



Islamabad POST

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UN Secy General says Pakistan's role praiseworthy

Detailed News On Page-08

Pak welcomes US-Iran deal, says Ishaq Dar

Detailed News On Page-08

Sherry hails Pak role in ME process

Detailed News On Page-04



US-Iran agreement

World leaders hail Pakistan mediatory role

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan described the agreement as "an important development for establishing peace and tranquility in our region." He specifically thanked Pakistan for its "exceptional mediation efforts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: World leaders on Monday welcomed the deal reached between the United States and Iran aimed at de-escalating tensions in the Middle East, hailing it as a significant diplomatic breakthrough that could restore stability, reopen the Strait of Hormuz, and ease global economic pressures. In a series of statements, leaders and senior officials from United Nations, Australia, Qatar, France, Türkiye, Japan, New Zealand, and Germany expressed support for the agreement, which builds on earlier ceasefire efforts and paves the way for broader negotiations on Iran's nuclear program and regional security. Pakistan's pivotal mediation role has once again come into the international limelight, with multiple world leaders appreciating Islamabad's diplomatic efforts that helped initiate the ceasefire and facilitated the eventual US-Iran understanding. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Foreign Minister Penny Wong, in a joint statement, commended "the efforts to date of Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and other mediating countries." They emphasized that Australia had long called for de-escalation, including in Lebanon, and welcomed steps toward reopening the Strait of Hormuz. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan described the agreement as "an important development for establishing peace and tranquility in our region." He specifically thanked Pakistan for its "exceptional mediation efforts," particularly to the leaderships of the United States and Iran, and also appreciated the

Israel says won't withdraw troops from Lebanon

DNA

JERUSALEM: Israel's defense minister said Monday that Israeli forces would remain in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza indefinitely, hours after the United States and Iran agreed to end the Middle East war, including in Lebanon. "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and I are pursuing a clear policy under which the IDF will remain in the security zones in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza for an unlimited period of time, in order to protect the border and Israeli communities from there against jihadist elements," Israel Katz said in a statement. Katz also warned Iran that if the Islamic republic attacked Israel in response to its campaign in Lebanon, Israel would retaliate with "full force."

support provided by Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in its statement, extended "thanks to our brothers in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, as well

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Trump, Vance and Ghalibaf signed the MoU

DNA

WASHINGTON: In a surprising diplomatic development, U.S. President Donald Trump, Vice President JD Vance, and Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at easing tensions between Washington and Tehran. According to senior officials, the agreement outlines cooperation in areas of regional security, trade, and cultural exchange. While details remain limited, observers note that this marks the first high-level accord between the two nations in years. Analysts caution that implementation will be challenging, given longstanding mistrust and geopolitical rivalries.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif giving policy statement about US-Iran deal. - DNA

US-Iran rapprochement

Pakistan to host Geneva ceremony on Jun 19: PM

He extended heartfelt congratulations to the entire Pakistani nation including President Asif Ali Zardari, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, PML-N leader Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday announced that Pakistan would host the historic signing ceremony of the US-Iran peace agreement in Geneva on June 19, terming the deal a "monumental milestone" for global peace and a "triumph" of peace and dialogue over the devastation of war. "Today the world has witnessed that the pursuit of peace has achieved a great victory and the flames of war have begun to subside. This is a historic moment that historians will record in golden letters," the prime minister said, addressing the National Assembly, hours after he and President Donald Trump announced that the deal between the United States and Iran had been reached. Describing the moment as a divine blessing after three months and sixteen days of immense trials, he said, "Following the dark night of war, the sun of peace has finally risen." He told the House that under

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'Deep mistrust' in US remains despite deal: Iran

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran's foreign ministry says the United States has committed to releasing Iran's frozen funds abroad and compensating it for damages during the war under a framework deal, AFP reports. "The release of the frozen Iranian assets, as well as the reparations for damages, are two essential points," says foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei during a press briefing. "The American side has committed to taking measures in both areas." Iran's foreign ministry says the country will charge maritime service fees on ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz,

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Briefs

Oil prices drop after deal plan

DNA

TEHRAN: India's Petronet sent a liquefied natural gas tanker through the Strait of Hormuz, the only shipment on Monday since the United States and Iran reached a peace deal to reopen the strategic waterway, shiptracking data showed. The limited traffic underscores wariness among shippers who have welcomed the deal but are still waiting for more details - including mine clearance in the strait - before allowing their vessels to pass through. Global oil prices fell about 4 percent on Monday as the United States and Iran are expected to sign the memorandum of understanding on Friday in Switzerland which will outline steps taken to resume shipping through the strait.

