



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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Indonesia, Pakistan realtions poised for quantum leap

Detailed News On Page-08

Economic stability enables balanced budget, says Tarar

Detailed News On Page-08

India behind AJK unrest, says Bilawal

Detailed News On Page-01

Briefs

Anti-Islam activist detained in Britan

NEWS DESK

LONDON: British anti-Islam activist Tommy Robinson said he was detained at Heathrow Airport on Saturday and had his phone seized, after a week when he posted heavily online about racist and anti-immigrant riots in Northern Ireland. Robinson, whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, said on X he was held on Saturday evening for around three hours under the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act. "My phone has been seized by the police," he said on X. "Please help kick off my legal fund for defense." Robinson tweeted repeatedly last week about violence that swept Belfast after a video went viral showing the brutal stabbing of a man, who lost an eye in the attack. A Sudanese man has been charged with attempted murder. Police have said they are not treating the attack as terrorism. In the days that followed rioters targeted homes and businesses owned by ethnic minorities or foreign residents in what the British minister for the province called racist thuggery. Local politicians have said far-right agitators online had helped to coordinate or promote the violence.

Ishaq Dar talks to Egyptian FM

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has telephonically talked to Foreign Minister of Egypt, Dr. Badr Abdelatty. They discussed the latest regional developments, including progress towards an understanding between the United States and Iran. They expressed the hope that these positive developments would contribute to lasting peace, security, and stability across the region. Both sides agreed to maintain close contact. Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar held a telephonic conversation today with Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud. They welcomed the US-Iran negotiations in the final stage. They expressed the hope that this important development will contribute to lasting peace and stability in the region.

Bid to travel abroad on fake docs foiled

DNA

MULTAN: The Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Immigration Wing on Sunday foiled an alleged attempt by a government employee to travel abroad from Multan Airport using a fake no-objection certificate (NOC). In a press release, the agency said that a passenger, identified as Mohsin Ali, was travelling to the United Arab Emirates on flight number PA812. It added that the passenger was serving as a ward servant at the District Health Authority, Vehari. "According to initial investigation, the passenger presented an NOC for travelling abroad, which was found to be fake during verification," the release said.

Diplomatic Deadlock

Tehran resists Trump's timeline

Iran says draft US deal includes oil sanctions waiver, nuclear limits and asset release

CENTRELINE REPORT

TEHRAN: A high-stakes diplomatic race between Washington and Tehran has collided with a dangerous spike in regional violence. Even as U.S. President Donald Trump pushes for an immediate signing of a new Middle East framework agreement, Iranian state media reports that Tehran is slow-walking the process—accusing Trump of seeking personal mileage to celebrate his 80th birthday today, June 14, while Israeli airstrikes rock the Lebanese capital. A major diplomatic showdown is unfolding on the timeline of the U.S. President's birthday celebrations. While President Trump announced that a major Memorandum of Understanding to end the wider West Asia war and reopen the strategic Strait of Hormuz was close to being finalized, Tehran has aggressively put on the brakes. Iranian state negotiators flatly rejected the

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'No more Israeli attacks' in Lebanon: Trump

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has called for end to attacks by Israel in Lebanon, saying the attack on Beirut "should not have happened" when the Washington was close to a deal with Iran. "Israel has the right to defend itself against threats, but the attack it was responding to was very small and meaningless, nobody was hurt, injured, or killed, and should not disrupt this important process," he wrote on Truth Social.

'Rulers deceiving themselves'

Opp leaders reject budget, say public crushed by poverty

Leaders from different opposition parties demand spending cuts, tax relief, structural economic reforms

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Opposition leaders on Sunday rejected the federal budget, accusing the government of ignoring economic realities, burdening citizens with taxes and failing to address rising poverty. "They [rulers] are deceiving themselves," Senate Opposition Leader Allama Raja Nasir Abbas said while addressing a budget seminar in Islamabad, criticising the government's claim that a person earning Rs280 a day was not below the poverty line. Abbas said rulers were "not ready to see facts with their own eyes" and alleged that the government had failed to provide services to people.

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Business leaders caution response to budget

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Business leaders on Sunday gave a mixed verdict on the federal budget for the fiscal year 2026-27, arguing that high energy costs, elevated tax rates and policy challenges continued to hinder investment in the country. The development emerged during a special

Continued on Page 06



NEW YORK: Players of Brazil and Morocco scramble for the ball as both teams secure one point each in their World Cup pool match. Detailed news on Page 6. - DNA

Spain beat Pakistan 5-1 in Pro League hockey match

DNA

BRUSSELS: A disappointing result from the turf as Spain handed Pakistan a heavy 5-1 defeat in their latest FIH Pro League encounter. The loss marks the Green Shirts' 10th consecutive defeat in the competition, extending a dismal run that has raised serious questions about the team's current form and future direction. Spain dominated possession and created chances at will, slicing through Pakistan's defense with clinical precision. Pakistan briefly showed signs of resistance, pulling one goal back, but the Spanish side responded ruthlessly to restore their multi-goal cushion before adding further strikes.

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Russian FMD vaccine supply restored in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The supply of Russian Foot and Mouth Disease vaccine has been restored to Pakistan, providing much-needed relief to the livestock sector. The disease afflicts millions of livestock in Pakistan, severely affecting their production and exports. About 2,100 cases of the disease have been reported in the last three years. Through the support of Special Investment Facilitation Council, the issue of supply of

Continued on Page 06

Bad security situation

PPP AJK urges election commission to withdraw polling schedule

PPP is not in favour of any confrontation or clash. 12 refugee seats cannot be more valuable than human lives

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: PPP's Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) chapter on Sunday urged the region's election commission to immediately withdraw the election schedule for 12 refugee seats, stressing the need for dialogue to defuse the ongoing crisis. The call comes ahead of the July 27 elections in AJK amid widespread protests by the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) over their demand to abolish 12 seats in the region's Legislative Assembly that are reserved for refugees from Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir who settled in mainland Pakistan after 1947. Elections for these seats are held separately from the 33 general seats in AJK, with refugees registered in 12 constituencies across Pakistan voting for their representatives. PPP-AJK President Chaudhry

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AJK unrest aiding 'India-Israel nexus', damages Kashmir cause

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Sunday said that the ongoing unrest in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) was damaging both the Kashmir cause and Pakistan's reputation as clashes between proscripted committee members and police left multiple people dead and dozens injured. "The situation [in AJK] was providing an unnecessary opportunity for hostile elements and

Continued on Page 06

Indian lawmakers slam US response after killing of sailors

DNA

NEW DELHI: Indian lawmakers denounced on Sunday the lack of a US apology over the killing of three seafarers off the coast of Oman, as another sailor died from medical complications aboard a vessel stranded in the region amid the US blockade.

Aditya Sharma, a cadet, Shivanand Chaurashiya, a fitter, and Patnala Suresh, a chief engineer, were killed aboard the Palau-flagged MT Settebelo when a US aircraft fired into the tanker's engine room last week. While the Indian Ministry of External Affairs summoned Washington's envoy to

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Crucial months to shape Pakistan's political future

“Perhaps it is time to consider something new a national government that brings together all political parties. Such an arrangement may well be the option favored by the Establishment, but how it could be implemented remains the million-dollar question”

OPINION

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI



THE recent elections in Gilgit-Baltistan have placed the PPP in a commanding position an outcome largely anticipated given the evolving political landscape and the ruling PML-N's performance over the past three years. The budget has now been presented and is expected to pass smoothly through parliament. Yet, the pressing question remains: can the ruling party sustain its tenure for another two years? The establishment had sought to secure the 28th Amendment before the budget session, but disagreements among political parties delayed the move. As a result, the matter will likely be revisited after the budget. This makes the coming months particularly crucial, as they will shape the country's future political trajectory. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), despite facing unprecedented restrictions, continues to gain political traction. In last elections in GB the party had secured two-thirds majority and this time it was even not allowed to contest the elections. Even then,

the party's resilience in the face of adversity has become a defining feature of its current trajectory. With each passing day, PTI's popularity appears to be expanding, even though it is barred from holding public meetings, rallies, or gatherings. This paradoxical rise can be attributed to two major factors: the continued imprisonment of Imran Khan and the governance failures of the incumbent government. The imprisonment of Imran Khan has transformed him into a symbol of resistance and injustice. For many Pakistanis, his confinement is not merely a legal matter but a political statement. The longer Khan remains behind bars, the more sympathy he garners from the masses. People perceive his imprisonment as a denial of democratic rights and an act of political victimization. This perception fuels public support for PTI, as citizens rally behind the idea of justice and fairness. Interestingly, Khan's absence from the political stage has not diminished his influence. Instead, it has amplified it. His supporters argue that he is more dangerous to his opponents while in jail than outside it, as his imprisonment continuously reminds the public of the alleged injustices meted out to him. This dynamic has created a powerful narrative: Khan as a martyr of democracy, and PTI as the vehicle of change. Parallel to Khan's imprisonment, the incumbent government's inability to deliver on governance has further strengthened

PTI's position. The economy remains fragile, with foreign reserves largely dependent on borrowed funds. Inflation continues to burden ordinary citizens, while corruption, nepotism, and jobbery dominate the political landscape. These failures have eroded public trust in the ruling coalition, creating fertile ground for PTI's resurgence. Even on the international front, where Pakistan briefly gained relief due to the easing of U.S.-Iran tensions, the political government failed to capitalize. Instead, the credit went to the military establishment, further diminishing the civilian government's credibility. This imbalance has reinforced the perception that the political leadership is weak and ineffective, while PTI or for that matter PPP represent a stronger alternative. The military establishment's growing influence in political affairs has complicated the situation. The U.S.-Iran standoff highlighted how the military, rather than the civilian government, was seen as the stabilizing force. This dynamic raises questions about the balance of power in Pakistan. For PTI, PPP this presents both a challenge and an opportunity. While the parties may struggle against institutional resistance, its narrative of civilian supremacy and anti-establishment politics resonates with a significant portion of the population. Talking specifically about the PTI, if current trends persist, the party is poised to emerge as the larg-

est party in the next elections. The combination of Imran Khan's symbolic power and the government's governance issues creates a strong electoral advantage. However, the political landscape in Pakistan is fluid, and scenarios may change rapidly. If another national government setup is introduced before elections, PTI may secure a share in governance but not necessarily a leading role. Much will depend on how the establishment and ruling coalition manage the pre-election environment. The future of PTI in Pakistan's politics is shaped by a paradox: restrictions on its activities have not weakened the party but strengthened its appeal. Imran Khan's imprisonment has become a rallying point for supporters, while governance failures of the incumbent government have amplified PTI's narrative of change. As long as Khan remains in jail, public sympathy will continue to grow, making PTI a formidable force in the political arena. The PPP, meanwhile, is eager to position itself as the viable alternative should a change at the federal level be pursued. Yet the critical question remains: can leaders who have already been tested truly deliver better results this time? Perhaps it is time to consider something new a national government that brings together all political parties. Such an arrangement may well be the option favored by the Establishment, but how it could be implemented remains the million-dollar question.

Four of a family killed over property dispute

PESHAWAR: At least for members of the same family were killed after a property dispute turned into a deadly clash between two groups in Bannu district, rescue and local police officials said on Sunday. Police said the incident took place late Saturday night in Odeen Kallay area of Bannu, where a long-standing property dispute between two groups escalated into an armed confrontation. Heavy gunfire was exchanged during the clash, leaving four members of a family critically injured.

The victims were identified as Umar Nawaz, son of Syed Alam alias Landai, Matiullah, son of Umar Nawaz, Farmanullah, son of Umar Nawaz and Umair, son of Fareedullah Shah. Rescue 1122 medical teams rushed to the scene and shifted the injured to RHC Domel Hospital. However, doctors pronounced all four victims dead upon arrival. Police said the incident was the result of an old property dispute that had been ongoing for a considerable period. Among those killed were a father and his two sons, while the fourth victim was reported to be a close relative. The tragedy has spread fear and concern throughout the area. Locals said tensions over the property had persisted for years before culminating in the deadly confrontation.

Police have launched an investigation and are conducting raids to arrest those involved.—APP

Greek envoy, Imtiaz Shaikh discuss bilateral ties

KARACHI: Ambassador of Greece to Pakistan, Irene Pochini here called on Pakistan Peoples Party leader and Member of the Sindh Assembly Imtiaz Ahmed Shaikh at his residence on Saturday and discussed matters of mutual interest, bilateral relations, investment opportunities, women empowerment and ongoing development projects in Sindh. The Greek Ambassador appreciated the hospitality, cultural diversity and traditions of the people of Sindh, saying that the love, tolerance and rich culture of Sindh had greatly impressed her. She emphasized the need to further strengthen relations between Pakistan and Greece and expressed a desire to enhance cooperation in various sectors. Ambassador Irene Pochini praised Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's vision for women empowerment and the legislation introduced in this regard MPA Imtiaz Ahmed Shaikh said that the Pakistan Peoples Party has always taken practical steps for the protection of women's rights, their welfare and empowerment, and that the party leadership remains committed to advancing this mission.

