DNA

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Gaza aid must be delinked from politics

DR. RAMZY BAROUD

GAZA requires urgent international attention. What is happening in the besieged and devastated Strip far exceeds an unfolding humanitarian disaster; it is a calculated geopolitical reshaping. Israel is executing a plan to permanently occupy the vast majority of Gaza, with consequences that require little elaboration considering what we already know about the ongoing genocide. Currently, much of the international debate centers on a single official: Bulgarian diplomat Nickolay Mladenov. The former UN special envoy to the Middle East has been designated by the US as executive director of the Trump administration's "Board of Peace" – an international council founded to oversee the implementation of Washington's 20-point Gaza roadmap. The issue, however, is much bigger than a single Washington-backed bureaucrat. A growing number of Palestinians and political analysts accuse Mladenov of manufacturing the conditions that continue to obstruct progress on the agreement's transition to its second phase. Under this framework, the official transition to the second phase – which Trump and the Board of Peace declared to have begun in January – demands sweeping, one-sided Palestinian concessions, most notably the total disarmament of armed factions. This demand is a recipe for the failure of the entire project, especially given that Israel has not implemented the most basic requirements of the agreement's first phase. It has refused to halt its routine military incursions, failed to withdraw its forces to the originally mandated "Yellow Line," and it continues to deny entry permits to the technocratic committee slated to assume civil governance of the Strip. The insistence on Palestinian disarmament before the agreement can advance conveniently flips the narrative Mladenov's insistence on Palestinian disarmament before the agreement can advance – without a single guarantee of Israeli compliance – conveniently flips the narrative. It cynically reframes systematic starvation and the denial of medical and construction supplies as being due to a Palestinian failure to honor commitments. In reality, Mladenov holds no real cards; he is merely a cog in a larger machine controlled by Benjamin Netanyahu. The Israeli prime minister has made it clear that he has no intention of following any peace roadmap, planning instead for the permanent, incremental takeover of Gaza. Speaking at a conference in a West Bank settlement on May 28, Netanyahu explained his strategy with total clarity, abandoning all diplomatic double-speak: "We are currently squeezing Hamas; we now control 60 percent of the territory of the Strip – you know this. We were at 50, we moved to 60. My directive is to move to..." he said, pausing as an audience member shouted "100." Netanyahu smiled and responded: "Let's go step by step. First



of all, 70. Let's start with that. We are pressing them from all sides, we'll deal with the remnants." This is the blueprint of the Israeli government, declared openly to domestic audiences. The admission was so brazen that even US Secretary of State Marco Rubio expressed frustration at Netanyahu's candor. Testifying before Congress last week, Rubio remarked: "We have a plan – it doesn't call for that," referring to further Israeli territorial expansion. But Rubio quickly reverted to Washington's standard line: "And at the end of the day, we understand that what we want, and I think what the Israelis would ultimately want, is a Gaza that is governed by a non-Hamas entity." While the immediate priority for Palestinians is not governance but food, clean water, medicine and basic survival, Netanyahu and Rubio view the entire crisis through a political lens. The US-Israeli plan is predicated on achieving, through diplomatic strangulation and engineered famine, what they failed to fully achieve through military might.

A rare, decisive answer came from UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric, who summed up the organization's position plainly: "One hundred percent of Gaza should be for the Palestinian people." The problem, however, is that the UN's rhetoric does not have the backing of any genuine enforcement mechanisms. The immediate priority for Palestinians is not governance but food, clean water, medicine and basic survival. The international community has walked into a trap, outsourcing the future of the Gaza Strip to the Trump administration and its Board of Peace. Even the designated technocratic committee has been rendered entirely irrelevant, excluded from a decision-making process left solely to diplomats beholden to the White House. The situation on the ground remains catastrophic. Since the fragile, heavily compromised ceasefire took effect on Oct. 10 last year, regular Israeli violations and airstrikes have killed nearly 1,000 Palestinians and wounded thousands more – the vast majority women and children. When added to the horrific toll of the initial two years of war, the official number of Palestinians killed has surpassed 73,000, with more than 173,000 injured. Furthermore, credible epidemiological studies and medical journals have concluded that the true death toll is likely vastly higher. With nearly the entire population of Gaza living in substandard tents and surviving on the meager rations permitted through Israeli checkpoints, it is the highest form of immorality to demand political concessions in exchange for basic sustenance. Netanyahu's "step-by-step" annexation does not hinge on what Palestinian factions decide to do – his expansionist timeline is shaped independently of Palestinian compliance. Arab, Muslim and allied nations must fundamentally shift their diplomatic strategy. They must firmly insist that humanitarian aid is completely delinked from the future governance and demilitarization of the Gaza Strip. Starvation cannot be tolerated as political leverage for war criminals. Netanyahu is emboldened by a history of international impunity, speaking openly of expanding Israel's military footprint regardless of the consequences of such actions. The international community must remind Israel's government that the survival of millions of Palestinians cannot be held hostage to the political ambitions of an extremist coalition.

Connectivity as Pakistan's new economic doctrine

T.M. Awan



This is where the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has emerged as an important catalyst. Over the past two years, SIFC has helped improve coordination among federal ministries, provincial governments, development agencies, and investors. While bureaucratic fragmentation has historically slowed the implementation of large...

HISTORY offers a remarkably consistent lesson: nations prosper when they connect. From the ancient Silk Road that linked civilizations across Asia to the modern logistics corridors that power global trade, connectivity has remained one of the most reliable engines of economic growth. Infrastructure is often viewed as concrete, steel, and asphalt, but in reality it is much more than that. It is the foundation upon which trade expands, industries flourish, investment flows, and economies transform. For Pakistan, connectivity is no longer simply a development objective. It is increasingly becoming an economic necessity. At a time when global supply chains are being reconfigured, regional trade corridors are gaining strategic importance, and competition for investment is intensifying, Pakistan's geographical location offers a unique advantage. Situated at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Western China, Pakistan possesses the potential to become a major regional connectivity hub. Yet geography alone does not create prosperity. It must be supported by modern infrastructure, efficient logistics, policy consistency, and institutional coordination.

This is where the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has emerged as an important catalyst. Over the past two years, SIFC has helped improve coordination among federal ministries, provincial governments, development agencies, and investors. While bureaucratic fragmentation has historically slowed the implementation of large infrastructure projects, the new coordination mechanism has accelerated decision-making and renewed focus on several connectivity initiatives that could significantly reshape Pakistan's economic landscape. Among these projects, the modernization of Main Line-1 (ML-1) stands out as perhaps the most consequential. Stretching from Karachi to Peshawar, the railway corridor passes through Pakistan's principal industrial, commercial, and agricultural centers. More importantly, it forms the backbone of future freight mobility. Pakistan's

logistics system remains overwhelmingly dependent on road transport, which carries approximately 95 percent of freight movement. Rail transport accounts for only a small fraction of cargo traffic despite being significantly cheaper and more efficient for bulk transportation. The modernization of ML-1 therefore represents more than a railway project. It is an economic restructuring initiative. By reducing logistics costs, increasing freight capacity, and linking ports with industrial zones and Special Economic Zones, the project has the potential to improve export competitiveness and strengthen industrial productivity across the country.