One dead in Israeli strike in Lebanon

NEWS DESK

BEIRUT: An Israeli strike in the south of Lebanon on Monday killed one person, state media said, the first reported deadly strike since the announcement of a deal to end the Middle East war on all fronts. "Enemy drone aircraft targeted a car at the Kfar Tibnit roundabout, leading to the death of its driver," the National News Agency (NNA) said, referring to a village near the city of Nabatieh. Earlier, Lebanon's army urged displaced residents to delay their return to southern border villages, hours after the agreement was announced between Washington and Tehran to end Middle East war, including in Lebanon. Since early Monday, AFP correspondents reported a cautious return of residents to several south Lebanon areas where Israeli forces are not present.

Tragic incident PAF, Navy pilots martyred in trainer aircraft crash: ISPR

Air Headquarters constituted board of inquiry to ascertain cause of accident, says ISPR

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistan Air Force (PAF) trainer aircraft on a routine training sortie crashed near Mardan on Monday, martyring both pilots on board, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement. According to the military's media wing, the pilots were identified as Flight Lieutenant Muhammad Qasim Abdullah of the PAF and Lieutenant Taha Abbasi of the Pakistan Navy. Air Headquarters has constituted a board of inquiry to ascertain the cause of the accident, the statement said. Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Asim Munir, along with the services chiefs and all ranks of the Pakistan Armed Forces, expressed deep grief over the tragic loss of precious lives and extended heartfelt condolences

to the bereaved families. The latest crash occurred five days after another aircraft accident. Earlier on June 10, an Mi-17 helicopter of the Pakistan Army Aviation crashed near Muzaffarabad on Wednesday due to "technical fault" occurred during the chopper's take-off, the military's media wing said. "All personnel on board embraced Shahadat. There were no survivors," the ISPR said. It added that a board of inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the exact technical cause of the accident. Last year in September, five personnel were martyred when an army helicopter crashed in Gilgit-Baltistan's Diamer district due to a technical fault. Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed deep grief over the crash of a Pakistan Air Force (PAF) trainer aircraft near Mardan that claimed the lives of two pilots.

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US-Iran agreement Dar briefs Romanian FM on Middle East peace progress

She extended Romania's appreciation for Pakistan's diplomatic engagement and acknowledged the contributions of regional partners, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Türkiye, and Egypt

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Romanian Foreign Minister Oana Ciuiu announced that Romania and Pakistan have further consolidated their bilateral ties, with Pakistan assuming an increasingly pivotal mediation role in the Middle East. Following a morning discussion with Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Minister Ciuiu

est mediation efforts in the Middle East regarding the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, the essential agreement between the United States and Iran, and the timeline for its signature," Minister Ciuiu stated. She extended Romania's appreciation for Pakistan's diplomatic engagement and acknowledged the contributions of regional partners, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Türkiye, and Egypt, as well as the ongoing support of the United Nations and the European Union. The two officials reaffirmed the strong bilateral relationship between Romania and Pakistan, rooted in a sustained political



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Governor for collective steps to tackle climate change

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhel said that collective measures would be taken to tackle climate change which is a global problem, so its solution should also be global because planet Earth is the only common home of all humans in the entire universe. He said that climate security and policy dialogue is not the responsibility of any single institution, but they require the cooperation of all relevant departments, local authorities, educational institutions, civil society and development partners, it is hoped that today's dialogue would provide support and guidance to our policy makers. He expressed these views while addressing the participants of the Climate Security Program in Balochistan organized by UNDP at Serena Hotel, Quetta. On this occasion, Resident Representative of UNDP Pakistan (Dr. Samuel Risk), Deputy Representative (Ms. Van Nyegum), Honorary Consul General Mir Murad Baloch, Provincial Minister Mir Asim Kurd Gelu, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khatran, Rah-ila Hameed Khan Durrani, Member Provincial Assembly Kulsoom Niaz Baloch, Provincial Head of HONDP Zulfiqar Durrani, Vice Chancellor of University of Balochistan Dr. Zahoor Ahmed Baza, Vice Chancellor of BUITEMS University Prof. Dr. Khalid Hafeez, Vice Chancellor of Women's University Prof. Dr. Rubina Mushtaq, former Senator Roshan Khurshid Nrocha and Advocate Zarghona Barich