He said that Sindh offers vast opportunities for local and foreign investors and the provincial government was providing a conducive environment for investment. Imtiaz Shaikh further stated that, in line with Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's vision, several development projects are being successfully implemented under public-private partnership initiatives, with their positive impact reaching the people.—APP



Islamabad – Ambassador of France Nicolas Galey presented an award to the winner of Francophonie Talents at a ceremony held in Islamabad. The ambassadors of Romania and Belgium were also present on the occasion and looked on as the French envoy handed over the prize, marking a moment of diplomatic camaraderie and cultural exchange. The guests enjoyed Francophonie buffet as well. DNA

Govt land worth hundreds of billions retrieved in Balochistan

QUETTA: In a significant step towards restoring the writ of the state and safeguarding public resources, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Balochistan has successfully recovered government land worth hundreds of billions of rupees from illegal occupation. The actions were carried out in compliance with directives issued by NAB Headquarters, aimed at eliminating unlawful encroachments, promoting transparent accountability, and ensuring the recovery and protection of national assets. This achievement was made possible through the directives of the Chief Minister of Balochistan and the coordinated efforts of the Provincial Government, the Revenue Department, and the Forest and Wildlife Department, said a news release. According to details, during an initial scrutiny of forest lands in Balochistan in 2025, it was revealed that there was no properly maintained official land transfer record for approximately 2.8 million acres of land belonging to the Forest Department.

Taking serious notice of the situation, NAB Balochistan initiated immediate and impartial action on the instructions of the Chairman NAB. During 2025, more than one million acres of government land were recovered, resulting in the protection and recovery of assets valued at approximately Rs. 1,370 billion. This operation ranks among the largest land recovery drives in Pakistan's history. Maintaining this momentum, NAB intensified its operations in 2026, leading to the recovery of approximately 260,000 acres of government land in Quetta, Sibi, Sherani, Hub, Lasbela, and Gwadar districts, with an estimated value of Rs. 414.2 billion. In Quetta, approximately 47,000 acres of Forest and Wildlife Department land were recovered, valued at Rs 354 billion, marking one of the most financially substantial recoveries. The largest land recovery in terms of area was reported in Gwadar, where 176,000 acres worth Rs 25 billion were retrieved. Other dis-

tricts also saw notable progress, including Sibi with 2,861 acres valued at Rs 2.3 billion, Sherani with 15,000 acres worth Rs 29 billion, Hub with 153 acres valued at Rs. 500 million, and Lasbela with 17,000 acres worth Rs. 2.2 billion. The Balochistan government extended full support throughout the process, while the Senior Member Board of Revenue (SMBR) Balochistan and the Forest Department played a pivotal role in ensuring the success of the operation. The achievement highlights the importance of inter-departmental coordination in protecting state resources and enforcing the rule of law. NAB reiterated its commitment to implementing a zero-tolerance policy against corruption and land-grabbing mafias. Illegal occupation of state land will not be tolerated under any circumstances, and operations will continue in accordance with the law, without discrimination, and with complete transparency.—DNA

Camps set up in remote areas of Upper Kohistan to safeguard children from infectious illnesses

PESHAWAR :To protect children from vaccine-preventable diseases and curb the spread of infectious diseases in the remote, sparsely populated mountainous areas of Upper Kohistan district, three vaccination camps were organized to provide essential immunization services to underserved communities. The camps were established at Sachoi, Thoki and Gujjar Bond in Gabar Nala (Goshali), located about 24 kilometres east of Komila Bazaar off the Karakoram Highway. Residents of Gabar Nala, also known as Goshali, are scattered across rugged mountainous terrain and live under challenging geographical conditions, making access to healthcare services very difficult. "To ensure vaccination coverage in these hard-to-reach areas, HHUJRA Village Support Organization (HVSO), with support from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, organized the camps, says Dr Munib, team lead HHUJRA. The initiative aimed to improve immunization coverage and raise awareness among community members about the importance of routine vaccination for children and pregnant women. The camps marked an important step towards improving public health in the remote mountainous region by protecting children from vaccine-preventable diseases and reducing the risk of infectious disease outbreaks, he added. Health workers administered vaccines in accordance with the national immunization schedule and guided disease prevention and child health. During the camps, children were vaccinated against various diseases, particularly measles, while special efforts were made to identify and vaccinate zero-dose children who had not previously received routine immunization. The camps played a significant role in extending vaccination services to remote and scattered populations and successfully brought many previously unvaccinated children into the immunization network. Local residents appreciated the initiative and described it as a major step towards protecting children's health and improving access to essential healthcare services in the area. Before the camps, community mobilization activities were carried out to encourage participation. As a result, parents and caregivers actively brought their children for vaccination. At the same time, health workers educated families about the benefits of timely immunization and the importance of completing follow-up doses.—APP

IWT violations by India put Kohistani Markhor

KOHISTAN: As dawn breaks over the rugged mountains of Dasu in Upper Kohistan, a lone Kashmiri markhor carefully navigates a rocky cliff overlooking a valley carved by centuries of flowing water of River Indus. The endangered wild goat, famed for its majestic spiral horns and remarkable agility, has long depended on the freshwater streams and alpine meadows sustained by the Indus river system. Today, wildlife experts feared that this iconic species faces a growing threat of extinction not from poachers or predators alone, but from shrinking water resources linked to India's violations of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). For generations, the rivers of Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab have nourished not only millions of people but also the forests, grasslands, wetlands, aquatic resources and mountain habitats that support a rich diversity of wildlife. Conservationists warned that any disruption in the natural flow of these western rivers could have far-reaching negative consequences for fragile ecosystems stretching from the Himalayas region of Kashmir to the plains of Punjab and northern hills Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "Without smooth flow of water, there is hardly any survival of wildlife and Markhor," said Dr. Muhammad Mumtaz Malik, former Chief Conservator of Wildlife, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Standing among maps and wildlife surveys accumulated over decades of conservation work, he described water

as the lifeline of Himalayan biodiversity, fisheries and wildlife. "Water is essential for wildlife and biodiversity survival. Conservation efforts in KP, Azad Kashmir and Punjab will suffer immensely if western river flows decline amid IWT violations. The entire food chain depends on these freshwater systems," he said. High in the alpine meadows, the Kohistani markhor relies on vegetation sustained by seasonal streams and mountain springs. According to Dr Mumtaz Malik, changes in water availability can alter plant growth, reduce grazing opportunities, and fragment habitats already under pressure from climate change. As river systems become increasingly stressed, Dr. Malik warned that the markhor may face greater difficulty accessing food and water, particularly during prolonged dry periods. Habitat degradation could accelerate Markhor population decline among species already struggling for survival in Kashmir region after IWT violations. The concern extends far beyond a single species but entire biodiversity including migratory birds and trout fish. KP and Azad Kashmir's diverse landscape, ranging from subtropical forests to snow-covered peaks, provides refuge to some of South Asia's most remarkable wildlife, including the snow leopard, Himalayan brown bear, musk deer, Himalayan goral, Eurasian lynx, pangolin, barking deer, and grey wolf. Environmentalists feared that reduced river flows could trigger a

chain reaction across these interconnected ecosystems. Shrinking freshwater sources may affect breeding cycles, force wildlife migration, reduce vegetation cover, and weaken natural resilience against drought. Along the banks of the Indus at Dasu and Dubai Valleys in Upper and Lower Kohistan districts, local fishermen and farmers spoke of their deep connection with the river. For many communities, water is not merely a resource rather it is a way of life. It irrigates crops, sustain livestock, supports fisheries, and nourishes forests that shelter wildlife. "When there is no water, there are no habitats. And when habitats collapse, conservation programs collapse," Dr. Malik emphasized. He said the issue extends beyond wildlife conservation and poses wider ecological and human challenges. "Wildlife and biodiversity keep ecosystems healthy and support sustainable agriculture and food security," he said. "Reduced water flow increases the risk of drought and desertification. That translates into hunger, poverty, and food insecurity for millions of people." Experts said Pakistan is already among the countries most vulnerable to climate change, facing erratic rainfall patterns, glacial melt fluctuations, and increasing environmental stress. They cautioned that additional pressure on river systems could worsen existing challenges, affecting agriculture, forests, pollinators, and wildlife alike.—DNA

Kundi lauds Red Crescent's free medical services

He reaffirmed his commitment to raising his voice at every forum for the protection of the province's constitutional rights and the resolution of public issues

MANSEHRA Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday praised the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) for providing free healthcare services in remote areas, saying the organisation had always remained at the forefront of serving people in need. During a visit to a free medical camp organised by the Pakistan Red Crescent Society Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Branch at Lassan Thakral in Mansehra, the Governor appreciated the PRCS medical team for examining hundreds of male and female patients and providing them with free medicines. He said the establishment of free medical camps in far-flung areas such as Lassan

Thakral was a great relief for local communities, adding that such initiatives would be expanded to other remote regions of the province. Governor Kundi said two important agreements would soon be signed to facilitate patients suffering from thalassaemia and those requiring dialysis treatment. He said the mission was to ensure healthcare facilities and promote self-reliance among underprivileged communities. He also acknowledged the Pakistan Red Crescent Society's exemplary services during flood emergencies, saying that the organisation had not only distributed relief goods but also extended financial assistance to flood-affected families. Speaking to the media, the Governor said issues relating to CNG and wheat supply had not been resolved through correspondence by the provincial government. He welcomed the chief minister's proposal to work jointly for resolving provincial issues, saying effective cooperation between the federal and provincial governments was essential for addressing the challenges facing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He thanked the Prime Minister for resolving the CNG issue and said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was the country's second-largest producer of oil and gas after Balochistan. Under the Constitution, he said, provinces producing natural resources had the first right over those resources. The Governor termed restrictions on wheat transportation contrary to constitutional and legal provisions and said he had already brought complaints regarding obstacles in wheat movement and illegal collections to the notice of the Prime Minister. He reaffirmed his commitment to raising his voice at every forum for the protection of the province's constitutional rights and the resolution of public issues.—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
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- ### Water Tank
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 - Potohar Town.....9209224
 - Rawal Town.....5773343

- ### Water Tank
- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

APNS Federal Committee demands fair distribution of advertisements

The participants urged the need for fixing meetings with Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Secretary Information and the Principal Information Officer to force them to resolve these issues



DNA

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Federal Committee of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) was held at Ali Akbar House, Islamabad, chaired by the Committee Chairman and Editor-in-Chief of Pakistan Observer, Mr. Faisal Zahid Malik. The meeting reviewed in detail the issues facing the newspaper industry. Participants expressed grave concern that the newspaper industry is currently facing a severe crisis and its survival is at stake, and therefore the government and relevant authorities must take immediate action. Participants regretted that the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

and its subordinate bodies have failed to ensure fair and transparent distribution of advertisements to newspapers. Furthermore, the Press Information Department (PID) has not cleared newspaper dues despite several years having passed. The meeting noted that three years have passed since the current government came to power, but during this period no effective measures have been taken for the welfare of the newspaper industry or to resolve its financial difficulties. Participants demanded that at least 50% of outstanding dues be paid immediately during June 2026 to ease the financial hardships faced by newspapers. The meeting also emphasized that the current system of government advertisement dis-

tribution has been unjust for a long time and must be made transparent and merit-based without delay. Federal Committee members warned that if dues are not paid within the next six months, APNS will consider suspending advertisements for defaulting government institutions again. Participants also expressed dissatisfaction that PID's role in recovering payments from various government institutions has not been effective. The meeting demanded that immediate meetings be arranged with the Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, the Secretary of Information, and the Principal Information Officer to take practical steps to resolve the issues facing the newspaper industry. Participants

urged APNS leadership to review various public and private clients and make the dues recovery process more effective and organized. It was also agreed that unity and solidarity among all APNS members is essential for the protection of the newspaper industry. At the conclusion of the meeting, it was decided that the next meeting of the APNS Federal Committee will be convened soon to review progress on these matters. The meeting was attended by Hafiz Asim (Nawa-i-Waqt/The Nation), Naveed Niazi (Daily Pakistan), Ansar Bhatti (Centreline), Tariq Mughal (Nawa-i-Pak), Waseem Ahmed (Daily Awaam), Syed Ahmed Ali (Daily Jang), Khushnood Ali Khan (Daily Sahafat), Rafi Niazi (Daily Patriot), and Syed Irfan Shah.