Similarly, projects such as Thar Rail Connectivity demonstrate how transportation infrastructure can directly support energy security. By integrating indigenous coal resources into the national transport network, Pakistan can reduce dependence on imported fuels while improving the efficiency of power generation and industrial supply chains. The same logic applies to emerging motorway projects, including the Karachi Port-Hyderabad Motorway and the northern connectivity corridors linking industrial centers across Punjab. These projects are not merely transportation upgrades; they are investments in economic efficiency. Every hour saved in cargo movement reduces business costs, improves reliability, and enhances Pakistan's attractiveness as an investment destination. Yet perhaps the most strategic component of Pakistan's connectivity vision lies in Gwadar.

For years, Gwadar has been discussed primarily through the lens of geopolitics. Increasingly, however, its true significance may be economic. Combined with the New Gwadar International Airport and the completion of key road links connecting the port to the national transport network, Gwadar possesses the potential to serve as a gateway not only for Pakistan but also for Western China, Afghanistan, and eventually Central Asia. In an era where logistics corridors are becoming instruments of economic influence, Gwadar could evolve into one of Pa-

kistan's most valuable strategic assets.

Connectivity is no longer confined to roads and ports alone. Digital infrastructure is rapidly emerging as an equally important component of economic competitiveness. Pakistan's fiber-optic links with China and multiple submarine cable connections position it favorably within the growing digital economy. As data services, e-commerce, artificial intelligence, and technology-driven industries expand globally, digital connectivity may become as important as physical connectivity in determining future growth.

The challenge now is implementation. Infrastructure projects alone do not guarantee economic transformation. Regulatory reforms, logistics modernization, customs facilitation, industrial policy alignment, and private-sector participation must accompany physical development. Connectivity succeeds when infrastructure and institutions evolve together. The experience of successful economies is instructive. Connectivity reduces costs. Lower costs attract investment. Investment generates production, employment, and exports. In this sense, connectivity is not simply a transportation policy; it is an economic growth strategy. Pakistan possesses the geography, infrastructure potential, and strategic location required to become a regional trade and logistics hub. What has often been missing is coordinated execution. If SIFC can continue to align major connectivity projects with broader economic objectives, Pakistan may finally be in a position to convert its long-discussed geostrategic advantage into tangible geo-economic gains. In the years ahead, the countries that prosper will not necessarily be those with the largest populations or the richest natural resources. They will be the countries that connect markets most efficiently, move goods most competitively, and integrate most effectively into regional and global value chains. For Pakistan, that journey begins with connectivity.

– The writer is a journalist, strategic communication, and public diplomacy advisor based in Islamabad. X: @TM_AwanOfficial

How Ukraine and Iran Rewrote the Rules of War

Qamar Bashir



Yet Ukraine refused to collapse. With substantial support from Europe and the United States, combined with extraordinary national determination, Ukraine transformed itself into one of the most innovative military forces in modern history. Ukrainian engineers, military planners and scientists pioneered large-scale drone warfare, integrated battlefield intelligence and precision long-range strikes. They demonstrated that innovation could compensate for numerical inferiority. As the war evolved, Ukraine carried the battlefield deep into Russian territory

HISTORY is often written by great powers. Yet occasionally, history takes a different course and is rewritten by nations that refuse to surrender. The wars in Ukraine and Iran may ultimately be remembered as such moments. Though different in geography, culture and circumstances, both conflicts delivered the same strategic lesson: overwhelming military strength, economic dominance and technological superiority no longer guaranteed military and political victory. For decades, the international system operated on an assumption that major powers could ultimately impose their will upon smaller states. The experiences of Ukraine and Iran have challenged that assumption. In doing so, they may have altered not only the nature of warfare but also the future direction of global politics.

Russia entered Ukraine in February 2022 believing that its superior military power, larger population, greater economic resources and vast nuclear arsenal would quickly force Kyiv into submission. Instead, it became one of the most costly military miscalculations of modern times. Russia possesses approximately 16.4 million square kilometers of territory, making it the largest country in the world. Ukraine covers roughly 579,000 square kilometers. Russia's economy before the conflict exceeded \$2.4 trillion, while Ukraine's economy was only a fraction of that size. Russia enjoyed superiority in military manpower, industrial capacity, missile forces and strategic reserves.

Yet Ukraine refused to collapse. With substantial support from Europe and the United States, combined with extraordinary national determination, Ukraine transformed itself into one of the most innovative military forces in modern history. Ukrainian engineers, military planners and scientists pioneered large-scale drone warfare, integrated battlefield intelligence and precision long-range strikes. They demonstrated that innovation could compensate for numerical inferiority. As the war evolved, Ukraine carried the battlefield deep into Russian territory. Airfields, logistics centers, energy infrastructure and strategic military facilities once believed beyond reach became vulnerable. Russia discovered that military power alone could not guarantee security. This represented a profound strategic shock. A smaller nation had denied a much larger power the victory it expected. The second shock came in the Middle East. Unlike Ukraine, Iran did not enjoy broad Western military support. For decades, Iran operated under sanctions, financial restrictions and diplomatic pressure. Its economy remained constrained compared to the overwhelming economic power of the United States and Israel. America's economy exceeds \$28 trillion annually. Israel possesses one of the world's most technologically advanced military establishments. Iran's economic and military resources are significantly smaller by comparison. Yet Iran possessed advantages that could not be measured solely in GDP, military spending or advanced

weapon systems. It possessed strategic depth, resilience and geography. Iran's ability to absorb pressure while maintaining its military and political cohesion surprised many observers. Rather than relying on conventional parity, Tehran emphasized missiles, drones, asymmetric warfare and maritime leverage. It demonstrated that a state facing superior conventional military power could nevertheless impose significant costs on stronger adversaries.

Most importantly, Iran highlighted the strategic importance of geography. The Strait of Hormuz, through which approximately one-fifth of global oil consumption and more than one-quarter of seaborne oil trade passes, became a focal point of international concern. Suddenly, a regional conflict was no longer merely a regional conflict. It became a potential threat to the global economy. History demonstrates that major powers often respond to resistance by increasing pressure rather than reassessing assumptions. What begins as a regional confrontation can gradually expand geographically and economically. Maritime competition can spread from one strategic corridor to another. Economic warfare can become a global phenomenon affecting billions of people who have no direct connection to the original conflict. This is perhaps the most important lesson emerging from both Ukraine and Iran. Modern warfare is no longer fought exclusively with tanks, aircraft and artillery. It is increasingly fought through drones, cyber capabilities, intelligence networks, financial systems, supply chains and strategic chokepoints. Geography itself has become a weapon.

The implications are profound. Middle powers throughout the world are closely observing these developments. They see that drones costing thousands of dollars can threaten systems worth millions. They see that intelligence and innovation can offset numerical disadvantages. They see that geography can provide leverage against stronger opponents. Most importantly, they see that determined resistance can frustrate even the most powerful adversaries. Yet this lesson contains a dangerous paradox. If asymmetric warfare allows smaller states to resist larger powers, what happens when larger powers become frustrated? The answer may lie in the world's nuclear arsenals. The experiences of Ukraine and Iran are likely to influence strategic thinking across the globe. Some major powers may conclude that conventional military superiority is no longer sufficient to guarantee desired outcomes. Some smaller powers may conclude that international law alone cannot guarantee security. Both conclusions risk producing the same result: increased reliance on nuclear weapons.