were present along with many experts and distinguished guests. Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhel said that Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan in terms of area, from Gwadar to Zhob, we are on the front line of climate crises, environmental stress is increasing the risks to governance and social stability. He said that in 2022 alone, forest fires in Zhob division affected nearly 40 percent of the trees, while floods triggered by rains displaced more than 1.3 million people across the province and contributed to pushing more than 9 million people into poverty across the country, more than 7 percent of whom were in Balochistan. He said that UNDP's role with communities affected by climate change-related natural disasters is commendable, including through housing reconstruction and rehabilitation assistance, as well as through its support and guidance to climate-vulnerable communities through constructive dialogue with livelihoods and public institutions. "It is encouraging to see efforts that help citizens raise their concerns through dialogue, mediation and grievance redressal, while helping government institutions respond in ways that build trust, improve coordination and reflect at scale", he said. He said that the province of Balochistan has its own unique geography of mountains, deserts, mineral resources and a long coastline, the people here have been living with difficult environmental conditions for generations saying that they

understand resilience not as a theory but as a part of daily life. Therefore, Balochistan needs a partnership that is practical and based on our objective conditions. As the Chancellor of Public Sector Universities, I encourage every Vice Chancellor and my Governor House team to put their work into practice. Balochistan has immense potential, our coastline, rivers, forests, natural resources, young population, public sector universities and above all the resilience of our people are all great strengths, he mentioned. The Governor said that we understand that environmental pressures are becoming more complex, water scarcity, drought, deforestation, land degradation and coastal erosion are affecting both lives and livelihoods across the province adding that in the coastal belt of Gwadar and Makran, communities are facing challenges related to the blue economy, drinking water, fisheries and changing sea conditions. "These issues require a practical and scientific approach as they not only affect the environment but also the well-being, dignity and economic future of our people", he said. Governor Mandokhel said that the Balochistan government has taken a significant step through the Balochistan Climate Change Policy 2024; the next step is to support its implementation through strong coordination, practical planning and continuous communication with the communities.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Education, MoFE & PT Dr. Nadeem Mahboob cutting ribbon to inaugurate the Summer School & Fiesta 2026 at Islamabad College for Girls.

Govt to advance blue economy

ISLAMABAD: The government has allocated substantial resources in the Budget 2026-27 to accelerate the development of the blue economy through investments in maritime infrastructure, fisheries, aquaculture, offshore energy exploration and coastal tourism. According to official data, the government would continue implementation of key Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) projects. The projects include the Korangi Fish Harbour export infrastructure project with an allocation of Rs 1,048 billion, infrastructure upgradation at Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works (KS&EW) costing Rs 10.69 billion, and modernization of the Gadani shipbreaking industry with an outlay of Rs 12.9 billion. The budget also envisages execution of the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) Fleet Development Plan aimed at expanding the national fleet capacity to as many as 30 vessels, strengthening the country's maritime transport capabilities. In the energy sector, efforts will continue for operationalization of offshore oil and gas exploration in 23 awarded blocks, while technical feasibility studies will be undertaken for offshore wind energy projects in the Sindh Wind Corridor and Hingol National Park Corridor. To enhance fisheries output, the government plans to expand inland and coastal aquaculture through cluster-based coastal aquaculture projects in Sindh and Balochistan and promotion of shrimp and other high-value aquaculture activities in Punjab.—APP