133 premises sealed over Anti-Dengue SOP violations

RAWALPINDI: The District Administration, in collaboration with allied departments, has sealed 133 premises and registered 796 First Information Reports (FIRs) over violations of anti-dengue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) from January 1 to date. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC) Dr Jawad Ahmed, Saturday, said the authorities had also issued 625 challans and imposed fines amounting to Rs. 1.966 million on violators in different parts of the district. Giving details of surveillance activities, he said 1,268 anti-dengue teams had conducted indoor inspections at 20,765,061 houses since January 1 and detected dengue larvae at 39,272 homes. Similarly, during outdoor surveillance, the teams inspected 934,586 locations and found dengue larvae at 46,167 spots, he added. Dr Jawad Ahmed said only two confirmed dengue cases had been reported in the district so far this year, compared with nine cases during the corresponding period in 2025, 14 in 2024, and eight each in 2023 and 2022. —APP

AIOU announces July 1 admissions

ISLAMABAD :Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) announced admissions for the Fall 2026 semester in a wide range of academic programs from Matriculation to PhD level. The nationwide admission campaign will officially begin on July 1, 2026 across all four provinces of Pakistan as well as Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and other northern regions. In line with the vision of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood, the University is expanding its portfolio of market-driven and job-oriented programs to equip young people with the education and skills required in today's competitive environment. As part of this initiative, various technical, professional, diploma and certificate programs will also be offered during the semester to help develop a skilled workforce capable of contributing to the country's socio-economic development.—DNA

China's poverty alleviation model

DNA

ISLAMABAD: "True development is not merely a reflection of GDP growth, but a holistic transformation of human capability and societal governance structures. China successfully redefined institutional frameworks to lift hundreds of millions out of poverty." This was stated by Khalid Malik, former United Nations Resident Coordinator in China and former Director of the UNDP Human Development Report Office, as the keynote speaker at a seminar titled "Development as Transformation: Learning from China." The seminar was organized by the China Study Centre at COMSATS University Islamabad to commemorate the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan, China Economic Net reported

The event brought together global diplomats, university leadership, academia and students, including Mr. Chen Peng, Cultural Counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, as the Chief Guest. Mr. Malik provided an in-depth analysis of China's transformative development paradigm. Drawing on his extensive experience with the United Nations and his historic tenure in Beijing, he explained how China has redefined the institutional framework to lift hundreds of millions out of poverty. China has secured a complete victory in the fight against poverty. According to official figures, the country has lifted all 98.99 million rural residents living below the current poverty line out of poverty. All 832 designated poverty-stricken counties and 128,000 impoverished villages have been removed from the poverty list, and the problem of regional overall poverty has been solved, completing

the arduous task of eliminating absolute poverty. Since China's reform and opening-up, the country has achieved the poverty reduction target of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development a decade ahead of schedule. According to the World Bank's international poverty standard, China's poverty reduction has accounted for more than 70 percent of global poverty reduction during the same period, significantly shrinking the world poverty map. Poverty remains a persistent challenge for human societies, and lifting people out of poverty has been a prominent issue troubling global development and governance. Pakistan is no exception. The country's poverty rate has risen to 28.9 percent, meaning nearly 29 out of every 100 Pakistanis now live below the poverty line, according to the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2025-26.

Pak-China Pharmaceutical investment conference

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is set to host its first Pak-China Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Investment Conference from July 16 to 19 in Karachi, as efforts intensify to attract Chinese investment into the country's pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors. About the event, Jamil Qureshi, Federal Secretary of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), said more than 50 companies have registered through the official conference portal, while several large-scale bankable investment projects have been prepared for presentation to potential investors. Leading Chinese pharmaceutical companies, medical instrument manufacturers, and healthcare firms are expected to participate in the event, according to a Gwadar Pro's report. The conference will focus on key subsectors including active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), vaccines, biologics, medical devices, clinical research, and allied pharmaceutical manufacturing industries. Qureshi said the initiative reflects a broader effort to transform Pakistan's pharmaceutical and healthcare landscape through international investment and industrial collaboration. "The objective is to move from dialogue to deployment, from memorandums of understanding to joint ventures, and from investment intent to tangible industrial capacity," he said.

Discussions on budget should be based on facts: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal on Sunday said that discussions on the federal budget 2026-27 should be based on facts rather than misrepresentations. Responding to points raised by former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser during the budget debate in the National Assembly, Ahsan Iqbal accused the former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government of undermining democratic norms during its tenure. He alleged that during the PTI government, production orders for

detained members of parliament were often withheld despite repeated requests from opposition lawmakers. "We witnessed a time when opposition members had to plead for the issuance of production orders for arrested parliamentarians, yet those orders were not issued," he said. Referring to PTI's criticism of the judiciary, Ahsan Iqbal said the former government failed to implement Supreme Court orders for nine months after local governments were restored in Punjab. He also accused the PTI administration of politically victimising opposition lead-

ers through what he termed fabricated cases. He said several leaders of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), including former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, Khawaja Asif, Khawaja Saad Rafique, Hamza Shehbaz and Rana Sanaulah, had faced imprisonment during that period. Ahsan Iqbal also highlighted development initiatives in Swabi, the constituency represented by Asad Qaiser, saying the federal government had established a university there.

Federal budge balanced document, says Bakhtawari

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Patron-in-Chief Azerbaijan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, has described the Federal Budget 2026-27 as a balanced and largely positive budget, stating that the government has

introduced several encouraging measures aimed at promoting business activity and improving the investment climate. In his statement, he said that the relief provided to the real estate sector, particularly on the purchase and sale of property, along with the reduction in withholding tax, would boost business activity and strengthen investment trends. He added that the reduction in super tax and relaxation in withholding tax are also welcome developments for the business community. He further stated that tax relief for the salaried class and the reduction in super tax represent positive steps, while incentives for the IT and export sectors are expected to improve exports and create new employment opportunities. According to him, the allocation of PKR 88 billion for the Export Finance Scheme is commendable; however, further expansion is needed to achieve substantial growth in exports. Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the fixed tax system is a good initiative, but its effective implementation requires a clear mechanism and complete transparency.



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Briefs

Syedaal, Qadir discuss Balochistan uplift

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan met former federal minister and senior politician from Balochistan, Lieutenant General (R) Abdul Qadir Baloch, and discussed issues of Balochistan. During the meeting, both leaders held a detailed discussion on the overall political, social, and economic situation in Balochistan, along with various issues and development prospects concerning the province. The meeting emphasized the need for sustainable development in Balochistan, improvement of infrastructure, and strengthening of education, healthcare, and public welfare initiatives. Matters related to creating employment opportunities for the youth, promoting vocational training, and enabling young people to play an active role in national development were also discussed. Syedaal Khan stated that Balochistan holds fundamental importance in Pakistan's development and prosperity, adding that the province's natural resources, strategic geographic location, and talented youth are valuable national assets. He emphasized that addressing the deprivations faced by the people of Balochistan, ensuring the provision of essential services, and timely completion of development projects should remain among the state's key priorities.—APP

133 premises sealed over anti-Dengue SOP violations

RAWALPINDI: The District Administration, in collaboration with allied departments, has sealed 133 premises and registered 796 First Information Reports (FIRs) over violations of anti-dengue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) from January 1 to date. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC) Dr Jawad Ahmed, Saturday, said the authorities had also issued 625 challans and imposed fines amounting to Rs. 1.966 million on violators in different parts of the district. Giving details of surveillance activities, he said 1,268 anti-dengue teams had conducted indoor inspections at 20,765,061 houses since January 1 and detected dengue larvae at 39,272 homes. Similarly, during outdoor surveillance, the teams inspected 934,586 locations and found dengue larvae at 46,167 spots, he added. Dr Jawad Ahmed said only two confirmed dengue cases had been reported in the district so far this year, compared with nine cases during the corresponding period in 2025, 14 in 2024, and eight each in 2023 and 2022.—APP

Special sanitation plan launched

RAWALPINDI: Special sanitation operations have been launched across all tehsils of Rawalpindi district under the Clean Punjab Programme to ensure a clean environment for mourners during Muharram-ul-Haram and Ashura. According to the RWMC spokesperson, sanitation staff, machinery officials and field supervisory teams have been mobilized to provide optimum cleanliness arrangements on the special instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and under the supervision of Managing Director Suthra Punjab Agency (SPA) Rawalpindi and Chief Executive Officer of the Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC), Rana Sajid Safdar. The operation covers Rawalpindi city as well as the tehsils of Gujjar Khan, Kahuta, Kallar Syedan and Taxila, where cleaning, washing, timely disposal of waste and desludging of drains were underway at imambargahs, procession routes, venues of majalis and other public places. Additional waste containers, waste bags and sanitation workers have also been deployed along the main and subsidiary procession routes to ensure the prompt disposal of garbage. SPA teams were conducting daily field monitoring, while a special control mechanism had been established to oversee the sanitation campaign and ensure effective implementation.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Heavy machinery being used in construction work at the Park Road underpass project in the Federal capital.

NA Budget debate

Lawmakers for relief, long-term eco stability

PP MNA Sharmila Faruqi said repeated criticism and rebuttals during budget debates would not help resolve public issues, stressing the need for meaningful dialogue and consensus-building on economic challenges. She said every year the federal budget raised expectations among the public for relief

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Sunday witnessed an extensive budget debate, with lawmakers across party lines discussing fiscal priorities, economic challenges and public relief measures, while also acknowledging government efforts amid difficult financial and security conditions. Participating in the budget debate, Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) MNA Syed Hussain Tariq said it was a positive development that the entire federal cabinet was present during the budget session, terming it encouraging for parliamentary engagement. He said a budget was not merely about figures but about balancing debit and credit while setting a long-term direction for the country. He stressed that the real impact of a budget should be measured by whether it improves the living conditions of the working class, adding that if lower-income groups were satisfied, it could be termed a truly people-friendly budget. He said the PPP and its allied parties were engaged in consultations on the budget and would continue deliberations on its various aspects. He also referred to inflation, stating it stood at around 8 percent, and noted that rising fuel prices had

increased transport costs and overall inflationary pressure. Electricity prices, he added, had increased by 54 percent. He questioned how a person earning between Rs 40,000 and Rs 45,000 could afford electricity bills ranging from Rs 20,000 to Rs 25,000. Turning to agriculture, he appreciated the efforts of Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain, driving several concrete policies and initiatives to modernize farming and ensure food security. However, he said agriculture had faced significant neglect over the years, and this year's allocations and focus on the sector appeared comparatively limited. Only Rs4 billion had been allocated for agriculture, which was the country's backbone and a sector capable of driving meaningful improvement in the national economy. He said a large portion—almost 99 percent of this allocation appeared to be absorbed by salaries and administrative expenses, leaving little room for meaningful development work. He added that the real solution lay in a long-term policy framework focused on modernisation, stressing that such a policy should aim to make businesses economically viable and promote continuous reform across agriculture, services, and industry. He explained that balanced development meant investment across all sectors so that each area could contribute to national progress, while regional equity required fair in-

vestment at provincial, district, and town levels based on local strengths. Highlighting delayed infrastructure projects, he referred to the Hyderabad-Sukkur motorway project, saying that although funds had been repeatedly allocated in successive budgets over several years, progress on the ground remained limited. He also mentioned the KIV water project in Karachi, noting that while significant allocations were shown in the budget, actual fund releases and execution often lagged behind. He said it was essential to build confidence among farmers, businesspeople, and young people by ensuring stable, predictable long-term policies, including taxation frameworks and regulatory certainty for 15 to 20 years, so that economic actors could work without uncertainty. He said the budget had been prepared under difficult circumstances and appreciated the government's efforts. Mohammad Usman Badini of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) said the federal budget had failed to address the basic hardships faced by ordinary citizens, arguing that it continued to impose an unbearable burden on households that could not even be calculated on a monthly basis. Focusing on Balochistan, he said the province had repeatedly been promised development through major projects and mineral resources, including mining potential that was projected to help eliminate national debt. However, de-

spite these claims, basic living conditions in resource-rich districts remained poor. Residents in districts such as Chagai continued to struggle with basic necessities despite valuable mineral deposits. He criticised the lack of infrastructure and public services, stating that essential facilities such as roads, healthcare systems, and functioning financial institutions were either missing or severely underdeveloped in many parts of Balochistan. Referring to repeated proposals from lawmakers, he said basic infrastructure projects such as the Basima-Kharan road were often announced or allocated funds on paper, but progress on the ground remained limited. He called for regulated trade mechanisms that could benefit local communities along the Pakistan-Iran border. He said that despite repeated discussions in the National Assembly, border trade points and export-import routes had not been properly developed or regulated, leaving thousands of residents dependent on uncertain livelihoods. He also highlighted electricity shortages in parts of Balochistan, stating that in some areas, power supply was limited to only a few hours per day or even per week. PPP MNA Sharmila Faruqi said repeated criticism and rebuttals during budget debates would not help resolve public issues, stressing the need for meaningful dialogue and consensus-building on economic challenges.