For nuclear-armed states, the temptation may arise to rely more heavily upon nuclear deterrence when conventional coercion proves insufficient. For non-nuclear states, the lesson may be that survival ultimately requires acquiring a nuclear capability of their own. Such a

trend would be extraordinarily dangerous.

For this reason, the long-term lesson of these conflicts should not be nuclear expansion but renewed nuclear disarmament. A stable international system cannot permanently rest upon a hierarchy in which some states possess ultimate weapons while others do not. Lasting security requires moving toward a universally applied and verifiable framework that reduces and ultimately eliminates nuclear arsenals. Equally important is the need to reform international governance. The wars in Ukraine and Iran have revived longstanding debates regarding the structure of the United Nations. Critics argue that the veto power enjoyed by the five permanent members of the Security Council frequently prevents effective collective action and allows geopolitical interests to override broader international consensus. Many advocates of reform contend that decisions affecting international peace and security should more accurately reflect the collective judgment of the international community. They argue that the authority of the General Assembly should be strengthened and that mechanisms should be developed to reduce paralysis caused by competing vetoes. Whether such reforms are politically achievable remains uncertain. Nevertheless, the debate itself reflects growing frustration with a system many view as increasingly disconnected from contemporary realities. The fundamental challenge facing humanity today is therefore larger than any single war. The challenge is whether the international community can adapt its institutions, strengthen international law, preserve the freedom of global commerce and reduce reliance on military coercion before future crises become even more dangerous.

Ukraine and Iran have demonstrated that technology, geography, innovation and national determination can challenge even the strongest powers. They have shown that military superiority does not automatically translate into political success. They have revealed the vulnerability of global supply chains, maritime commerce and existing security structures. Above all, they have reminded the world that the pursuit of dominance often produces resistance rather than submission. The future now presents two possible paths. One path leads toward greater militarization, nuclear proliferation, expanding maritime confrontation and intensified geopolitical rivalry. The other leads toward institutional reform, collective security, strengthened international law and renewed commitment to diplomacy. The choice between those paths will determine not merely the outcome of future conflicts but the future of international order itself.

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

Briefs

6 personnel martyred as terrorists...

FROM PAGE 01

Officials say those appeals have gone unheeded. After two consecutive months of improvement, Pakistan's security situation deteriorated sharply in May 2026, driven primarily by escalating terrorist violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, according to the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS). The country witnessed six suicide attacks during May, including four vehicle-borne suicide bombings. These attacks alone resulted in the deaths of 34 security personnel and nine civilians. On May 9, a suicide attack in Bannu claimed the lives of 15 police personnel, after which Pakistan issued a "strong demarche" to Afghanistan. Over a week later, a prominent tribal elder was among three killed in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast that struck the busy Rustam Bazaar area of Lower South Waziristan's Wana. In early June, security forces foiled a terrorist suicide attack on a military post near Miranshah in North Waziristan.

Fourteen terrorists killed in IBO

FROM PAGE 01

the nefarious designs of the terrorists, the ISPR said. During the conduct of the operation, the military's media wing said the movement of terrorists was effectively checked and engaged by the military punitively. After an intense fire exchange, fourteen Indian sponsored terrorists were killed, while multiple terrorists were injured. In addition, four vehicles being used by the terrorists and improvised explosive devices were also destroyed on the spot, the statement added. During the intense fire exchange, one brave son of the soil, Lance Havildar Muhammad Abbas, having fought gallantly, paid the ultimate sacrifice and embraced martyrdom. The ISPR said that sanitisation operations were underway in the area to clear any remaining militants and ensure security.

Field Marshal, Lebanese...

FROM PAGE 01

and underscored the Pakistan Army's commitment to expanding defence collaboration with the Lebanese Armed Forces. General Haykal appreciated the professionalism and operational excellence of the Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged their contributions to regional peace, stability and international peacekeeping efforts. According to the ISPR, the visit reflects the shared commitment of both armed forces to fostering closer military-to-military cooperation.

Bahraini commander lauds Pak...

FROM PAGE 01

at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, where they underscored the need to strengthen bilateral military cooperation, the military's media wing said. "During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security environment, and avenues for enhanced bilateral defence and security cooperation were discussed," it added. According to ISPR, Field Marshal Munir and General Shaikh Mohammad expressed satisfaction over the longstanding brotherly relations between Pakistan and Bahrain.

UK, allies condemn settler violence

FROM PAGE 01

the situation on the ground. Britain has added seven new designations under its global human rights sanctions regime, targeting individuals and entities involved with Israeli settlers in the West Bank, a government notice showed on Tuesday.

Long awaited domestic football kicks off

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has announced the launch of the District Football Championship 2026, a landmark nationwide initiative aimed at revitalising grassroots football, identifying emerging talent, and strengthening domestic football structures across the country. Addressing a press conference alongside PFF Director Media Umair Wasim and provincial football heads participating virtually, PFF Chief Operating Officer Muhammad Shahid Niaz Khokhar revealed that, for the first time in Pakistan football's history, the federation will provide comprehensive professional and administrative support to all the districts to ensure the successful organisation of the championship. Khokhar credited provincial and regional FAs presidents for their productive contribution in the consultation process and PFF President Syed Mohsen Gilani for spearheading the initiative, describing it as a transformative step towards rebuilding Pakistan's football ecosystem from the grassroots level. "Under the leadership of Mohsen Gilani, Pakistan football has already made significant progress internationally and has earned appreciation from FIFA and AFC officials. Now, the focus is on bringing the same vision and commitment to grassroots and domestic football," he said. The PFF COO emphasised that the District Football Championship 2026 represents a major investment in the future of Pakistani football, with the objective of creating opportunities for local players and establishing a sustainable talent development pathway. "The PFF is fully committed to making this championship a historic success. Mr. Gilani is very com-



mitted and passionate about grassroots events and eager to go to FIFA and AFC for providing all kinds of assistance especially financial in making these events a huge success. Khokhar further said that for the first time, the PFF will play an active coordinating and supporting role in the organisation of district-level football competitions. District Football Associations (DFAs) will conduct the events, while the federation will provide logistical, technical and administrative assistance. He stated: "A collaborative framework has also been established to ensure close coordination among districts,

provinces and the federation. Formal consultations and regular meetings will be held to finalise all championship-related matters through mutual discussion and consensus." The COO said that all four provincial football associations and the three regions, Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir, are represented on a dedicated committee tasked with ensuring the successful execution of the championship.

The District Football Championship 2026 is expected to deliver several long-term benefits for Pakistan football, including: Strengthening grassroots and domestic football structures, fulfilling constitutional requirements at the District Football Association level, identification and verification of genuine football clubs, nationwide talent identification and player development, capacity building of District Football Associations, greater coordination between districts, provinces and the PFF and enhanced use of modern technology in competition management. The National U17 Championship will serve as a talent identification platform for Pakistan's future international campaigns. Outstanding performers will be considered for selection to national youth teams competing in the SAFF U17 Championship and the AFC U17 Qualifiers. Khokhar said the initiative reflects the federation's commitment to providing greater opportunities for young players under the leadership of PFF President Mohsen Gilani. "Under Mohsen Gilani's dynamic leadership, Pakistani footballers are being provided with maximum opportunities to develop and showcase their abilities. We hope the talented players selected through these competitions will continue to work hard, represent Pakistan with distinction, and bring international success to the country," he concluded.