Ombudsman revamps dispute resolution system

ISLAMABAD: Wafaqi Mohtasib (Federal Ombudsman) Naveed Kamran Baloch on Monday launched a revamped Informal Resolution of Disputes (IRD) programme and inaugurated a four day online training workshop in Islamabad to strengthen a faster, dialogue based mechanism for resolving citizens' complaints, aiming to improve grievance redressal across the country, particularly in remote and underserved areas. Speaking at the inauguration of the training workshop for IRD focal persons and officers at the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat, Mr Baloch described the IRD programme as a transform-

ative initiative designed to ensure expeditious, accessible and amicable resolution of public grievances without resorting to lengthy formal procedures. He said the IRD mechanism provides a structured yet flexible framework that enables disputes to be settled through dialogue, mutual understanding and consensus between the parties. The process, he added, is facilitative rather than adjudicatory and seeks to resolve complaints without formal determination of rights and liabilities. Drawing parallels with internationally recognised Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) models, the

Ombudsman noted that the concept also reflects the long standing tradition of the "Punchayat" system historically practiced in the region to settle disputes through community consensus. Baloch said the initiative seeks to institutionalise a culture of problem solving within public administration and make grievance redressal more responsive, humane and efficient. He observed that many complaints stemming from administrative delays and procedural bottlenecks could be resolved effectively through constructive engagement rather than prolonged legal processes.—DNA

Efforts afoot to promote oil seed cultivation

ISLAMABAD: To reduce reliance on imports and strengthen domestic edible oil production, the Pakistan Oilseed Department has submitted a comprehensive plan aimed at boosting indigenous oilseed cultivation and increasing local edible oil output through import substitution. The plan outlines a phased roadmap to raise the country's self-sufficiency in edible oil to 27 percent in the short term, 40 percent in the medium term and 70 percent in the long term, an official of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research told APP on Monday. The official said the government was pursuing a multi-pronged strategy to expand oilseed cultivation, enhance productivity and gradually reduce the country's heavy dependence on imported edible oil. He said that during the first 10 months of fiscal year 2025-26, Pakistan imported 3.65 million tonnes of edible oil, including 0.67 million tonnes extracted from 2.91 million tonnes of imported oilseeds. The import value of edible oil and oilseeds stood at \$3.21 billion and \$1.34 billion, respectively. Local edible oil production during FY2025-26 is estimated at 0.55 million tonnes, while total availability from domestic production.—APP

CM orders uninterrupted civic services during Muharram

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presided over a meeting to review arrangements for Muharram-ul-Haram and directed all concerned departments to ensure foolproof security, uninterrupted civic services and comprehensive administrative measures for mourning processions and religious gatherings (majalis) across the province. The meeting, held at CM House, was attended by Provincial Ministers Nasir Hussain Shah, Zia-ul-Hasan Lanjar and Riaz Hussain Shah Shirazi, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Home Secretary Iqbal Memon, Inspector General of Police Javed Alam Odho, provincial secretaries, CEO water board and other concerned. Representatives of the reli-

gious community, including leaders of the Jafaria Alliance - Allama Baqar Husain Zaidi, Syed Shabar Raza Zaidi, Syed Nadeem Hyder, Hassan Saghir Abdi, Syed Ali Sadaqain and other scholars - also attended the meeting and presented their recommendations regarding Muharram arrangements. The chief minister reviewed security measures for majalis and mourning processions and emphasised that maintaining law and order and facilitating mourners would remain the government's top priority during Muharram. "Any negligence or lapse in Muharram arrangements will not be tolerated," the chief minister said, directing all departments to remain fully alert and ensure effective coordination. Earlier, the chief minister listened to the suggestions given by the Ulemas at the meeting and incorporated all of them

into the plan. Murad Ali Shah instructed K-Electric, HESCO and SEPCO to ensure an uninterrupted electricity supply during majalis and processions and avoid load-shedding during religious events. He also directed local government institutions and municipal agencies to complete cleanliness drives along procession routes, improve street lighting, ensure the availability of drinking water, and enhance drainage and sewerage systems to prevent inconvenience to mourners. The chief minister instructed the police and district administrations to make comprehensive security arrangements at all sensitive locations and maintain close coordination with religious scholars, procession organisers, and community representatives. Directing the Inspector General of Police to implement a comprehensive security and traffic management plan, Murad Ali Shah said smooth traffic flow should be ensured while facilitating participants in religious gatherings and processions. He stressed the importance of promoting inter-sect harmony, religious tolerance and unity during Muharram and called upon all stakeholders to work together to maintain peace and uphold the sanctity of the holy month.—DNA