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Sunday issued a power suspension programme for Monday in various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to an IESCO spokesman, power supply from the Pir Sohawa feeder under the Islamabad Circle will remain suspended from 7:00 am to 11:00 am. Under the Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, electricity supply from the Rehmatabad-I, Takbeer-I, Chaklala and Kot Jabbi feeders will remain suspended from 7:00 am to 11:00 am. Similarly, under the Rawalpindi City Circle, consumers receiving electricity from the Sector-IV, APHS, PAF, Dhok Chaudhri, Peshawar Road, Millatbad, Cheering Cross, NRC, Cobe Line and Askari-XI feeders will face power outages from 7:00 am to 11:00 am. In Chakwal

Circle, power supply from the Jamalwal and Menghan feeders will remain suspended from 7:00 am to 12:00 noon. Meanwhile, under the GSO Circle, electricity supply in 132-kV New Wah-POF transmission line along with the related earth switch, will remain suspended from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Similarly, maintenance work on the 132-kV Chakwal-Bhagwal-Talagang, 132-kV Kahuta City-Palandri and 132-kV New Wah-Bahter More transmission lines, along with related earth switches, will be carried out from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, resulting in temporary power suspension in the respective areas and their surroundings. IESCO management apologizes to its esteemed customers for the power outage. If the work is completed ahead of time, the power supply can be restored even before the scheduled time.—APP

Call for rainwater harvesting to tackle water challenges

ISLAMABAD: Climate experts, environmental specialists, government officials and civil society representatives have emphasized the need for promoting rainwater harvesting as a sustainable and practical solution to Pakistan's emerging water challenges amid the impacts of climate change. The call was made during a webinar organized by the Alliance Good Governance Foundation, where participants highlighted the importance of adopting innovative water conservation measures and strengthening climate-resilient policies to ensure long-term water security, said a press release. They noted that climate change, population growth, rapid urbanization and changing weather patterns were increasing pressure on water resources, making efficient water management a national priority. Economist and agricultural expert Dr Khizar Nazir said climate change had posed serious challenges to Pakistan's agriculture, economy and natural re-

sources, with irregular rainfall, rising temperatures and extreme weather events affecting water availability and food security. He stressed the need to adopt sustainable water management practices, including rainwater harvesting, to reduce pressure on conventional water resources. "Rainwater harvesting is not only a conservation method but also a practical strategy to strengthen climate resilience. The country needs to store rainfall instead of allowing this valuable resource to go to waste," Dr Khizar Nazir said. The participants observed that rainwater harvesting had emerged globally as one of the most effective and affordable methods for enhancing water availability, replenishing groundwater reserves and supporting communities facing water shortages. They noted that Pakistan receives substantial rainfall in different regions; however, inadequate storage facilities and weak management systems result in the loss of a significant portion of this val-


uable resource. The experts said that properly designed rainwater harvesting systems could help capture, store and utilize rainwater for domestic, agricultural and environmental purposes while contributing to groundwater recharge. According to experts, collected rainwater can be stored in tanks, reservoirs, and underground systems or directed towards recharge wells to restore declining aquifers. This approach, they added, is particularly important for urban areas where excessive groundwater extraction has become a major concern. Climate specialists highlighted that major cities, including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, and Karachi, are facing increasing water pressure due to population growth, expanding housing sectors, and rapid urban development. Dr Ejaz Tanvir of the Federal Flood Commission underscored the importance of adopting practical climate adaptation measures to address growing environmental challenges.—DNA

OIC-COMSTECH to organise free medical camp

ISLAMABAD: The OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) will organise a two-day free medical camp in Fort Abbas, a remote desert tehsil bordering India in southern Punjab from June 18-19 to provide healthcare services to underserved communities in Cholistan. The camp, being organised in collaboration with the Patient and Child Welfare Association Fort Abbas and the Punjab Health Department, is expected to benefit around 1,500 people from remote villages where access to specialised healthcare services remains limited. A team of 15 senior male and female medical specialists will provide free consultations, diagnosis and medicines during the camp. The team includes cardiologists, child specialists, dermatologists, ophthalmologists, gastroenterologists, gynaecologists, physiotherapists, general physicians, ENT specialists and female medical practitioners.—DNA

DigiSkills conducts 5.14m trainings

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's flagship digital skills programme DigiSkills conducted more than 5 million trainings during July-March FY2025-26, strengthening the country's digital workforce and supporting the rapid growth of freelancing, information technology services and online entrepreneurship. According to the official data available with Wealth Pakistan, the DigiSkills has conducted more than 5.14 million trainings during July-March FY2025-26, making it one of the largest digital skills development initiatives in the country. The programme has expanded access to technology-related education and provided opportunities for individuals from diverse educational and socioeconomic backgrounds to participate in the digital economy. The report notes that the programme has been a key driver of growth in Pakistan's freelancing sector, which has emerged as an increasingly important source of export earnings and employment opportunities. Freelancers trained under DigiSkills earned approximately \$1.65 billion during July-March FY2025-26, reflecting the programme's economic impact and its contribution to foreign exchange inflows. Those who were trained under the programme comprised 70 percent males and 30 percent females. The number of overseas Pakistanis trained in the programme is more than 61,754.—DNA




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What if Europe loses access to its climate data?

BERTRAND BADRE

LAST October, Signe Ratsø, deputy director-general of the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission, issued a stark warning while speaking on a panel at the European Parliament. "When critical datasets and analytical tools are hosted outside" the EU, she explained, "their access or even the content ... can change beyond our control." As a result, "core scientific values can be compromised." Ratsø's remarks highlight one of the main issues facing European climate researchers. While many people are focused on the implications of the "backlash" against sustainability for the European Green Deal, these conversations – as important as they are – overlook the less visible, but arguably more significant, problem of data extraterritoriality. The threat is subtle. The US has enacted laws that give it effective control over data and digital infrastructure, regardless of where they are located. This suggests a creeping expansion of the US International Traffic in Arms Regulations, which govern the export of military technologies and technical data into the civilian realm. Such instruments allow the US to exert pressure by imposing traceability and end-use monitoring on sensitive fields such as climate research and digital systems. Instead of instituting outright bans, US policymakers can quietly shape what is studied and how. The EU seems well-equipped to counter this threat. The General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Act, the AI Act, and soon the Cloud and AI Development Act are meant to defend the bloc's digital sovereignty. But Europe's regulatory fortress has a foundational weakness: overreliance on foreign-controlled infrastructure and datasets. Equally worrying are Europe's excessive focus on compliance, rather than operational implementation, and its insufficient real-world testing of usage governance, particularly for AI. Over the past decade, for example, the share of ESG (environmental, social, governance) and climate datasets and models owned or controlled by non-EU actors has steadily grown. Now, according to the PARC Foundation's ESG Data Cartography, more than 80 percent of the ESG data volume used in the EU falls into this category. This concentration of control creates an asymmetry. Europe writes the rules, including the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive and the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation, that are responsible for generating vast amounts of data: corporate disclosures, green taxonomies, climate-risk analyses,

decarbonization pathways, and just-transition policies. But the analytical tools that turn these data into power are overwhelmingly non-European. To remain a leading scientific and industrial force in climate policy, renewable energy, and sustainability, the EU must secure access to the underlying data and analytics. What makes the asymmetry particularly troubling is its cumulative effect. The raw data feed models that improve with scale and the most advanced systems become ever more dominant and difficult to replace. Over time, this dynamic could lock Europe into a dependency on the foreign-owned infrastructure that captures the economic value of ESG data. Such ownership concentration is not only a sovereignty risk, but also a competitiveness trap. AI is accelerating the process. While traceability of training data – along with documentation and auditability – is a prerequisite for AI access to EU markets, that is not necessarily how it works in practice, especially because compliance deadlines are still far away. And while it is conceivable that large language models could act as effective safeguards against climate-skeptic narratives on social media, they have tended to exhibit regressive complacency biases and, in some cases, regurgitate falsehoods. Research by PARC shows a significant gap between Grok and DeepSeek in terms of spreading climate misinformation. Efforts to make these data publicly accessible have fallen short of their potential. The Net-Zero Data Public Utility, now called the Climate Data Utility, launched in 2022 to create a centralized, open repository for climate transition-related data from companies worldwide, has stalled. Likewise, the scope of the European Single Access Point, which is set to go live in 2027, has narrowed amid a simplification push. Europe's green transition rests on an informational infrastructure that it does not control. In February, US Energy Secretary Chris Wright reportedly asked the International Energy Agency to abandon its climate scenarios, long regarded as the global benchmark for decarbonization pathways, and the closest thing to a shared net-zero scripture that the world has. This episode highlights how contested an agreed theory of change can become. At stake is more than the execution of specific policies; the EU's entire climate agenda and even its foundational values could come under threat. Of course, the answer is not digital autarky. Instead of cutting itself off from the rest of the world, Europe must promote freedom of choice. As the European Parliament made clear in its Jan. 22 resolution on European technological sovereignty and digital infrastructure, the first step is to map the EU's dependencies. Following that operational challenge for the bloc, the next is to develop alternative methods: modular, interoperable, locally governed data ecosystems that can ensure continuity for scientific and industrial uses. Data sovereignty is more than a political slogan; it could determine Europe's ability to produce its own knowledge. To remain a leading scientific and industrial force in climate policy, renewable energy, and sustainability, the EU must secure access to the underlying data and analytics. That requires taking Ratsø's warning seriously.

Trump's Normalization of Lying, Stealing and Distrust

Qamar Bashir



The issue extends beyond foreign policy and enters the realm of moral philosophy. Every civilization teaches its children that stealing is wrong. Every major religious tradition condemns theft. The Ten Commandments leave no ambiguity on the matter. "Thou shalt not steal" is not qualified by military strength, economic necessity, or political advantage. It is a universal principle. The same moral traditions also prohibit bearing false witness and demand honesty in public and private life. These principles form the ethical foundation upon which stable societies are built

THE most disturbing aspect of the current Iran crisis is not the war itself, nor even the repeated claims that a peace agreement has been reached. The deeper concern is the emergence of a political culture in which three of the most fundamental pillars of civilization—respect for property, commitment to truth, and preservation of trust—appear increasingly vulnerable to political expediency. In recent weeks, President Donald Trump has repeatedly spoken about Venezuelan oil, Iranian energy resources, and prospective peace agreements in a manner that has generated serious ethical, diplomatic, and constitutional questions. To many observers, the issue is no longer simply about foreign policy. It is about whether stealing, lying, and breaching trust are being normalized and even celebrated as instruments of statecraft. President Trump has publicly claimed that the United States has made a "fortune" from Venezuelan oil and has suggested that revenues associated with those operations have more than compensated for the costs of the conflict with Iran. He has also spoken openly about taking control of Kharg Island, the strategic hub through which the overwhelming majority of Iran's oil exports flow. In several remarks, he portrayed such control not merely as a military objective but as an economic opportunity that could generate immense wealth for the United States. Whether these statements were intended as policy declarations, negotiation tactics, political theater, or rhetorical exaggerations, they carry profound implications. Oil beneath the soil of Venezuela belongs to the Venezuelan people. Oil beneath the soil of Iran belongs to the Iranian people. Those resources are national assets intended to finance development, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and future prosperity. When leaders of powerful nations speak openly about controlling or profiting from those resources, many around the world hear echoes of an earlier age in which might determined ownership and power determined morality. Critics see something far more troubling. They see a public celebration of conduct that, if performed by an individual rather than a state, would be condemned without hesitation. If a powerful neighbor seized the property of a weaker neighbor and then proudly announced the profits generated from it, few would regard such conduct as ethical. Yet when similar language enters geopolitical discourse, many appear willing to accept it as normal. The issue extends beyond foreign policy and enters the realm of moral philosophy. Every civilization teaches its children that stealing is wrong. Every major religious tradition condemns theft. The Ten Commandments leave no ambiguity on the matter. "Thou shalt not steal" is not qualified by military strength, economic necessity, or political advantage. It is a universal principle. The same moral traditions also

prohibit bearing false witness and demand honesty in public and private life. These principles form the ethical foundation upon which stable societies are built. Yet the controversy surrounding the Iran negotiations raises another concern: truth itself. On June 11, President Trump announced that a peace agreement between the United States and Iran had effectively been reached and would soon be signed. Markets immediately reacted. Investors welcomed what appeared to be the end of a conflict that had threatened global energy supplies, disrupted trade routes, and generated uncertainty across financial markets. Stocks rose and optimism returned. Within hours, however, Iranian officials challenged that narrative. Tehran insisted that no final agreement had yet been approved and that critical issues remained unresolved. Iranian media subsequently published details of what it claimed were provisions of the draft understanding, many of which differed significantly from the public impression created by Washington. The result was confusion. This was not the first time that declarations of imminent breakthroughs had been followed by contradictory developments. Since the conflict began, announcements of progress have repeatedly been followed by delays, disputes, or denials. Each cycle has generated renewed uncertainty in financial markets and among international observers. Such declarations risk becoming instruments of perception management rather than accurate descriptions of diplomatic reality. Whether one accepts that interpretation or not, the consequences are significant. Markets function on confidence. Democracies function on informed consent. Both require a reasonable degree of confidence that official statements reflect reality. But there is a third issue that may be even more important than property and truth: trust. Having spent years in diplomacy and public communication, I have observed that trust is the invisible currency that sustains international negotiations. Governments do not negotiate successfully because they like one another. They negotiate successfully because they develop sufficient confidence that commitments will be honored and understandings respected. One of the most sacred norms of diplomacy is confidentiality during negotiations. Sensitive discussions involving war, peace, sanctions, territorial disputes, and nuclear programs are conducted privately for a reason. Premature disclosure can derail progress, embarrass negotiating partners, and create political pressures that make compromise more difficult. The accepted diplomatic practice is straightforward. Negotiators work through disagreements behind closed doors. Draft texts remain confidential until finalized. Once consensus is achieved, representatives of both governments jointly announce the agreement. This

process protects the integrity of negotiations and preserves trust between the parties. The repeated pattern witnessed during the Iran negotiations appears to move in the opposite direction. Before agreements are finalized, public declarations are made. Before negotiating partners have completed internal consultations, details are discussed publicly. Before joint announcements can occur, one side seeks to shape the narrative through media appearances and political messaging. From a diplomatic perspective, such conduct can be viewed as a breach of trust. When one party repeatedly announces outcomes before they are formally accepted by the other side, confidence erodes. Negotiators become cautious. Communication becomes more difficult. Suspicion replaces cooperation. Agreements that might otherwise succeed become vulnerable to misunderstanding and political backlash. Trust, once lost, is extraordinarily difficult to restore. The broader concern is that these three developments—celebrating the acquisition of foreign resources, making claims that are subsequently disputed, and undermining the confidentiality of negotiations—are interconnected. Together they create an impression that power has become more important than principle, that narrative has become more important than truth, and that immediate political advantage has become more important than long-term credibility. History teaches a different lesson. Great nations are not defined solely by their military strength or economic power. Empires have risen and fallen throughout history. What distinguishes enduring civilizations is their commitment to principles even when circumstances make it tempting to abandon them. Respect for property, respect for truth, and respect for trust are not signs of weakness. They are the foundations upon which stable societies, successful economies, and credible governments are built. The debate surrounding Iran, Venezuela, sanctions, oil, and diplomacy will eventually pass. Markets will recover. Agreements will be signed or abandoned. Political leaders will come and go. But the ethical questions raised by this episode will remain. Can power justify possession? Can political advantage justify deception? Can diplomacy succeed without trust? The answers to those questions will shape not only the future of American foreign policy but also the moral character of the international order itself. For if stealing becomes a virtue, truth becomes optional, and trust becomes disposable, then the damage extends far beyond any single negotiation. It reaches into the very foundations of civilized society.