Junaid, Shahid Afridi explore Ports-Sports Cooperation Initiative

Both sides agreed to develop a comprehensive roadmap to strengthen cooperation between the maritime and sports sectors, aiming to promote Pakistan's blue economy vision while encouraging social cohesion and environmental awareness through sports

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry and former Pakistan cricket captain Shahid Afridi held a meeting to explore cooperation between the ports and the sports sector. The discussions focused on expanding the role of maritime and coastal infrastructure beyond trade and logistics to include sports development, youth engagement and environmental awareness, said a press release. The minister assured full support from maritime institutions for initiatives aimed at promoting sports, particular-

ly in coastal regions. He said ports and maritime zones were increasingly becoming centres of national development where education, sports and environmental awareness could be integrated. Junaid Chaudhry said under blue economy vision, sports development could be advanced through public-private partnerships, including the establishment of coastal sports academies, cricket training centres and structured youth programmes along the coastline. He added that cricket, as the most popular sport, could be used as a unifying platform

to raise awareness about marine conservation, climate change and the importance of ocean resources among young people. The meeting also discussed linking sports activities with ocean literacy campaigns to address issues such as marine pollution, declining fish stocks and the protection of coastal ecosystems. Afridi welcomed the proposal, saying sports were one of the most effective tools to engage young people in positive activities and could also be leveraged to promote environmental awareness. He noted significant potential for sports

tourism and grassroots cricket development. The two sides also reviewed proposals to launch coastal sports and ocean awareness drives in Karachi, Gwadar, and other port cities. These initiatives would combine cricket tournaments with awareness sessions on mangrove conservation, marine biodiversity and sustainable use of ocean resources. Under the proposed framework, maritime institutions would provide infrastructure support, while sports organisations and private sector partners would develop training and outreach programmes. - APP

US denies entry to Somali referee traveling for World Cup

FIFA confirms Artan would play no part in the World Cup

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States denied entry to a Somali referee who arrived in the country over the weekend to officiate games during the FIFA World Cup, the US Customs and Border Patrol said on Monday. The Somali national arrived at Miami International Airport from Istanbul International Airport on Saturday and was determined to be inadmissible due to vetting concerns and was denied entry, the CBP said in a statement, without saying what those concerns were. The CBP did not name the Somali national, but according to media reports, it was Omar Artan, an award-winning referee who had a valid visa and was set to be the first from his country to officiate at the World Cup. Somalia's embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

A FIFA spokesperson confirmed in a statement that Artan, who was refused entry to the US after arriving at Miami International Airport, would play no part in the World Cup. "FIFA can confirm that match official Omar Abdulkadir Artan will be unable to train and officiate at the FIFA World Cup 2026 after he was denied entry into the United States," a FIFA spokesperson told AFP. FIFA emphasised that it was powerless to influence the decision, which it said was the sole preserve of tournament co-hosts the United States. "FIFA is not involved in host country immigration processes, including visa adjudications, and has been informed by authorities that Mr Artan's status will not be changed at present," the spokesperson said. "In line with previous FIFA events, a host government ultimately determines who receives a visa and who is admitted into their country."

Day of Portugal in Islamabad celebrates...

FROM PAGE 01

trade and investment, education, culture, and people-to-people contacts. He described the current phase as "particularly positive," marked by regular high-level engagement and a shared commitment to deepening cooperation in areas of mutual interest. Ambassador Domingues also acknowledged the professionalism of the Embassy staff in Islamabad and extended sincere appreciation to Portugal's Honorary Consuls in Karachi and Lahore—Mr. Fakir S. Ayazuddin and Mr. Iftikhar Firoz, respectively—for their role in fostering closer ties with Pakistani institutions, businesses, and citizens. He expressed deep appreciation to Pakistani authorities, the diplomatic corps, business and academic leaders, media representatives, and "all friends of Portugal" for their role in strengthening the friendship between the two nations.

Day of Portugal in Islamabad...

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US judge blocks Trump's...

FROM PAGE 01

Judge Leo Sorokin ruled that the charge was effectively a tax, and therefore illegal because only the US Congress has the authority to create new taxes. The decision came after 20 state attorneys general, all Democrats, filed a legal challenge. They argued that the fee would make it harder for public universities, schools, and hospitals to hire qualified international staff. The Trump administration had defended the policy, saying the president had the power to impose the fee as part of immigration enforcement and efforts to limit certain categories of foreign entry into the US. The court rejected that argument. Judge Sorokin said the government could not re-label a tax as a "fee" or "penalty" to bypass congressional approval.

Imran sisters denied...

FROM PAGE 01

Replying to a question regarding elections in Gilgit-Baltistan, Aleema alleged that in GB, the voices of the people were suppressed in mainstream media, but everything was available on social media. "Despite that, the people of GB voted in favour of PTI. As a result, people were baton-charged, and PPP and PML-N leaders had to rush to GB. Today, there is social media and everyone can see what is happening in GB," she added. When asked why she was there in the sweltering heat, Aleema said that Imran sits there round the clock in the same conditions, so she could also spend some time there. Aleema said that it was the duty of every Pakistani to save the country and called for Imran's release to help stabilise Pakistan. When asked if Chief Minister Sohail Afridi was coming to Adiala jail, she said it had been decided that Afridi would go to Parliament House on June 12, when the budget would be tabled.

Jota will be in Scotland skipper Robertson's 'heart'

"That's how we do it here at home too. Every day. He would be, and is, incredibly proud of you. "Cherish that dream, Andy. Live it for yourself and for him." Robertson said Cardoso's letter would stay with him for a "very long time"

PARIS: Diogo Jota's widow said in a letter to Scotland captain Andy Robertson she is sure her late husband will be in his "heart" when he leads the side out for their opening match in the World Cup on Saturday.

Jota and Robertson became close friends during their time at Liverpool before the former's spell there was cruelly cut short when he died, aged 28, in a car crash last July. Robertson, who ended a trophy-laden nine year spell with Liverpool when he signed for Tottenham Hotspur last Friday, had paid tribute to Jota after the Scots secured their place at the finals for the first time since 1998. "We spoke so much about going to the World Cup because he missed the last one with Portugal and I did with Scotland," Robertson said last November after the play-off win over Denmark.

"I know he'll be smiling over me today," Rute Cardoso, the mother of Jota's three children, said in her letter - which FIFA published along with a video of Robertson reading it - his words that night had touched her deeply. "When I heard your words and learnt what you felt on that day when Scotland qualified for the World Cup, after so many years of waiting, I realized that Diogo never truly left the pitch," wrote Cardoso, who married Jota days before he died alongside his brother Andre Silva. "By achieving that moment and securing your place at the World Cup, you won't be going alone. "You'll be taking his dream with you too. And when you

step on to the pitch, I know it won't just be you walking out. Diogo will be with you in your thoughts, in your steps, in your heart. "So today, I want to thank you. Thank you for not forgetting him. "Thank you for taking him with you. Thank you for turning the pain of loss into strength and into something so beautiful. "That's how we do it here at home too. Every day. He would be, and is, incredibly proud of you. "Cherish that dream, Andy. Live it for yourself and for him." Robertson said Cardoso's letter would stay with him for a "very long time."