RDA vows to dengue-free Rawalpindi

The RDA reiterated its resolve to enforce anti-dengue regulations and promote public awareness to safeguard the health and well-being of citizens

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on Monday reaffirmed its commitment to preventing the spread of dengue and ensuring a clean, healthy and safe environment for the residents of the city on the occasion of World Dengue Day 2026. Acting on the directions of Commissioner Rawalpindi Division and Director General RDA, Engr. Aamir Khattak, the authority, has been actively participating in anti-dengue awareness and enforcement activities across its jurisdiction. This year's World Dengue Day theme, "Small Bite, Big Threat - Stop Dengue, Save Lives," underscores the importance of collective efforts to eliminate mosquito breeding sites and prevent dengue outbreaks. According to an RDA spokesman, field teams have been directed to maintain strict surveillance of under-construction buildings and vacant plots to prevent the accumulation of stagnant water that could serve as breeding grounds for dengue mosquitoes. He said the authority was conducting regular inspections and taking legal action against those found violating dengue prevention regulations. As part of the enforcement campaign, RDA has also been sealing buildings and premises where repeated violations of anti-dengue measures have been detected. The spokesman urged builders, property owners and residents to keep their surroundings clean and free from stagnant water to help curb the spread of the disease. Citizens were advised to cover water storage containers, remove standing water from rooftops, courtyards and drains, use mosquito nets and repellents, and adopt all necessary precautions to protect themselves and their families from dengue. He said dengue was a preventable disease and that community participation remained essential for its eradication. He urged all stakeholders to cooperate with government departments and adopt preventive measures to help make Rawalpindi a dengue-free city. The RDA reiterated its resolve to enforce anti-dengue regulations and promote public awareness to safeguard the health and well-being of citizens.—APP

Court Notice

IN the Court of Nadeem Asghar Nadeem Civil Judge Family Court Rawalpindi. Suit for Dissolution of Marriage on the Basis of Khula etc. Laiba Bibi Versus Raye Fakhar Iqbal S/o Peer Muhammad Atah Rehman R/o Kor Sawar PO Sakheli Mandi Tehsil Pindi Bhattian District Hafiz Abad. Whereas Defendant cannot be served in Ordinary manner So you are inform to attend the Court personal through counsel or attorney on 16-06-2026 at 08 am to avoid ex parte Proceedings.

Nurses, allied health workers to get specialized training

ISLAMABAD: The OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) has launched a specialized training programme for Yemeni healthcare professionals in collaboration with the Prime Institute of Health Sciences, Islamabad, and the Embassy of the Republic of Yemen in Pakistan, as part of its continued efforts to support human resource development in OIC member states facing humanitarian and developmental challenges. The programme, titled "OIC-COMSTECH and Prime Institute of Health Sciences Joint Training Programme in Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Sciences for Yemen," was formally launched at the COMSTECH Secretariat in Islamabad on Friday Under the initiative, an initial batch of 25 Yemeni healthcare professionals, including nurses and allied health workers, will receive specialized professional training in Pakistan. The programme aims to enhance technical skills, clinical competencies and modern healthcare practices, particularly in maternal and child healthcare, nursing, community healthcare and allied health sciences. Speaking at the launching ceremony, Coordinator General OIC-COMSTECH Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary said the programme

reflects COMSTECH's commitment to strengthening healthcare systems across OIC member states through education, training and human resource development. He noted that Yemen has faced immense challenges in recent years, placing extraordinary pressure on its healthcare infrastructure and workforce. He emphasized that investment in healthcare professionals remains one of the most sustainable and effective ways to strengthen national healthcare systems and improve public well-being. Highlighting COMSTECH's broader support for Yemen, he informed participants that the organization has recently launched the second phase of its fellowship and scholarship programme for Yemeni citizens living in Yemen, under which more than 100 Yemeni scholars are expected to benefit. He added that the newly launched healthcare training programme represents the fourth major capacity-building initiative undertaken by COMSTECH for Yemen in recent years. Addressing the ceremony, Ambassador of the Republic of Yemen to Pakistan, Mohammed Motahar Alashabi, described the initiative as a practical manifestation of solidarity and cooperation among OIC member states. He said the programme represents an in-