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

A Parliament Transformed: The Vision and Leadership of Ayaz Sadiq

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Perhaps the most transformative dimension of this reform agenda has been the Speaker's vision of a paperless Parliament. For generations, parliamentary work relied heavily upon mountains of documents, reports, agendas, notices, and legislative papers. The extensive digitization of parliamentary business has revolutionized this process

THE progress of nations is seldom measured merely by the laws they enact or the institutions they build. Rather, it is reflected in the character of those entrusted with leadership and in their ability to adapt institutions to the demands of changing times. History bears witness to the fact that true leadership is not confined to authority; it is manifested through tolerance, magnanimity, foresight, and an unwavering commitment to the public good. Such qualities are neither acquired overnight nor sustained without perseverance. They require patience in the face of criticism, resilience amid challenges, and the courage to pursue reform even when the path is difficult. In contemporary Pakistan, few public figures embody these attributes more distinctly than thrice-elected Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. The hallmark of great leadership lies in bringing people together while steering institutions towards excellence. Throughout his parliamentary career, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has demonstrated a rare ability to combine humility with determination, fostering consensus while pursuing meaningful change. His tenure has not merely been about presiding over parliamentary proceedings; it has been marked by a sustained effort to transform the National Assembly into a modern, efficient, and accountable institution capable of meeting the governance challenges of the twenty-first century. One of the most remarkable achievements under his stewardship has been the implementation of a comprehensive programme of right-sizing, fiscal discipline, and institutional modernization within the National Assembly Secretariat. At a time when public resources are under immense pressure and governments across the world are seeking greater efficiency, the Secretariat has emerged as a model of prudent financial management. Through carefully planned austerity measures and administrative reforms, it is projected to save approximately Rs. 4.5 billion during the financial year 2025–26, amounting to more than a quarter of its total budgeted expenditure. What makes this accomplishment particularly noteworthy is that it has been achieved without sacrificing institutional effectiveness or employee welfare. The Secretariat undertook a substantial reduction in sanctioned posts, decreasing its workforce structure from 1,725 positions to 1,344.

Yet not a single employee was dismissed or compelled to resign. This reflects a sophisticated approach to human resource management in which efficiency was enhanced through strategic restructuring rather than punitive measures. Equally significant has been the reduction in non-employee expenditure through stronger financial oversight, rational procurement practices, energy conservation initiatives, and tighter operational controls. These measures have not only generated considerable savings but have also cultivated a culture of accountability and responsible governance. In an era where public trust in institutions often depends upon transparency and fiscal prudence, such reforms set an example worthy of emulation. Perhaps the most transformative dimension of this reform agenda has been the Speaker's vision of a paperless Parliament. For generations, parliamentary work relied heavily upon mountains of documents, reports, agendas, notices, and legislative papers. The extensive digitization of parliamentary business has revolutionized this process. Electronic circulation of official documents has significantly reduced paper consumption, printing expenses, and administrative delays while contributing positively to environmental sustainability. This shift reflects a recognition that technological innovation is not merely a convenience but an essential instrument of modern governance. The culmination of this vision was witnessed with the launch of Pakistan's first AI-enabled parliamentary system. This historic initiative represents a milestone not only for the National Assembly but for parliamentary institutions throughout the developing world. By integrating advanced digital tools and artificial intelligence into legislative processes, the Assembly has entered a new era of institutional capability. Legislative research, document management, information retrieval, and administrative coordination are now being strengthened through technology-driven solutions designed specifically for parliamentary requirements. What distinguishes this initiative is its emphasis on national ownership and data sovereignty. The AI platform has been developed as a highly secure, fully on-premises system, ensuring that all parliamentary data remains within Pakistan and under the exclusive control of the National Assembly. At a time when concerns about cybersecurity and data pro-

tection are becoming increasingly significant, this approach demonstrates both foresight and responsibility. The digital transformation has also extended to the Speaker's Office and parliamentary administration. Members of the National Assembly have been provided with digital devices enabling immediate access to legislative documents and parliamentary records. Training programmes for technical staff have been introduced to ensure that the institution possesses the capacity required to sustain and expand these innovations. The establishment of a modern data centre further underscores the Assembly's commitment to building a technologically empowered parliamentary ecosystem. These achievements gain even greater significance when viewed against the backdrop of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's parliamentary legacy. By March 2026, he had become the longest-serving Speaker in Pakistan's parliamentary history, surpassing the record previously held by Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan. Having been elected Speaker on three separate occasions, he occupies a unique place in the democratic evolution of the country. Yet longevity alone does not define greatness. What distinguishes his tenure is the manner in which experience has been translated into institutional reform and enduring progress. The National Assembly's journey toward efficiency, transparency, and technological modernization illustrates how visionary leadership can transform public institutions without compromising democratic values. In a world where governance increasingly depends upon innovation and adaptability, Pakistan's Parliament has demonstrated that tradition and technology need not stand in opposition. Instead, they can work together to strengthen democratic institutions and improve public service. The reforms introduced under the leadership of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq offer an important lesson: genuine progress is achieved not through rhetoric but through sustained effort, careful planning, and a willingness to embrace change. By combining fiscal responsibility with digital innovation and institutional modernization, the National Assembly has set a precedent for other public institutions. It is a reminder that when leadership is guided by wisdom, tolerance, and a commitment to the national interest, even the oldest institutions can be renewed and prepared for the challenges of the future.

Briefs

Tehran resists Trump's timeline

FROM PAGE 01
US-driven timeline, with the Revolutionary Guards-affiliated Fars News Agency stating that Tehran has not yet taken or announced its final decision as experts continue to review the political, technical, and legal aspects of the framework. State-linked channels explicitly criticized Trump's unusual insistence on signing the preliminary deal today, accusing the U.S. administration of trying to turn a sensitive national security agreement into a symbolic publicity event and political propaganda maneuver for the President's personal benefit. Iranian officials clarified that while a deal in the coming days remains possible, it would certainly not happen today. Hardline factions within Iran have also launched street protests in cities like Mashhad, accusing their own diplomatic team of offering too many concessions to Washington.

Opp leaders reject budget...

FROM PAGE 01
"The people of Pakistan are being crushed in the mill of poverty," he said, adding that prices of food items were "touching the sky". Comparing the country's finances to a household budget, the opposition leader said that when a family's expenses exceeded its income, it came under the burden of debt and then started selling its assets. "Pakistan's income is less than its expenses," he said, adding that no serious effort had been made to reduce expenses and increase income. Abbas also warned that if the next elections were held under the same system, the results would be "the worst". Tehreke-e-Tahafuz-e-Ayene-e-Pakistan leader Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar said the rise in poverty was proof of the failure of economic policies. "The real measure of economic growth is improvement in people's lives," he said, adding that life had become difficult for low-income groups.

Business leaders caution...

FROM PAGE 01
Geo News transmission on the country's post-budget economic outlook, where economists and business leaders analysed the government's key proposals and their likely impact on the economy and the lives of ordinary citizens. Speaking during the show, Habib expressed doubts that the government's latest measures will be sufficient to trigger investment and create employment opportunities, citing high energy costs and tax rates. "I do not think the government's measures will lead to investment," he said, adding that the country also needed lower tax rates to improve competitiveness. According to Habib, the business community had consistently called for the abolition of the super tax and stressed that reducing energy costs was essential for boosting investment and exports.

PPP AJK urges election...

FROM PAGE 01
Muhammad Yasin, who addressed a crowded press conference at Kashmir House following a meeting of the party's core committee, said that to deal with the existing challenges and tensions in the region, negotiations and political consensus were unavoidable. "The central focus of PPP's politics has always been the Kashmir issue. Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto played a historic role in highlighting the Kashmir cause at the global level," he said. He noted that over the last seven months, the government had made serious efforts to resolve public issues and strengthen democratic institutions.

Rising Stars veterans clinch victory in hockey match



RISING Stars Veterans Hockey Club Islamabad and the Jhelum Veterans Hockey Club. The High Commissioner of Brunei H.E Kamal Ahmed attended as chief guest and even joined the Rising Stars team on the field. The match was closely contested, with Rising Stars eventually securing a 6-4 victory. Following the game, the chief guest lauded the professional skills and sportsmanship displayed by both sides, emphasizing the importance of such events in promoting hockey culture and strengthening ties through sport. - DNA

Brazil and Morocco share the spoils in World Cup clash

DNA

RIYADH: One of the most anticipated matches of the 2026 FIFA World Cup group stage came to a close with neither side able to find a winner. Brazil and Morocco played out a 1-1 draw in front of a sell-out crowd at the MetLife Stadium, with Ismael Saibari and Vinicius Junior canceling each other out in the first half. But the frantic opening period left much to be desired in the second. Morocco kicked off the Mohamed Ouahbi era at a blistering pace. For long spells of the opening exchanges, it looked as though the five-time world champions were not wearing yellow and blue, but red and green. The Atlas Lions gave Brazil little room to breathe and almost capitalized on their early pressure, if not for a series of blocks from Gabriel Magalhaes. After their energetic start, Morocco dropped into a 4-2 shape and allowed Brazil to enjoy more of the ball. It was then that Vinicius Junior be-

gan to emerge, narrowly getting the better of Achraf Hakimi down the left flank before delivering a cross toward Igor Thiago, who could not direct his header on target. But that shift in momentum ultimately led to the opening goal. In the 21st minute, Ibrahim Diaz threaded a pass through the Brazilian defense for Ismael Saibari, who caught Alisson off his line with a chip and calmly finished for the opener. A hydration break immediately followed, but it did not halt Morocco's momentum. Hakimi grew into a more attacking role, driving deep into Brazil's half before unleashing a shot that went wide of Alisson's goal. Vinicius Junior had other plans, however. Just five minutes later, he received a pass from Bruno Guimarães on the left flank before beating Neil El-Aynaoui and curling a crisp finish beyond Yassine Bounou to level the score. Morocco switched off for a brief moment and the Selecao immediately capitalized. If the first half was played at a blistering pace, the second was the complete opposite. Morocco were

content to allow Brazil, who introduced Danilo and Fabinho in place of Roger Ibanez and Casemiro, more time on the ball. The Atlas Lions appeared content to settle for a point - the contrast in their attacking output between the two halves was striking. Morocco registered 12 attempts before the break, but failed to muster another shot until stoppage time. Brazil threatened from time to time, but their attacking output was largely muted by Morocco's disciplined low block. They found a gap in the 77th minute when Vinicius Junior burst forward on the counterattack and picked out Raphinha inside the box, but the Barcelona winger's effort was comfortably saved by Bounou. The Selecao almost found a late winner in the 83rd minute when Issa Diop misjudged a back pass to Bounou, allowing Raphinha to nearly latch onto the loose ball. The Moroccan goalkeeper reacted quickly, however, racing off his line to clear the danger. In the eighth minute of stoppage time, the Atlas Lions almost found a winner them-

selves. El-Aynaoui unleashed a powerful effort from distance that Alisson could only parry into the path of substitute Ayoub Amaimouni. The forward looked destined to snatch a dramatic winner, but the Brazilian goalkeeper reacted brilliantly to produce a stunning point-blank save. In the end, neither side was able to find a breakthrough. Morocco will likely be the happier of the two teams after frustrating Carlo Ancelotti's side, while Brazil were left to reflect on a match in which they struggled to consistently break down a well-organized Atlas Lions defense. Beyond the result, one of Morocco's brightest positives on the night was the performance of 18-year-old Ayoub Bouaddi. The midfielder, who switched his international allegiance to Morocco just last month, looked completely at ease on his World Cup debut. His composure in possession and ability to progress the ball under pressure provided the Atlas Lions with a valuable outlet throughout the contest.