"I'll carry him in my heart and I know he'll be with me come the first game, come the second game, come the third game and hopefully beyond that," said Robertson. "He's always there. The memories are always something that we bring up and sometimes laugh, sometimes cry. "And that will be no different, especially going into a tournament which is full of emotion. I know he'll be right at the front of my mind. "I'm not only just playing for me. I'm playing for both of us." Robertson will hope to honor the memory of Jota by becoming the first Scotland skipper to lead the side into the knock-out stages of the finals at the ninth attempt.

The Scots open their campaign against Haiti on June 13 in Boston, followed by tougher dates with African champions Morocco, also in Boston on June 19, and five-time winners Brazil on June 24 in Miami. - APP

Iran says US revoked World Cup ticket allocation for supporters

The federation described the move as "contrary to the spirit governing international competitions and the principle of equality among participating countries"

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran's football federation on Tuesday said the United States has revoked its allocation of tickets for its World Cup group games, accusing the co-host of obstructing the attendance of Iranian supporters under the shadow of a bitter diplomatic row. The US has presented a number of bureaucratic hurdles for Iran at the global football spectacle, including refusing to issue visas for some of its support staff, as the two countries remain at war after the US and Israel attacked the country in late February. "With less than three days remaining

until the start of the 2026 World Cup... the United States has once again acted to obstruct the presence of Iranian supporters at the stadiums hosting the national team's three group stage matches," the federation said in a statement. The Iranian football body said FIFA regulations dictate that it should be allocated eight percent of tickets for each match, which are given to participating federations for distribution to their supporters through official channels. According to the statement, Iran had already begun ticket sales for group stage matches against New Zealand, Belgium and Egypt - all to be held in the US - after receiving its quota, with some fans having

already made necessary arrangements. "However, in an unexpected move, the allocation granted to the Iranian Football Federation has been withdrawn, and under the current circumstances, the federation is unable to provide even a single ticket to supporters of the national team," it said. The federation described the move as "contrary to the spirit governing international competitions and the principle of equality among participating countries." It also called on FIFA and tournament organizers "to uphold the principles of neutrality, fairness, and established regulations, to provide the necessary conditions for Iranian supporters."

Neither FIFA nor US organizers have publicly commented on the Iranian accusation. The complaint is the latest dispute regarding Iran's participation in the World Cup, following visa issues that Tehran says have prevented some 15 administrative and management staff in its delegation from entering the United States. Rising tensions also prompted Iran to announce that it was moving its World Cup training base to the Mexican border city of Tijuana rather than Tucson, Arizona, as originally planned. Iran open their campaign against New Zealand in Los Angeles on June 15, before facing Belgium in the same city on June 21 and Egypt in Seattle on June 26.

Briefs

Rupee gains
03 paise
against US
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 03 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs278.37 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs278.40. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs278.25 and Rs279.40, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee increased by Rs0.47 and closed at Rs321.14 from the previous day's close of Rs320.67, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs1.73, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs1.01 and closed at Rs372.10 compared to the previous day's Rs371.09. The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham remained stagnant at Rs 75.79 while the Saudi Riyal increased by 03 paise to close at Rs74.14.—APP

Gold price in-
creases by Rs
2,830 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold registered an increase in the local market on Tuesday, with 24 karat gold per tola gaining Rs 2,830 to settle at Rs 455,063 compared to Rs 452,233 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 increased by Rs 2,547 to Rs 389,534 from Rs 386,987, whereas 10 grams of 22 karat gold went up by Rs 2,306 to Rs 357,225 against Rs 354,919 in the international market, the price of gold increased by \$28.295 to \$4,326.270 per ounce from \$4,297.975. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola increased by Rs 141 to Rs 7,314 from Rs 7,173, while the price of 10 grams of silver rose by Rs 129 to Rs 6,245 from Rs 6,116. The price of silver in the international market also increased by \$1.411 to \$68.352 per ounce from \$66.941.—APP

Tehran's
international
airport
reopens

TEHRAN: Tehran's international airport has reopened and flights carrying Hajj pilgrims from Saudi Arabia have landed, Iranian news agencies reported early Tuesday. "The deputy head of airport operation of Imam Khomeini Airport Company announced the resumption of flights to Imam Khomeini Airport and the flights of pilgrims," Mehr news agency reported. Tehran's international airport suspended all incoming flights on Sunday after Iranian missile strikes on Israel. Israel retaliated with strikes of its own. It was the latest closure for the airport, one of two serving the Iranian capital, which had only reopened in April after being shut for weeks during the Middle East war.—APP

Three Polisario
members killed
in Western
Sahara

ALGIERS: Three members of Western Saharan independence group the Polisario Front, including the son of the organization's longtime leader Mohamed Abdelaziz, were killed while staging an attack on a Moroccan defense wall, the group announced. Lehib Mohamed Abdelaziz, a member of the Polisario's secretariat, "fell on the field of honor," according to a statement released on Sunday by the Sahrawi news agency SPS. His father Mohamed Abdelaziz was the historical leader of the Polisario and the president of the self-proclaimed Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) from its proclamation in 1976 until his death in 2016. The Polisario announced three days of mourning in the wake of Lehib Mohamed Abdelaziz's death on Sunday. The 37-year-old officer was killed during an operation against the Moroccan defense system in Western Sahara, the group said, without specifying the identities of the three others killed.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs review meeting on privatisation of DISCOs.

Greater membership to enhance ICCI's influence

Highlighting the achievements and services of the Chamber, Sardar Tahir Mehmood urged traders to become active members of ICCI, stating that a larger membership base would further strengthen the collective voice of the business community and enhance the Chamber's ability to effectively pursue the resolution of traders' issues

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood, has said that ICCI is the most credible representative platform of the business community of the federal capital. He said that the chamber remains fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the interests of traders and entrepreneurs through effective advocacy and constructive engagement with policymakers. He expressed these views while addressing a large delegation of the Traders Welfare Association (TWA), G-8 Markaz, led by its President Ajab Khan on Tuesday. Highlighting the achievements and services of the Chamber, Sardar Tahir Mehmood urged traders to become active members of ICCI, stating that a larger membership base would further strengthen the collective voice of the business commu-

nity and enhance the Chamber's ability to effectively pursue the resolution of traders' issues. Referring to the upcoming Federal Budget 2026-27, he expressed hope that the government would announce significant relief measures for the business community, including rationalization of property transfer fees and other business-friendly incentives. He also called upon the concerned authorities to resolve the long-standing issue of automobile showrooms without further delay. On the occasion, the ICCI President announced the formation of an ICCI Membership Committee under the chairmanship of TWA G-8 President Ajab Khan. The committee will work in accordance with the objectives, policies, and rules of the Chamber and will submit recommendations to the ICCI President from time to time regarding

membership expansion and traders' engagement. Speaking on the occasion, TWA G-8 President Ajab Khan highlighted various issues confronting traders of the sector, particularly those relating to the Excise and Taxation Department, and sought ICCI's support for their early resolution. General Secretary TWA G-8, Mohammad Waseem Abbasi, emphasized the need for installation of a modern water filtration plant in the sector and proposed the establishment of a flower market to facilitate business activity and public convenience. Former ICCI President and Council Member Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi thanked the business community of G-8 Markaz for its continued trust and unwavering support for the ICCI Founder Group and appreciated their active role in strengthening the Chamber.