vestment in Yemen's future, particularly in the development of qualified healthcare professionals who are essential for rebuilding and strengthening the country's healthcare sector. He noted that nurses, midwives and allied health professionals constitute the backbone of healthcare delivery and play a critical role in improving maternal and child health outcomes and community healthcare services. The ambassador expressed deep appreciation to COMSTECH for its continued support in education, science, technology and capacity building, and praised the Prime Institute of Health Sciences for opening its doors to Yemeni trainees. He said the initiative would further strengthen the longstanding fraternal relations between Pakistan and Yemen and promote the exchange of expertise and best practices in healthcare education. Chairman Prime Institute of Health Sciences, Dr. Abdul Wajid said the institution was honored to become part of what he described as a humanitarian and educational mission aimed at supporting the people of Yemen. He stated that the programme goes beyond conventional training and represents a long-term commitment to building professional capacities within Yemen's healthcare sector.—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
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Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

ICCI, African diplomatic community to celebrate Africa Day on June 30

Africa occupies special importance in Pak's eco, trade policy: Tahir



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), in collaboration with the African diplomatic community in Islamabad, will celebrate Africa Day-2026 with great enthusiasm and grandeur at the S.M. Munir Auditorium of the Chamber on June 30, 2026. The event is aimed at strengthening economic, cultural, and people-to-people ties between Pakistan and the African continent while exploring new avenues for trade, investment, and business cooperation. The landmark decision was finalized during the visit of H.E. Munsoor Kurrimbacus, High Commissioner of Mauritius, and Mr. Ahmed Drif, Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Morocco to the ICCI on Monday.

Upon their arrival at the Chamber House, the distinguished guests were warmly received by President ICCI Sardar Tahir Mehmood, accompanied by Vice President Irfan Chaudhry, Convener ICCI Standing Committee on Diplomatic Af-

fairs Zafar Bakhtawari, Convener ICCI Standing Committee on Sister Cities Initiative Sajid Iqbal, former Senior Vice President Khalid Chaudhry, Executive Member ICCI Irfan Chaudhry, and Secretary General ICCI Ghulam Murtaza. Speaking on the occasion, High Commissioner of Mauritius H.E. Munsoor Kurrimbacus highly appreciated the proactive role of ICCI in promoting business diplomacy and strengthening linkages with chambers and business communities across the world. He commended the Chamber's leadership for its consistent efforts in fostering international economic cooperation and creating opportunities for business-to-business engagement. Deputy Head of Mission of the Moroccan Embassy, Ahmed Drif, highlighted the longstanding friendly relations between Pakistan and Morocco. He emphasized the immense potential that exists for enhancing bilateral trade, investment, tourism, and cultural exchanges and stressed the need for greater collaboration between the public and private sectors of both countries. Addressing the

gathering, ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood stated that Africa occupies a place of special importance in Pakistan's foreign economic and trade policy. He noted that the African continent offers vast opportunities in trade, investment, agriculture, mining, information technology, tourism, education, and infrastructure development. He expressed confidence that the forthcoming African Day celebration would serve as a significant platform for bringing together diplomats, business leaders, investors, and policymakers from Pakistan and African countries, thereby opening new avenues for economic cooperation and mutually beneficial partnerships. "The African Day celebration will not only highlight the rich cultural diversity of Africa but will also provide an excellent opportunity to showcase the trade and investment potential of African nations and strengthen commercial linkages between Pakistan and the continent," he remarked. Convener ICCI Standing Committee on Diplomatic Affairs, Zafar Bakhtawari,

underscored the importance of deepening relations between Pakistan and African countries through enhanced cultural diplomacy. He stressed that the exchange of business delegations, cultural groups, academic collaborations, and the introduction of each other's cuisines could play a vital role in promoting people-to-people contacts and fostering greater mutual understanding. He said that stronger cultural and social interactions would complement economic relations and help build long-term partnerships between the peoples of Pakistan and Africa. The participants agreed that African Day 2026 would provide a unique opportunity to celebrate the enduring friendship between Pakistan and African nations while laying the foundation for stronger economic, cultural, and diplomatic engagement in the years ahead. The event is expected to attract ambassadors, diplomats, government representatives, business leaders, investors, members of the diplomatic corps, and representatives of the corporate sector from Pakistan and various African countries.