Russian FMD vaccine supply...

FROM PAGE 01

the vaccine has been resolved. This will restore the confidence of livestock farmers and improve the disease prevention system. Russian Trade Representative Denis A. Nevezorov appreciated the role of SIFC in effective coordination among all relevant agencies.

Spain beat Pakistan 5-1 in Pro...

FROM PAGE 01

The once-formidable hockey nation, famous for its golden era and World Cup triumphs, now finds itself in a deep slump. With confidence shattered and a young squad still searching for answers, a long road to recovery lies ahead for the national game. Head coach and team management face mounting pressure to arrest the slide, but with morale low and top-tier opponents looming, the Green Shirts risk further humiliation unless urgent changes are made. For now, Pakistan hockey fans are left to reflect on another grim chapter in the FIH Pro League - hoping that this painful phase becomes the foundation for a future revival, rather than a lasting decline.

Indian lawmakers slam US...

FROM PAGE 01

New Delhi in protest, the Department of State on Saturday quoted Secretary Marco Rubio as telling his Indian counterpart that "all commercial vessels should immediately comply" with orders from US forces and that "violations" of the American blockade around the Strait of Hormuz would not be tolerated. The statement has since gone viral in India, with lawmakers joining in condemnation. "Just days after three Indian seafarers were killed in US attacks - no regret, no apology. Instead, the United States continues to issue orders," Rahul Gandhi, the leader of the opposition in India's parliament, said on social media.

AJK unrest aiding 'India-Israel nexus'...

FROM PAGE 01

India-Israel nexus to exploit," the PPP chairman said in a statement. The AJK government on June 8, 2026 declared the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) a proscribed organisation under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), saying the group was engaged in terrorism. The ban was imposed days ahead of the banned outfit's planned June 9 protest seeking the abolition of 12 seats in the AJK reserved for refugees from Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) who migrated to Pakistan after 1947. Earlier on June 8, AJK police said that deliberate firing by members of the banned outfit left four law enforcement personnel martyred and more than 20 police and security officials injured in Rawalakot.

England reunited with World Cup kit after 'heist'

Two men charged over theft of \$18,000-worth of kit and equipment from England, says US prosecutor

ENGLAND goalkeeper Dean Henderson said he had his boots back after training equipment was stolen ahead of the squad's arrival at their World Cup training base on Saturday. Kansas City mayor Quinton Lucas earlier put out a statement on the "heist". He said officials at "local, state and federal levels" were investigating the theft from vehicles transferring equipment from England's training camp in Florida. But it was understood most of the items have now been recovered. Henderson was asked after England's first training session at Swope Soccer Village whether he had lost his boots. "I think I did, but I got them back, so it's all good," said the Crystal Palace goalkeeper. "I think they got everything

back, so it's all good." Defender Dan Burn was relaxed about the episode. "Obviously it was to do with the police," he said. "So I don't know how much people know about it. We didn't know a lot about it, but I've got all my kit and all my boots." Thomas Tuchel's England, among the favourites to win the World Cup, had a gentle training session in front of scores of watching fans on Saturday. They open their World Cup campaign against Croatia on Wednesday, before further games in Group L against Ghana and Panama. Meanwhile, two men were charged Saturday over the theft of \$18,000-worth of kit and equipment from the England team at the World Cup, a US prosecutor said.

Mustafa Salik and Erfan Kamal each face one count of receiving stolen property, according to a statement from the office of Jackson County Prosecutor Melesa Johnson. The offence under Missouri law carries a prison sentence of up to seven years. Johnson's office said in a statement that the stolen property is estimated to be worth about \$18,000. "Jackson County will not tolerate any criminal activity that targets World Cup visitors, including the international teams that have traveled here to compete," Johnson said. "We thank the Kansas City Police Department and our on-call attorneys for their quick work investigating this incident and filing charges immediately." - APP

Pakistan endure heavy defeat against Belgium in FIH Pro League

Defeat marks Green Shirts' eighth consecutive defeat in ongoing nine-team tournament

DNA

LONDON: Pakistan men's hockey team suffered a crushing 7-1 defeat against Belgium in their FIH Pro League fixture at the Belfius Hockey Arena on Saturday. The home side made a flamboyant start to the fixture as Nelson Onana opened the scoring for them in just the third minute by successfully converting the penalty corner. Belgium's early 1-0 advantage remained intact until the half-time as the second quarter remained goalless. The Green Shirts eventually netted the equaliser in the

33rd minute through Rana Waheed Ashraf, only for the home side to reclaim the lead four minutes later through Thibaut Stockbroeck, while Alexander Hendrickx doubled their advantage in the 42nd minute. Belgium came out all guns blazing in the final quarter as they netted four more goals, with Tobias Bieken scoring two, while Guillaume Hellin and Tom Boon struck, once apiece, to round up a crushing victory over Pakistan. The resounding victory lifted Belgium past Australia to the summit of the FIH Pro Leagues with 22 points in eight matches with a goal difference of 16.

Scotland hang on for first World Cup win since 1990

BOSTON: Scotland, roared on by their Tartan Army of traveling fans, savoured their first World Cup win in 36 years on Saturday when they edged past Haiti 1-0 thanks to a first-half strike by John McGinn. The Scots - needing three points against a side ranked among the minnows of the game before facing tougher opposition in the shape of Brazil and Morocco in their other Group C games - went ahead in the 28th minute. A close-range effort by Che Adams was saved by Johny Placide only for the ball to fall to McGinn whose shot was deflected over the Haiti goalkeeper and into the net. Eleven minutes earlier, Scott McTominay had smacked a shot against a post and, although Haiti showed glimpses of their electric pace and put pressure on Scotland in the closing stages, Scottish goalkeeper Angus Gunn barely had a save to make. The win puts Steve Clarke's men top of Group C ahead of five-times world champions Brazil and 2022 semifinalists Morocco who drew 1-1 earlier on Saturday. Under FIFA's expanded tournament format, three points and a decent goal difference at the end of the group stage would offer a good chance of qualifying for the knockout stage of the competition, something that has eluded Scotland in all of their previous eight World Cups. - APP

PHF holds specialized session for Junior U-21 Hockey team

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has continued its efforts to improve the fitness standards of the Junior Under-21 Hockey team and prepare players in line with modern sporting requirements. As part of these initiatives, a special session was conducted for the junior team under the supervision of senior sports nutrition expert Dr. Nabeel, said a press release. During the session, players were briefed on various nutrition-related challenges they face and practical solutions to address them. - APP

Qatar hails first World Cup point

DOHA: Qatar celebrated their first World Cup point in a 1-1 draw against Switzerland as captain Boualem Khoukhi headed in a stoppage-time equaliser to send the Gulf nation into jubilation on Saturday. Khoukhi rose highest to thump in Homam Ahmed's cross on 94 minutes and cancel out a first-half Brel Embolo penalty, leaving the Swiss stunned and rueful after failing to convert 26 goal attempts to Qatar's seven. The result left Group B wide open, with all teams locked on a point each following co-hosts Canada's 1-1 draw with Bosnia & Herzegovina. Qatar will be easily the most pleased among them, four years after their 2022 debut fell flat with a winless elimination on home soil. The entire Qatar squad stormed on to the pitch in ecstasy after Khoukhi's header fizzed by Swiss goalkeeper Gregor Kobel, giving Spaniard Julien Lopetegui a landmark result coaching his first World Cup match. "We achieved one dream when we arrived here, to be here, and now today is another little dream," Lopetegui told reporters. "And we have the right to continue having the dream." Qatar goalkeeper Mahmoud Abunada was

also naturally thrilled, having fouled Remo Freuler to hand the Swiss their 17th-minute penalty. "This is the first point in the history of the Qatari national team. Praise be to God in all circumstances," said Abunada. "Honestly, the match was played with great determination from everyone. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds." Switzerland may feel the footballing gods deserted them, though, having seen chance after chance go begging, with Dan Ndoye particularly wasteful in the first half. It was all set up for the group favourites, though, when Abunada smashed into Freuler in the six-yard box. Freuler ran onto a header by Embolo in the area, dinked the ball goalwards past Abunada and was met heavily by the stopper who came off second best in the clash. Referee Said Martinez pointed straight at the spot but it took a long VAR check to confirm the penalty while a prone Abunada - booked for the challenge - was attended to by medical staff. While Michel Aebischer racked up a sixth Swiss shot on goal, stopped on the line deep into first-half stoppage time, Qatar's attackers were left with scraps. - DNA

Australia defeat Türkiye in World Cup match

Türkiye reached the semifinals of the 2002 World Cup but then missed five straight tournaments before qualifying this year by beating Kosovo in a playoff

VANCOUVER: Nestory Irankunda and Connor Metcalfe scored and Australia spoiled Türkiye's return to the World Cup for the first time in 24 years with a 2-0 victory on Saturday night. For the latest updates, follow us @ArabNewsSport Goalkeeper Patrick Beach made eight saves for the Socceroos in their group opener as FIFA President Gianni Infantino looked on. Australia was playing in its sixth straight World Cup and seventh overall. Türkiye reached the semifinals of the 2002 World Cup but then missed five straight

tournaments before qualifying this year by beating Kosovo in a playoff. Irankunda broke through for the Socceroos in the 27th minute with a low shot while pursued by three defenders. It came less than a minute after the first-half hydration break. Irankunda celebrated by punching the corner flag in a tribute to Australian soccer legend Tim Cahill. The 20-year-old who plays for Watford is the Socceroo's youngest-ever goal scorer at a World Cup. Minutes later Beach stopped Abdulkarim Bardak's blast from distance. Beach start-

ed in goal for the Socceroos rather than experienced counterpart Matthew Ryan in a surprise decision from coach Tony Popovic. Kenan Yildiz, a 21-year-old who plays for Juventus, was not in the starting lineup but subbed in for Türkiye at half-time. Türkiye had a dangerous free kick in the 57th minute, but Arda Güler's attempt was saved by Beach. Güler, a talented 21-year-old attacking midfielder who plays for Real Madrid, was not yet born the last time Türkiye played in the World Cup. Connor Metcalfe capitalized on Ismail Yü-

sek's turnover in the 75th minute to double the Socceroos' lead. The Socceroos fell to France in the opener in Qatar but then beat Tunisia and Denmark in their group before getting knocked out by eventual champion Argentina in the round of 16. It is the third World Cup appearance for the Turks, who reached the tournament for the first time in 1954. The teams are in Group D with the United States and Paraguay. The Americans downed Paraguay 4-1 in their group opener on Friday in Los Angeles. - APP

Briefs

India slam
US response
after killing
of sailors in
Oman waters

NEW DELHI: Indian lawmakers denounced on Sunday the lack of a US apology over the killing of three seafarers off the coast of Oman, as another sailor died from medical complications aboard a vessel stranded in the region amid the US blockade.

Aditya Sharma, a cadet, Shivnanand Chaurashiya, a fitter, and Patnala Suresh, a chief engineer, were killed aboard the Palau-flagged MT Settebello when a US aircraft fired into the tanker's engine room last week. While the Indian Ministry of External Affairs summoned Washington's envoy to New Delhi in protest, the Department of State on Saturday quoted Secretary Marco Rubio as telling his Indian counterpart that "all commercial vessels should immediately comply" with orders from US forces and that "violations" of the American blockade around the Strait of Hormuz would not be tolerated.