ICCI Executive Member Raja Mohammad Naveed Satti and senior ICCI member Israr Mishwani also highlighted several civic and commercial issues facing traders, including the poor sewage system, deteriorating footpaths, inadequate parking facilities, and other infrastructure-related concerns. Senior Vice President TWA G-8 Abdul Qadeer proposed the appointment of a dedicated focal person by ICCI to maintain close coordination with traders of the sector and ensure prompt follow-up on their issues. In his concluding remarks, ICCI Vice President Irfan Chaudhry assured the delegation that the Chamber would continue to vigorously pursue the resolution of traders' concerns and would engage relevant government departments and authorities to achieve tangible results.

Irish envoy visits SCCI

SIALKO: Ireland Ambassador to Pakistan Mary O'Neill, on Tuesday visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) and met the local business community and discussed the ways to increase bilateral trade. SCCI President Syed Ahtesham Mazhar, Senior Vice President Mohammad Murad Arshad and Vice President Salman Sheikh welcomed the distinguished guest. Briefing the Ambassador, the SCCI President said that trade between the two countries had reached 700 million euros. He proposed setting up direct business-to-business (B2B) links, exchanging trade delegations, and signing an agreement with an Irish chamber to help Sialkot export more sports goods, surgical instruments, textiles, and leather products. Ambassador Mary O'Neill, praised Sialkot's famous self-help industry. She highlighted that many traditional Irish sports items (like hurling balls and Gaelic footballs) and musical instruments were already made in Sialkot, and major Irish retailers source their goods from here. She shared that Ireland's high-tech economy offers Pakistani businesses a great gateway to the 350 million-strong European market. The meeting featured presentations from Dr Mariam Noman, President of the Women Chamber (WCCIS), on supporting female entrepreneurs. SCCI Vice President Salman Sheikh also proposed starting regular online B2B matchmaking meetings to easily connect business owners from both sides, an idea highly supported by the Irish delegation. The event ended with an exchange of corporate souvenirs and a vote of thanks by President SCCI, Syed Ahtesham Mazhar.—APP

Ignite, Mobilink Bank partner to establish NIC

ISLAMABAD: Ignite, operating under the Ministry of IT and Telecom (MoITT), has signed an agreement with the Mobilink Bank-led consortium, which included CyberVision International, to establish and operate the National Incubation Center (NIC) Sialkot, further strengthening Pakistan's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem. The partnership aimed to create a dedicated platform for technology-driven startups and innovative ventures in Sialkot, one of Pakistan's leading industrial and export hubs, said a news release. The signing ceremony took place at the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication offices in Islamabad and was attended by senior Ministry officials, Ignite and Mobilink Bank representatives. Speaking on the occasion, Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, said: "The establishment of NIC Sialkot reflects the Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif's Digital National Pakistan vision. The government is fully committed to nurturing innovation and digital entrepreneurship across Pakistan by equipping young entrepreneurs with the right resources and opportunities." Renowned globally for its sports goods, surgical instruments, leather products, and musical instruments industries, Sialkot has emerged as a growing center for e-commerce and digital exports. NIC Sialkot will strengthen this entrepreneurial strength by supporting up to 25 startups annually through mentorship, business development services, investor linkages, market access opportunities, and networking support. The establishment of NIC Sialkot aligns with the government's vision of expanding innovation infrastructure beyond major metropolitan centers, creating new opportunities for entrepreneurship, technology adoption, employment generation, and export growth across Pakistan. CEO Ignite Muhammad Bilal Abbasi said: "NIC Sialkot is another important milestone in Ignite's mission to strengthen Pakistan's startup ecosystem. The centre will help entrepreneurs transform innovative ideas into scalable businesses while promoting technology adoption, industrial productivity and export competitiveness." The National Incubation Centre (NIC) Sialkot, is aimed at empowering local entrepreneurs to build globally competitive companies. Applications for the inaugural Cohort 1 incubation programme are also officially open. To apply, visit the website of NIC Sialkot. <https://www.nic.sialkot.com> President and CEO Mobilink Bank, Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, said, Pakistan's economic resilience demands broad-based participation — not growth concentrated in a few cities, but opportunity extended to small enterprises across the country. At Mobilink Bank, we believe innovation must be accessible, inclusive, and rooted in local business realities. Through NIC Sialkot, we are equipping entrepreneurs with mentorship, digital tools, financial solutions, and market access to scale with confidence.—DNA

Govt to promote NTUF-KOICA to strengthen textile innovation

FAISALABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister (PM) for Trade Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan said on Tuesday the government was committed to supporting international academic and technological partnerships. He also emphasized the importance of strengthening collaboration between the National Textile University Faisalabad (NTUF) and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to boost innovation, research and capacity-building in Pakistan's textile sector. The PM's Coordinator expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation from National Textile University Faisalabad led by its Vice Chancellor/Recto Prof Dr. Rashid Masood. The delegation also included NTUF Registrar Salim Saif, Project Coordinator Dr. Qamar Khan and representatives of Korea International Cooperation Agency. The meeting reviewed the ongoing cooperation between NTUF and KOICA and discussed future avenues for collaboration aimed at enhancing educational excellence, technological advancement and industrial competitiveness. During the briefing, the NTUF delegation apprised Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan of the current status of projects being implemented with KOICA's support and highlighted progress made in various academic and technical initiatives. The participants also exchanged views on strategies to further strengthen institutional cooperation and maximize the benefits of international partnerships. Discussions focused on KOICA-supported projects designed to enhance the capacity of Pakistan's textile sector through technical and technological assistance, promotion of applied research and development of modern academic and industrial linkages. The meeting also examined several pending issues being faced by the university and explored measures for their timely resolution. Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan assured the delegation that the government would extend full support in promoting international collaboration in the education and tex-

tile sectors, noting that such partnerships play a vital role in developing a skilled workforce and accelerating technological progress. He stressed the need for prompt resolution of outstanding matters to ensure uninterrupted implementation of development projects and to enable educational institutions to contribute more effectively to national economic growth. The participants agreed to fur-

ther strengthen coordination mechanisms, expand areas of mutual cooperation and continue joint efforts for addressing pending issues through constructive engagement. They expressed confidence that enhanced collaboration between NTUF and KOICA would help advance research, innovation and human resource development in Pakistan's textile industry.—DNA