Gilani reaffirms Pak's commitment to peace, dialogue

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate of Pakistan, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, Monday, welcomed the recent diplomatic progress between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States, expressing hope that sustained dialogue and engagement between the two countries will lead to greater regional peace, global stability, and economic prosperity. The Chairman Senate stated that amid evolving geopolitical challenges and regional tensions, diplomacy remains the most effective and sustainable path toward resolving disputes and building lasting peace. He observed that meaningful engagement between Iran and the United States could help reduce tensions, promote confidence-building, and contribute to a more secure and stable regional environment. Gilani reaffirmed Pakistan's longstanding position that disputes should be resolved through dialogue, mutual respect, adherence to international law, and peaceful means. He noted that Pakistan has consistently advocated diplomatic engagement over confrontation and supported all efforts aimed at regional stability, peaceful coexistence, and international cooperation. The Chairman Senate highlighted Pakistan's constructive role in promoting peace and dialogue among nations. He stated that under political wisdom and farsightedness of President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif, Deputy PM/ Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and the strategic foresight of the Pakistan Armed Forces especially the efforts of Chief of Defense Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Pakistan continues to pursue a balanced and principled foreign policy focused on regional stability, de-escalation, and cooperation.—APP

Khurshid terms US-Iran peace Pak's diplomatic success

DNA


ISLAMABAD: Senior Vice President of the Pak-UK Trade Forum, Khurshid Ahmed Hashmi, has described the recent understanding reached between the United States and Iran as a significant outcome of Pakistan's diplomatic efforts, stating that the development represents a positive and encouraging step towards reducing global tensions and promoting peace and stability in the region. In a statement issued here, he said that the consensus achieved between the United States and Iran clearly demonstrates that even the most complex disputes can be resolved through negotiations, mutual understanding, and diplomatic engagement. This confidence-building process between two important nations, he noted, will not only generate new hope

for regional peace but also pave the way for enhanced economic cooperation and stronger bilateral relations. Mr. Hashmi stated that Pakistan played a responsible, balanced, and constructive role in facilitating an environment conducive to reconciliation, a contribution that the entire nation can rightly take pride in. He extended heartfelt congratulations to President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, and the entire Pakistani diplomatic leadership on this important achievement. He said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's political wisdom, proactive diplomacy, and continuous engagement with global leaders effectively projected Pakistan's position on the international stage and further enhanced the country's reputation. Similarly, he observed that Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir demonstrated exceptional prudence, foresight, and leadership in promoting national security, regional harmony, and stability, thereby further strengthening Pakistan's prestige at the global level. The entire nation, he said, pays tribute to his valuable contributions. Mr. Hashmi also appreciated Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar's sustained diplomatic engagements and the strategic approach adopted by Pakistan's diplomatic team, describing their efforts in achieving positive outcomes as highly commendable. He emphasized that choosing diplomacy over confrontation to resolve international disputes is a welcome and encouraging trend. This achievement, he added, proves that sincere and serious diplomatic initiatives can bring even major crises to the negotiating table. Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to peace, moderation, mutual respect, and constructive engagement, Mr. Hashmi expressed confidence that the country would continue to play a positive and proactive role in promoting regional and global stability.

ISSI hosts launch of Pakistan's First State of Freedom report

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with Mishal Pakistan on Monday hosted the launch of the State of Freedom Report - Pakistan 2026, the country's first comprehensive national assessment of political, civil, economic, digital, legal, and social freedoms. The Chief Guest, Barrister Aqeel Malik, Minister of State for Law and Justice, welcomed the publication of Pakistan's first State of Freedom Report and underscored the importance of evidence-based policymaking, citizen engagement, constitutional governance, and institutional accountability, said a press release. He observed that objective assessments and informed public discourse play a vital role in strengthening democratic institutions and improving governance outcomes. Emphasizing the significance of public trust and responsive institutions, he remarked that, "Freedom is strengthened when citizens feel heard, institutions remain accountable, and policymaking is informed by evidence. This report is an important contribution toward that national objective." He noted that Pakistan's constitutional framework provides extensive protections for fundamental rights and highlighted ongoing legal and institutional reforms aimed at strengthening access to justice, transparency, accountability, and citizen participation. He further stressed the importance of fos-