The statement has since gone viral in India, with lawmakers joining in condemnation "Just days after three Indian seafarers were killed in US attacks - no regret, no apology. Instead, the United States continues to issue orders," Rahul Gandhi, the leader of the opposition in India's parliament, said on social media.—APP

Palestinian
death toll in
Gaza tops
73,000

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip: Gaza's Health Ministry says the Palestinian death toll from the Israel-Hamas war has surpassed 73,000. The updated toll on Sunday came as Israel has continued to strike despite a fragile ceasefire deal reached in October. Confirmation came from Zaher Al-Waheidi, head of the ministry's records department, and Hamza Salem from the ministry's public relations department. The total number of deaths since the beginning of the war is now 73,001. On Sunday, the ministry said, there were five deaths: two in the southern city of Khan Younis and one in central Gaza, in addition to two who died of earlier wounds. Over 173,200 people have been wounded since the start of the war, which was ignited by the Hamas-led Oct. 7, 2023, attack into Israel. That attack killed some 1,200 people and took 251 others hostage. An Israeli strike on Saturday evening killed two Palestinians in Khan Younis. The casualties were taken to Nasser hospital, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent Society. The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The health ministry, part of the Hamas-led government, is staffed by medical professionals and maintains detailed records viewed as generally reliable by United Nations agencies and independent experts. It does not say how many of those killed were civilians or militants.—APP

Oman's real
estate price
index rises
15%

RIYADH: Oman's real estate market continued its upward trajectory in the first quarter of 2026, with the country's real estate price index climbing 15.9 percent year on year, official data showed. Data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information indicated that commercial property prices grew by 10.5 percent, driven by a 16.5 percent increase in industrial land prices and an 11 percent gain in commercial land prices, while retail shop prices declined by 1.8 percent, the Oman News Agency reported. The latest figures come as Oman continues to advance its Vision 2040 agenda, which identifies the real estate sector as a key driver of economic diversification through urban development, private-sector investment, and sustainable cities. The strategy also seeks to improve the investment environment and expand housing and commercial developments to support long-term economic growth.—APP

Govt push for digital banking
& cashless economy lauded

The business community and experts expressed optimism that with sustained policy support, technological advancement and wider adoption of digital financial services, Pakistan would make further progress towards building a digitally empowered and financially inclusive economy

DERA ISMAIL KHAN :Business owners and economic experts in Dera Ismail Khan have hailed the federal government's Digital Pakistan and financial inclusion initiatives, saying the measures are promoting a cashless economy, improving business efficiency and expanding access to formal banking services. They expressed these views after Federal Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, during his budget speech for fiscal year 2026-27 at Parliament House, highlighted the progress made under the Digital Pakistan agenda. The finance minister said the number of people using digital banking services had increased to 133 million across the country. He said the number of merchants and businesses connected to digital payment systems surged to 1.677 million from 500,000 a year ago, while annual digital transactions rose significantly from 6.9 billion to 10.1 billion,

reflecting growing public confidence in digital financial services and wider acceptance of cashless payment methods. President Central Traders Union Dera Ismail Khan Sohail Ahmed Azmi appreciated the government's initiative and termed the rapid growth in digital banking and merchant connectivity a positive development for traders and the national economy. Talking to APP, he said digital payment systems had brought convenience and transparency to commercial activities and enabled traders to conduct business in a more efficient manner. "The government's efforts to promote digital payments and financial inclusion are commendable. The increasing use of digital payments is helping traders reduce dependence on cash while improving record-keeping and financial management," he remarked.

Azmi said small and medium-sized businesses were increasingly adopting digital payment methods and expressed hope that the government would further strengthen internet connectivity, cybersecurity and digital infrastructure to facilitate traders across urban and rural areas. Muhammad Irfan Haider, a trader in Dera Ismail Khan city, told APP that digital payment systems had made business transactions easier and more secure. "Customers are increasingly using mobile banking applications and QR code payments, which has reduced dependency on cash and improved transparency in business dealings," he said. Economist Muhammad Tariq appreciated the government's efforts to promote financial inclusion, saying the increase in digital banking users, merchant participation and digital transactions was an encouraging sign for the country's econ-

omy. "The federal government's initiative is helping bring more people into the formal financial system. Greater banking penetration and digital transactions can improve economic documentation, enhance transparency and support sustainable economic growth," he observed. Tariq suggested that the government should continue investing in digital infrastructure, cybersecurity and public awareness campaigns to ensure that the benefits of digitalization reach people living in remote and underserved areas. The business community and experts expressed optimism that with sustained policy support, technological advancement and wider adoption of digital financial services, Pakistan would make further progress towards building a digitally empowered and financially inclusive economy.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: President of the Pakistan Awam Party Shahid Khaqan Abbasi addressing during a Awaam Pakistan budget seminar, at National Press Club, in the Federal Capital.

Health workers struggle to
contain Ebola in Congo camps

NIZI:After the Kpangba displacement camp became the first in this part of war-torn Congo to record deaths from Ebola two weeks ago, health workers rushed to trace those who had come into contact with the deceased to break chains of transmission. But the workers - from the provincial health ministry, the World Health Organization and other aid agencies - were forced away by angry locals who denied that the two women had died from Ebola, said Jean-Claude Lonzama, the chief doctor for the local health zone of Nizi, a heavily populated mining area. "Up to this day, we are not able to follow up on the contacts of these cases," Lonzama told Reuters on Saturday. The standoff has left health authorities flying blind as they try to stave off a surge of Ebola cases in this camp of around 30,000 people, most of whom have fled inter-ethnic violence in surrounding areas. "We have 22 displaced persons sites in the Nizi health zone ... with around 81,124 residents," Lonzama said. "This is also our great worry because no preventive measures have been put in place in these sites aside from a few educational messages." Since the outbreak was declared a month ago, several treatment sites have been attacked by locals angry about not being able to bury their loved ones because of precautions taken to keep the virus from spreading or convinced Ebola is a hoax. Aid workers fear Ebola could spread quickly in this and other displacement camps, where hundreds of people sometimes share a single toilet and open defecation is common, accelerating the spread of what is already one of the world's largest-ever outbreaks. There are more than 5 million displaced people across the three provinces affected by the outbreak - Ituri, South Kivu and North Kivu - all of which have been devastated by decades of conflict. In Kpangba, as in towns and rural areas across eastern Democratic Republic of Congo where cases have been recorded, health workers trying to contain the outbreak are running up against deep-seated mistrust of the government and outsiders. The attacks on Ebola treatment sites recall the widespread violence targeting health facilities by civilians and armed groups during a 2018-2020 outbreak in eastern Congo that killed more than 25 health workers. The deaths in Kpangba occurred on May 31 and June 1, but were first made public in a report by the UN refugee agency published on Thursday. According to a Congolese health ministry report seen by Reuters, the first victim, a 60-year-old woman in the camp, tested positive for Ebola on May 30 but had, by then, broken out of quarantine and could not be located. The difficulties winning trust from the population, combined with shortages of critical equipment and armed conflict across much of the affected areas, has left health experts deeply worried about the prospects for containing the outbreaks.—DNA

ME fuel crisis
keeps Mozambique
fishermen ashore

MAPUTO: Dozens of low fishing boats lay anchored in flat waters off Mozambique's capital, stranded for days as surging fuel costs kept their owners from heading out to sea. Since the government hiked prices in early May because of the impact of the Middle East conflict on supply, many fishermen in Maputo's quiet Pescadores quarter have not had the cash to fuel a fishing trip. "The impact is dramatic for us," said Carlos Nguenha, vice president of the local community fisheries council, as wooden boats bobbed idly behind him, some piled with nets. "These conflicts don't only impact those countries, they affect the whole world," Nguenha said. "We appeal to them to sit down and talk so that we can overcome this."

Nguenha's council covers 1,800 fishermen and nearly 290 boats on the Costa do Sol just north of the city. Members are young and old and mostly family breadwinners, with no other work, he said. Mozambique's energy authority in early May increased the cost of petrol by 12 percent to 83.6 meticais (\$1.3) a liter. Diesel rose by nearly 46 percent to a record \$1.8 a liter. While fuel costs are slightly higher in other countries in the region, the sharp increase, coupled with erratic supply, has hit hard in Mozambique, which was listed as the world's second-poorest country in a World Bank economic update published in March 2026. There have been massive queues at filling stations and some people have reportedly given up using their own vehicles in favor of public transport. Its poverty headcount, defined as people living on less than \$3 per day, is 81 percent and most employment is informal and low-paying, the World Bank report said. Exhausted and dishevelled, Eduardo Alexandre and his crew had just landed their boat on the Pescadores beach with no catch after more than 24 hours at sea. "We would still be out there but we had to come back because of a lack of fuel," the 49-year-old said.—APP

16m cubic meters
of desalinated
water daily in KSA

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia maintained its position as the world's largest producer of desalinated water, with daily production capacity exceeding 16 million cubic meters by the end of 2025, representing a 247.8 percent increase compared to 2016, official data showed. According to the National Transformation Program's 2025 annual report, the Kingdom has successfully transformed water challenges into opportunities for innovation, technological progress and long-term sustainability through the efforts of the Saudi Water Authority and the NTP. Saudi Arabia's desalinated water production capacity increased from 4.6 million cubic meters per day in 2016 to 5.9 million cubic meters per day in 2020, before reaching 16 million cubic meters by the end of 2025. This milestone underscores the nation's position at the forefront of global desalination efforts, serving as an international model for advancing Sustainable Development Goal on clean water and sanitation. "The Kingdom has gained international recognition as a global model for advancing Sustainable Development Goal 6, which focuses on ensuring clean water and sanitation for all. This distinction reflects the nation's commitment to best practices and rapid progress in this critical area," said the report. The analysis also highlighted that Saudi Arabia has achieved multiple Guinness World Records in desalination. The Shuaiba Phase 5 plant set records for low energy consumption, with 2.34 kilowatt-hours per cubic meter overall and 1.7 kWh per cubic meter during the salt separation phase. The Al-Khobar Phase II project achieved a record-breaking production capacity of 670,852.4 cubic meters per day on one of the smallest land footprints for a project of its scale. Saudi Arabia has also established the world's largest water research facility. Covering more than 33,000 sq. meters, the Rabigh Oasis Water Research and Innovation Facility was designed to serve as a flagship national hub for water research and innovation. The NTP also contributed to a significant expansion of Saudi Arabia's water network. By the end of 2025, more than 3.7 million meters of water transmission lines and distribution networks had been installed.—APP

UK anti-Islam
activist Robinson
detained

LONDON: British anti-Islam activist Tommy Robinson said he was detained at Heathrow Airport on Saturday and had his phone seized, after a week when he posted heavily online about racist and anti-immigrant riots in Northern Ireland. Robinson, whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, said on X he was held on Saturday evening for around three hours under the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act. "My phone has been seized by the police," he said on X. "Please help kick off my legal fund for defense." Robinson tweeted repeatedly last week about violence that swept Belfast after a video went viral showing the brutal stabbing of a man, who lost an eye in the attack. A Sudanese man has been charged with attempted murder. Police have said they are not treating the attack as terrorism. In the days that followed rioters targeted homes and businesses owned by ethnic minorities or foreign residents in what the British minister for the province called racist thuggery. Local politicians have said far-right agitators online had helped to coordinate or promote the violence. Without naming him, a police spokesman said officers had stopped a man in his 40s at Heathrow Airport on Saturday, following his return to Britain from Russia via Turkey. "The man was interviewed by officers and his communication devices were seized. He was subsequently released," the spokesman said.—APP

CCRI issues
heat stress
advisory
for cotton
growers

MULTAN :Cotton growers have been advised to adopt integrated crop management practices to protect crops from severe heat stress during the critical flowering and boll formation stages Central Cotton Research Institute (CCRI) Multan Director Ms Sabahat Hussain on Sunday said that prolonged hot and dry conditions increase the risk of flower and boll shedding, making timely irrigation and nutrient management essential for sustaining crop health and yield. She cautioned farmers against allowing water stagnation in fields, noting that standing water heats up quickly under high temperatures, damaging the root system and adversely affecting plant growth. Excess irrigation water, she stressed, should be promptly drained. Ms Hussain recommended light irrigation every three to five days during the flowering and boll formation stages to maintain optimum soil moisture. She further advised farmers to irrigate during early morning or late evening hours to reduce evaporation losses and minimize heat stress on the crop. On nutrient management, she suggested a foliar spray solution comprising 200 grams potassium sulphate, 250 grams magnesium sulphate, 150 grams zinc sulphate, 100 grams borax and one kilogram urea mixed in 125 liters of water per acre, to be applied during cooler hours. The spray should be repeated after 15 days for better results, she added. She also recommended applying half a bag of urea or one bag of calcium ammonium nitrate per acre with irrigation, along with 10-20 kilograms of potash to improve water-use efficiency and enhance the crop's tolerance to high temperatures.—APP

Lebanon
complains
over alleged
Israeli
herbicide use

BEIRUT: Lebanon's foreign ministry said it had lodged a complaint with the United Nations over Israel's alleged spraying of herbicide glyphosate in Lebanese territory near the border earlier this year. In a statement circulated on Sunday, the ministry said it had sent a letter to the UN Security Council and the UN secretary-general this week to complain about the incident, which occurred in February, a month before the latest Israel-Hezbollah war erupted on March 2. The ministry said "laboratory tests and chemical analyzes carried out on soil samples" in the south Lebanon border villages of Aita Al-Shaab, Ras Naqura and Dhayra "confirmed the use of glyphosate at high levels of concentration." It said the levels "greatly exceed" those usually found in agricultural areas after regular use by farmers. The statement said the complaint was based on a report from Lebanon's government-linked National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS). At the time, the UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon said Israel had notified it of its plans to spray a "non-toxic chemical substance" near the border and had warned peacekeepers to take shelter.—APP

N Korea says
denuclearization
matter
terminated
irreversibly

SEOUL: North Korea said on Sunday denuclearization is a matter that is terminated irreversibly, as it condemned recent nuclear deterrence talks between the US and South Korea. "The US and its vassal forces' meaningless rhetoric against the DPRK and cooperation in posing a nuclear threat to it can never affect the irreversible position of the DPRK as a nuclear weapons state," a spokesperson for North Korea's foreign ministry said in a statement carried by state media KCNA, using the country's official name. "The 'denuclearization' is an irreversibly finalized matter," it said. Last week, the US and South Korean officials discussed strengthening nuclear deterrence and readiness against North Korea's growing weapons program at talks in Seoul under their Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG)—APP