Israeli military gets green signal to bomb Beirut

DUBAI: Israeli ministers have authorized the military forces to strike Beirut in response to any rocket fire emanating from Lebanon and crosses into the country's territory, media reports say. Israel's security cabinet decided Monday morning that any rocket fire from Lebanon that crosses into Israeli territory will trigger an immediate strike on Beirut — no special political approval required, Israeli Channel 14 reported. During the Cabinet meeting, Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said "the fate of the Dahiye in Beirut is the fate of the towns of the north." Turkish Anadolu Agency also reported. The new rules of engagement became effective overnight, with no projectiles being fired into Israel since Monday morning. Iran fired a salvo of missiles at Israeli targets in retaliation for an attack on the outskirts of Beirut. That prompted an Israeli retaliation, despite US pressure for restraint, before President Donald Trump called for an "immediate ceasefire" and that final peace negotiations on "peace" are proceeding. Tehran has repeatedly stated any deal should include Lebanon — where Israel has been pressing its war with Iran-backed Hezbollah.—APP

Iraqi officials work to identify victims after bus crash kills 21

IRBIL, Iraq: Iraqi officials are working to identify the victims of a bus crash that killed 21 people, a provincial official said Monday. A passenger bus crashed and burst into flames Sunday in southern Iraq, in the latest deadly accident on the country's poorly maintained roads. Fourteen of the bodies were burned beyond recognition and have not been identified, said Ahmad Saleem, spokesperson for the Thi Qar provincial council. Two Iranian nationals are believed to be among the dead, though their bodies have not yet been identified, he said. The bus was traveling from the city of Najaf — which is holy to Shiite Muslims and a frequent destination for pilgrims — to the southern port city of Basra when the crash occurred at around 3 p.m. Sunday in Thi Qar province, between Thi Qar and Diwaniyah, Saleem said. In addition to the 21 people killed, another 20 were injured. The injured included two Iranians who were evacuated to Iran on Monday morning through the Iranian Consulate in Basra, the official said. Saleem attributed the crash to the road's poor condition, noting that local authorities had previously flagged it as a safety concern. He added that a severe shortage of ambulances in the province had hampered the response to the crash.—APP

Briefs

Egypt FM discusses regional security with US

DUBAI: Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty discussed on Tuesday with US Senior Advisor for Arab and African Affairs Massad Boulos, on developments across Sudan and Libya. Egypt's foreign ministry said that during the phone call both sides reviewed the situation in Sudan. Abdelatty stressed the importance of preserving the country's unity and territorial integrity, supporting national institutions, and rejecting the creation of any parallel governing bodies. He also underlined the need for a Sudanese-led political process to end the conflict, alongside an urgent humanitarian truce as a step toward a lasting ceasefire that would allow aid delivery and ease civilian suffering. The two officials also discussed Libya, with Abdelatty reaffirming Egypt's support for the country's stability and unity, and calling for the unification of state institutions. - APP

Chinese President Xi returns home

SEOUL: Chinese President Xi Jinping returned home on Tuesday following a rare trip to North Korea that included a bilateral meeting and public appearances with leader Kim Jong Un underscoring a joint push to reestablish the alliance between their countries. Xi flew to the capital Pyongyang on Monday in his first visit there in seven years. During their summit later in the day, Xi expressed China's willingness to expand cooperation in a wide range of areas including trade, agriculture, construction and technology, while Kim said the two countries will maintain their friendship as "the most important top-priority strategic work," according to Chinese and North Korean state media reports. Xi and Kim on Tuesday visited a North Korea-China friendship tower honoring Chinese soldiers who fought alongside North Korea during the 1950-53 Korean War. They stressed the importance of carrying forward the countries' traditional friendship and spirit of resistance against the United States, Chinese state media reported. - APP

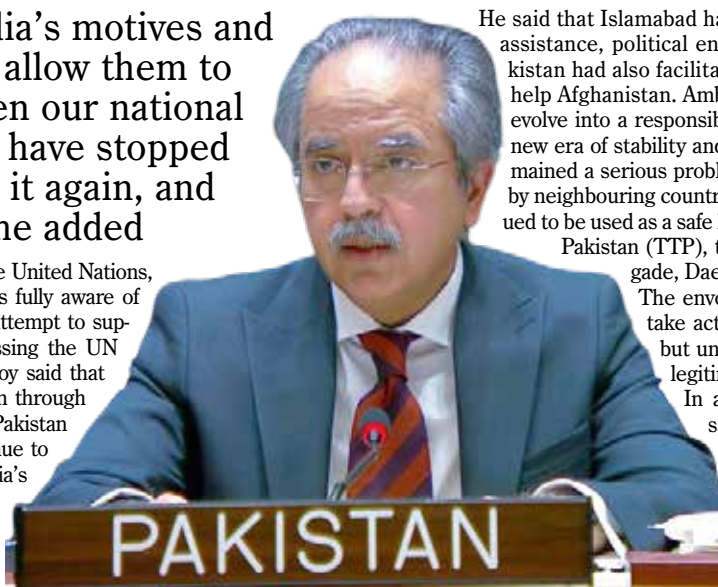
Ireland police arrest stabbing culprit

BELFAST: Police in Northern Ireland said Tuesday they had arrested a man following a "stabbing incident" in Belfast, with graphic online video prompting widespread condemnation and protest calls from UK far-right figures. The PSNI said the arrested man, in his 30s and believed to be Somali, had been detained on suspicion of attempted murder following the "serious assault involving a knife." The force said a man in his 40s was in hospital with serious injuries following the incident shortly after 10:30 p.m. (2130 GMT). - APP

Pakistan says aware of India's evil designs

"Pakistan is well aware of India's motives and evil designs. But we will not allow them to nourish terrorists and threaten our national security. I would say that we have stopped them before and we will do it again, and we will do it always," he added

NEW YORK: Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad said that Islamabad is fully aware of India's motives and evil designs and will not allow any attempt to support terrorists or threaten its national security. Addressing the UN Security Council on a Right of Reply, the Pakistani envoy said that India is pursuing policies aimed at destabilising Pakistan through militant groups operating from Afghan territory. He said Pakistan had countered such efforts in the past and would continue to do so whenever necessary. "Pakistan is well aware of India's motives and evil designs. But we will not allow them to nourish terrorists and threaten our national security. I would say that we have stopped them before and we will do it again, and we will do it always," he added.



He said that Islamabad had supported the Afghan people through humanitarian assistance, political engagement, and dialogue initiatives. He added that Pakistan had also facilitated bilateral trade and provided transit concessions to help Afghanistan. Ambassador Asim said it was expected that the Taliban would evolve into a responsible governing administration and lead Afghanistan into a new era of stability and development. However, he noted that terrorism has remained a serious problem in Afghanistan for decades, with its effects being felt by neighbouring countries and the wider region. He said Afghan territory continued to be used as a safe haven by terrorist groups, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), the Majeed Brigade, Daesh-Khorasan and the East Turkestan Islamic Movement. The envoy said Pakistan had expected the Taliban authorities to take action against terrorist groups operating from Afghan soil, but unfortunately, they had failed to do so and had ignored the legitimate security concerns of Pakistan and other countries. In a right of reply during the meeting, Ambassador Asim said terrorism emanating from Afghanistan continues to affect Pakistan and has claimed the lives of hundreds of Pakistani citizens, including women, children and security personnel. The ambassador said more than 1,200 Pakistanis lost their lives in terrorist attacks last year and maintained that Pakistan would continue taking all necessary measures to defend its national security.