Trump turns 80 with cage fight
at the White House

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump celebrates his 80th birthday in typically forceful style on Sunday, as the oldest US president ever to take office holds a bloody cage match on the White House lawn. The unprecedented "UFC Freedom 250" event will see 14 Ultimate Fighting Championship stars beat each other to a pulp in a giant arena called The Claw. Costing \$60 million, it's linked to this year's festivities for the 250th anniversary of US independence - but it also happens to fall on the day that Trump enters his ninth decade. Critics have derided the violent extravaganza in America's most famous backyard, saying it is in poor taste during a war with Iran that has sent prices soaring for ordinary people. Trump may clinch a long-sought peace deal with Iran on his big day, although Tehran has cast doubt on that timing. The billionaire president - who has deep ties with a sport whose young male fans reflect his own political base - defended the UFC event as a unique spectacle. "This is going to be an event you're really gonna like," Trump said as he hosted some of the muscle-bound, bare-knuckle fighters in the Oval Office in May. The White House says the UFC is bearing the entire cost. UFC chief content officer Craig Borsari denied blending sport with

politics. "The way we look at this is we have an unbelievable, incredibly unique opportunity to celebrate this country and our athletes," Borsari told a news conference this week. In a dramatic touch, some of the top fighters taking part in Sunday's event are reportedly set to emerge from the Oval Office itself before marching out to the historic South Lawn. The fights themselves will take place in the Octagon, an eight-sided wire mesh cage, surrounded by seats for more than 4,000 spectators. UFC combatant Michael Chandler, who is fighting on Sunday, said it was the "biggest fight event in combat sports history." French fighter Cyril Gane also said he was focusing on the sporting element. "We're not in politics in any way but we have the opportunity to be exposed to the eyes of the world - we have to take it," he told AFP earlier this month. There will be a nod to the 250th celebrations with historical "vignettes" between bouts, Axios reported, and there will also be military bands, a US military flyover and parachute display and a 10-minute fireworks finale. Another battle has already been won. A US judge on Friday rejected a bid by two local residents to halt the fight on the grounds that the event was corrupt. Trump's birthday fight has already

taken over much of downtown Washington. The fighters are being weighed in outside the Lincoln Memorial, and there's space for some 125,000 people to watch the event on giant screens on the National Mall. The macho spectacle has also distracted from questions about Trump's health as he turns 80. Trump loves to compare his virility to Democratic predecessor Joe Biden, who was forced to drop his bid for a second term after a disastrous debate with the Republican. But from bruised hands to a vein condition in his legs and apparent sleepiness in meetings, Trump has also had a number of issues, even though his doctor says he's in excellent health. Trump admitted that he was "not happy about that birthday that I'm having," in a video posted by one of his officials this week. "It's not a number I like, but I'm here nevertheless." In fact the former reality TV star will be front and center throughout the gore and glitz, as he always is. "He's treating the presidency the way he treats his previous career, a big flashy show," Peter Loge, director of George Washington University's School of Media, told AFP. For his last birthday, Trump oversaw an unprecedented military parade in Washington, marking the 50th anniversary of the US army.—Agencies

Briefs

Seven dead, 33 injured as storms hit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: At least seven people died, and 33 others were injured in incidents caused by strong winds, lightning and rainfall across parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa over the past 24 hours, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said on Sunday. The deceased include two children, four men, and one woman, as the incidents were reported from Bannu, Shangla, and Mansehra. Meanwhile, the Pakistan Meteorological Department has forecast more rainfall in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Kashmir at several locations on Sunday. It added that most other parts of the country are expected to remain hot and dry. The latest casualties were reported days after at least two people were killed and 31 others were injured in rain and wind-related incidents in the province earlier this month. According to a damage assessment report issued by the PDMA, the casualties occurred when walls and roofs of houses collapsed due to strong winds and heavy rain that lashed different parts of the province.

UK spots shadow Russian oil tanker: Starmer

LONDON: British armed forces on Sunday intercepted a Russian shadow fleet oil tanker attempting to pass through the English Channel. The vessel SMYRTOS was boarded by Royal Marine Commandos and specially trained law enforcement officers from the National Crime Agency, Britain's Ministry of Defense said in a statement. The vessel will be held and monitored off the south coast as investigations continue, the statement said, adding that enforcement action in Britain's territorial waters was carried out in accordance with domestic and international law. British Prime Minister Kier Starmer said that he had directed the interception. - APP

Amb. Sukotjo talks to Islamabad POST

Indonesia-Pak relations move toward Concrete outcomes

Pakistan is currently the largest recipient, with more than 500 Pakistani students enrolled. In addition, several Indonesian universities independently provide scholarships for international students, including Pakistanis

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In an exclusive conversation with Daily Islamabad POST, the Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan H.E. Chandra W. Sukotjo highlighted the growing depth of bilateral cooperation across education, investment, regional policy, and tourism. Speaking on academic exchanges, he explained that the Indonesian government annually offers the KNB Scholarship (Kemitraan Negara Berkembang), which promotes international cooperation by enabling students from developing countries to pursue higher education in Indonesia. Pakistan is currently the largest recipient, with more than 500 Pakistani students enrolled. In addition, several Indonesian universities independently provide scholarships for international students, including Pakistanis. He noted that hundreds of Indonesian students are studying in Pakistan, particularly at the International Islamic University Islamabad and Jaamia Binoria Aalamia in Karachi. Earlier this month, the Embassy also hosted a delegation from the World Universities Association for Community Development, which briefed on collaboration with OIC-COMSTEC to strengthen academic ties. The Ambassador expressed



his readiness to support such initiatives to further enrich Indonesia-Pakistan relations. On investment opportunities, the Ambassador identified halal pharmaceuticals and surgical equipment as immediate areas where Pakistani firms could move into co-production models within Indonesia's regulatory framework.

He also pointed to healthcare institutions, agriculture logistics, and cold chain infrastructure as promising sectors. For Indonesian investors in Pakistan, he emphasized edible oil refining, vaccine and pharmaceutical manufacturing, halal meat processing, IT development centers, fintech collaboration,

and mining ventures in copper, gold, and lithium. These, he said, could transform bilateral economic engagement from commodity trade to infrastructure-led value creation. Discussing ASEAN, the Ambassador reaffirmed Indonesia's commitment to the ASEAN Way of peaceful dispute resolution, non-interference, and consensus-based decision-making. He highlighted ASEAN's role in regional stability through forums such as the East Asia Summit and ASEAN Regional Forum. For Pakistan, he noted, ASEAN is a central pillar of the Look East policy, offering integration with a bloc of 11 member states representing over 700 million people and an economy nearing USD 4 trillion. Tourism was another area of focus. Indonesia, a leading global destination, hosted over 15 million tourists in 2025, though only a small fraction were from Pakistan. He shared that Pakistani tourist arrivals in Indonesia have steadily increased over the past five years, while the number of Indonesian tourists visiting Pakistan has also grown. He underscored the potential for Indonesian construction firms to contribute to Pakistan's tourism infrastructure and suggested that Indonesia's hospitality expertise—particularly the "Bali model"—could help unlock the tourism potential of northern regions such as Hunza and Skardu.

Swiss to reject divisive proposal

GENEVA: The Swiss appeared Sunday to have voted down a divisive anti-immigration proposal to cap the country's population, according to initial projections from the gfs.bern institute minutes after polling stations closed. A separate vote on a law restricting access to conscientious objection to military service meanwhile appeared set to pass, the projections showed. Driven by concern about immigration, pressure on public services and housing, the constitutional change pitched by the right-wing Swiss People's Party, or SVP, would mandate that the population must not exceed 10 million by 2050. Official projections put it on track to do so by the early 2040s. The unprecedented scheme to dictate population levels by law sits alongside burgeoning efforts by the political right in Europe to set tougher curbs on immigration, fed by discontent about the cost of living, weak economic growth and crime. Under its system of direct democracy, the Swiss electorate generally votes on national referendums four times a year, which also require the support of a majority of its cantons to pass. The government and parliament have urged voters to reject the SVP's so-called "sustainability initiative" as folly at a delicate time for Switzerland's export-oriented economy. - APP

Economic stability enables relief-focused budget: Tarar



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attuallah Tarar on Sunday said the government's economic reforms and stabilization measures had created the fiscal space required to provide relief to the salaried class, exporters, retailers, the housing sector and other segments of society in the Federal Budget 2026-27. Taking part in the budget debate in the National Assembly, the minister said every political party was discussing the budget and criticism and protest were the opposition's democratic right, but positive measures introduced in the budget also deserved appreciation. He said the budget had provided significant relief to the salaried class, adding that no tax had been imposed on individuals earning up to Rs50,000 per month, while those earning between Rs 50,000 and Rs 100,000 would pay only one percent tax.

Tarar said there was a time when political leaders openly predicted Pakistan's default and discouraged investment in the country, while some even wagered on the country's economic collapse. He said that when no one was willing to take responsibility for the economy, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif demonstrated courage and determination by prioritizing the survival of the state over politics. "History will remember the moment when Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif declared that he would save the state regardless of political consequences," he added. The minister said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz assumed power under extremely difficult economic circumstances and successfully steered the country away from economic uncertainty. Recalling the economic conditions at the time, he said inflation stood above 38 percent, the exchange rate was highly volatile, businesses faced difficulties in opening letters of credit and exporters struggled due to uncertainty in the market. Tarar said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had offered a Charter of Economy in the larger national interest and expressed the view that the country would have benefited had that proposal been accepted. He said the present economic stability was the result of collective efforts by institutions and stakeholders, while Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his team worked tirelessly to improve economic indicators. The minister said inflation had been reduced to single digits, while the policy rate had been brought down from over 22 percent to 11 percent. He said GDP growth, which stood at minus 0.2 percent when the previous government left office, had increased to 3.7 percent, while per capita income had risen from 1,751 dollars to 1,901 dollars. - DNA

Indian sailor dies for medical complications

NEW DELHI: An Indian national died from medical complications aboard the vessel MT Celestial while it was docked at Duqm Port in Oman, the Indian embassy in Muscat said late Saturday. "Necessary arrangements are being made for the early repatriation of the mortal remains to India," the embassy said in a post on social media. India has more than 300,000 seafarers working across global shipping fleets, according to government data. More than 18,000 Indian seafarers are employed in the Middle East, an official in the country's shipping ministry said last week. The death comes days after three Indian seafarers were killed in a US strike on a tanker off Oman, triggering criticism from the public and opposition parties. Opposition parties have urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to raise the issue with US President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the Group of Seven summit later this week. And on Friday, India took the rare step of lodging a second protest with the US over a strike that took place more than three months into the US-Israeli war on Iran. India's foreign ministry said it had summoned the US chargé d'affaires to convey "its deep concern over the use of lethal and deadly force against civilian shipping." The body of 35-year-old Nishanth Uirthanathan, who died on June 11, remained onboard for more than two days without proper refrigeration, the Forward Seamen's Union of India said on social media on Saturday. "Crew is using cold water bottles in a desperate attempt to slow decomposition - a horrifying and health-risking situation," the union said, sharing a video it said was from the tanker. - APP

Cyberattack on Iranian banking system

DUBAI: A cyberattack disrupted services at four major Iranian banks, though no customer data was compromised, the country's banking coordination council said on Sunday, according to state media. The council said the attack targeted a shared communications infrastructure used by Bank Melli, Bank Tejarat, Bank Saderat and the Export Development Bank of Iran, prompting technical teams to implement protective measures and temporarily affecting some banking services. It said no unauthorized access to customer information had occurred and no data had been deleted, adding that recovery efforts were underway to restore normal operations. - APP

Punjab expands liquid tree project

According to Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, Pakistan's first EPA-certified liquid tree will be shifted from Faisalabad to Lahore under the expansion plan

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Sunday decided to expand the Liquid Tree project as part of its efforts to promote an eco-friendly province through modern scientific solutions. The Punjab Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) runs the initiative. According to it, a liquid tree is "an innovative biotechnology solution that uses microalgae to absorb carbon dioxide and improve urban air quality in areas where traditional tree plantations are limited". According to Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, Pakistan's first EPA-certified liquid tree will be shifted from Faisalabad to Lahore under the expansion plan. She said more than 100 types of microalgae have been collected from regions spanning Karachi to Khyber for the project. In the initial phase, liquid trees will be installed in major shopping malls as well as indoor and outdoor public spaces to help reduce urban air pollution. CM Maryam said the initiative represented a scientific and effective solution to combat rising levels of carbon dioxide and smog in urban centres, adding that it could play a significant role in improving environmental conditions. She described the project as a key step towards environmental improvement, noting that artificial tree installations in commercial and public spaces would contribute to cleaner air. Officials said the initiative reflects Punjab's broader strategy of adopting technology-driven approaches to address environmental challenges. As part of its efforts to eliminate environmentally hazardous operations, the EPA earlier this week demolished 36 fat-melting units across the province, sealed six and registered cases against their owners. In April, the EPA accelerated its efforts to establish zones in major city markets, that plastic bags below 75 microns completely banned. It announced a regulatory framework focusing on the establishment of zones in industrial areas, mandatory drives to reduce plastic pollution.



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