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ms. Jane Marriott, called on the Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environment Coordination, Dr. Musadik Malik. - DNA

PM Shehbaz directs to accelerate privatisation process of power DISCOs

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the relevant authorities to accelerate the privatisation process of electricity distribution companies (DISCOs), reiterating that offloading loss-making State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) was a priority for the government. During a high-level review meeting here, the prime minister instructed officials to ensure complete transparency throughout the privatisation process and establish a robust regulatory framework immediately following the transition of the DISCOs to the private sector. During the briefing on the progress regarding the privatisation of DISCOs, it was told that in the first phase, IESCO, GEPCO, and FESCO would be privatised as the Expression of Interest (EOI) for the purpose had already been published in national and international newspapers. - APP

Govt likely to present Federal Budget 2026-27 on June 12

FinMin Aurangzeb to present budget before lower house of parliament, says Tariq Fazal Chaudhry

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The federal budget for the fiscal year 2026-27 is likely to be presented in the National Assembly on June 12, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said on Tuesday. He said Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb will present the federal budget for the upcoming fiscal year before the lower house of parliament. The announcement marks a further adjustment to the budget schedule. The federal government had earlier decided to present the budget on June 10 after postponing it from June 5 amid consultations with coalition partners and discussions on proposed budgetary measures. Taking to X on Tuesday, the minister said that a summary has been sent to convene sessions of both the National Assembly and the Senate. He said the National Assembly session has been proposed for June 10 at 5pm, while a separate summary has been sent to summon the Senate session on the same day at 4pm. The minister added that the federal budget for the fiscal year 2026-27 is likely to be presented on June 12. Meanwhile, the meeting of the National Economic Council (NEC), scheduled for June 8, was postponed for the third time at the last moment amid ongoing negotiations to approve the national development outlay and macroeconomic framework for the next budget. An updated official schedule for the release of the Economic Survey of Pakistan as well as the federal budget has not yet been issued.

The development comes a day after the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), a key ally in the Centre, assured the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led government of its support for the passage of the federal budget, sources told. The assurance was conveyed during a high-level consultative meeting between a PPP delegation led by President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad. According to sources, the two sides reached broad agreement on most budget proposals, while technical committees will continue consultations on a few remaining issues to finalise the fiscal framework. During the meeting, President Zardari emphasised the need to prioritise public welfare, provincial rights and economic stability in the upcoming budget, according to a statement issued by the President's House Secretariat. He also directed that economic growth measures be aligned with public welfare initiatives. Parliamentary sources had earlier told that the delay in the budget presentation stemmed from coalition partners' objections to certain proposed measures, prompting the government to continue consultations before finalising the budget. Last week, Finance Minister Aurangzeb said the government was working to build consensus among coalition partners, describing the discussions as positive. He added that the budget was being prepared in coordination with IMF, allied parties and other stakeholders, with a focus on improving tax administration through enforcement measures and broadening the tax base.

PSX gains over 1,700 points

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) surged by more than 1,700 points on Tuesday as lower international oil prices and improving political sentiment fuelled investor confidence. The benchmark KSE-100 Index gained 1,756.89 points, or 1.04%, to close at 170,710.59 points, compared with the previous close of 168,953.70 points. "PSX is rising due to international oil prices coming down after yesterday's escalation on the Iran-Israel front ended," said Ahfaz Mustafa, chief executive officer of Ismail Iqbal Securities. He added that reports of the federal budget being finalised and likely to be presented on June 12 also provided relief to market participants.

"On the [local front], rumours of the budget being finalised and presented on the 12th gave participants some relief on the political front, ensuring that there was no real opposition to the budget and that it would be passed," Mustafa said. Oil prices fell on Tuesday, erasing most of the previous session's gains, after Iran and Israel said they had halted attacks on each other following an appeal from US President Donald Trump, though both sides warned they could resume hostilities. Asian stocks enjoyed a partial rebound from the previous day's rout as investors returned to the AI trade, while easing Middle East tensions also provided support. The gains across most equity markets followed a rebound on Wall Street, fuelled by a race to pick up cheaper assets following a sell-off sparked by bets on a US interest rate hike and warnings over tech firms' valuations. - DNA

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SCAN TO VISIT WEBSITE

Hezbollah urges Lebanon authorities to mend ties with Iran

BEIRUT: Hezbollah on Tuesday urged Lebanese authorities to mend their relationship with the group's backer Iran and benefit from Tehran's support, days after Iran struck Israel in response to bombardment on south Beirut. Last week Lebanon's president and prime minister issued pointed calls for Tehran to stop interfering in their country's affairs, after Hezbollah rejected a conditional ceasefire with Israel. "We call on the Lebanese authorities to seize the opportunity available and correct their official relationship with the Islamic republic in a way that serves the interest of both states," a Hezbollah statement said. Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the Middle East war on March 2 with rocket fire at Israel to avenge the killing of Iran's supreme leader in US-Israeli strikes. Iran insists a halt to the wider Middle East conflict must include a ceasefire in Lebanon. Iran launched missiles at Israel on Sunday in response to Israel bombing Beirut's southern suburbs, a Hezbollah stronghold. Iran warned it would resume attacks on Israel if the latter kept striking Lebanon. Iran and Israel, which fired back, on Monday halted the fresh hostilities. Hezbollah said Iran's attack on Israel "in defense of our Lebanese people is a message of the Islamic republic's commitment, morally, politically and on the ground, toward Lebanon." It urged Lebanese authorities to "use this Iranian support to achieve our national objectives." - APP

CEC orders re-polling in multiple constituencies

CEC confirms re-polling to be held in selected polling stations across five constituencies on June 15

STAFF REPORT

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Election Commissioner Raja Shahbaz on Tuesday announced that final results for multiple constituencies were withheld until the completion of partial re-polling scheduled for next week. The announcement came amid concerns raised by several political parties, including the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), over the transparency of the Gilgit-Baltistan elections. They alleged delays in the announcement of results, irregularities in the issuance of Form-45s, and attempts to influence outcomes as unofficial results began to emerge. In response to the complaints, the election authorities ordered re-polling in selected polling stations across five constituencies: GBA-8, GBA-13 Astore, GBA-15 Diar-I, GBA-16 Diar-II and GBA-17 Diar-III, rather than annulling results for entire seats. Speaking

to Geo News, CEC Shahbaz confirmed that re-polling has been scheduled for June 15 in the affected polling stations. He said final results for all constituencies would remain suspended until voting was conducted again in the identified areas. An election official applies ink on a voter's thumb at a polling station during the Gilgit-Baltistan General Elections 2026. According to the CEC, re-polling would be held in 10 polling stations in GBA-8, one in GBA-13 Astore, one in GBA-15 Diar-I, three in GBA-16 Diar-II, and 11 in GBA-17 Diar-III. Shahbaz also confirmed that Form-47s for all constituencies had been finalised, but said their issuance would only be completed after the conclusion of the re-polling process. The Bilawal Bhutto-led PPP has emerged as the single largest party in the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly elections, with unofficial and preliminary results showing it secured 10 of the 24 seats. According to unofficial and unconfirmed results, the PPP won constituencies including GBA-1, GBA-4, GBA-5, GBA-7, GBA-9, GBA-10, GBA-11, GBA-12, GBA-17 and GBA-19.