tering an inclusive governance environment where citizens are empowered to contribute to national development and policymaking processes. In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman Board of Governors, ISSI, appreciated Mishal Pakistan's efforts in undertaking a comprehensive study on the state of freedom in Pakistan. Referring to the report's findings, he highlighted Pakistan's growing digital transformation, expanding entrepreneurial ecosystem, and the increasing contribution of the IT sector to the national economy. He observed that the report presents encouraging perceptions regarding economic participation, business facilitation, and women's empowerment, while also identifying areas requiring continued policy attention, including economic security, governance performance, and institutional responsiveness. He emphasized that the report's multidimensional understanding of freedom provides a valuable framework for strengthening institutions and improving governance outcomes. Presenting the report, Amir Jahangir, Chief Executive Officer of Mishal Pakistan and co-author of the study, described it as Pakistan's first indigenous, evidence-based effort to assess freedom through the country's own constitutional, institutional, economic, and societal realities.—DNA



MILITARY LANDS & CANTONMENTS DEPT

RAWALPINDI CANTONMENT BOARD

The Mall, Rawalpindi Cantt
Tel: 051-9274401-04, Fax No: 051-9274407

RAWALPINDI CANTONMENT BOARD (RCB)

AUCTION NOTICE

E-AUCTION FOR INSTALLATION OF DIGITAL SCREENS (SMDS) AT MURREE ROAD FROM TM CHOWK TO HAIDER ROAD FOR THE PERIOD OF THREE YEARS THROUGH E-PADS V2.0

Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) invites electronic bids through the E-Pak Acquisition & Disposal System (EPADS) Version 2.0 for the auction of Digital Screens (SMDS) at Murree Road from TM Chowk to Haider Road for a period of three years in accordance with the provisions of PPRA Rules, 2004 and other applicable with Government regulations. Detailed bidding documents, reserve price, bid security requirements, auction schedule, eligibility criteria and complete terms & conditions are available on the EPADS V2.0 at PPRA websites. Only those bidders who are registered with the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), appearing on the Active Taxpayer List (ATL) and registered on EPADS Version 2.0 shall be eligible to participate in the e-auction process.

DIGITAL SCREENS (SMDS) AT MURREE ROAD FROM TM CHOWK TO HAIDER ROAD					
Ser	Location of site	Size	Qty	Remarks	E-PADS ID
1.	Murree Road from TM Chowk to Haider Road Saddar Rawalpindi Cantt	6'x3'	12	SMDS (Digital Screen / Steamers on Poles on Both sides	D10061

Terms & Conditions:

- All interested bidders must be registered with EPADS Version 2.0 before participation in the auction. Registration can be completed at: <https://vendors.epads.gov.pk/register>
- Bids shall be submitted electronically through EPADS only. Manual, physical, or hardcopy bids shall not be accepted.
- The e-auction shall remain open till Tuesday, 07 July 2026 at 02:00 PM and the bids shall be opened/evaluated online on the same day at 03:30 PM.
- During the e-auction process, bidders may improve/increase their bids multiple times until the closing time. After expiry of the closing time, EPADS v2.0 shall automatically declare the highest evaluated responsive bidder as the successful bidder, subject to approval of the competent authority.
- Each bidder shall submit a Bid Security amounting to Rs. 500000/- in the shape of Pay Order / Bank Draft / Call Deposit Receipt (CDR) in favour of "Cantonment Executive Officer, Rawalpindi Cantonment Board". Except for the first and second ranked bidders, all other bidders will have their call deposits refunded on application.
- The original bid security instrument must reach the office of RCB before the bid closing date and time. Cash payments will not be accepted.
- The contract shall be awarded through auction for a period of three (03) years, from 17-07-2026 to 16-07-2029. Bids shall be quoted on an annual basis, and the contract fee shall increase by 10% on a compound basis for the second and third years of the contract.
- The successful bidder shall deposit 25% (one-fourth) of the annual auction amount immediately after closing and acceptance of the bid. In case of failure, the bid shall be rejected and the bid security shall be forfeited in favour of RCB.
- The security deposit shall be returned after successful completion of the contract and shall not be adjusted against monthly installments. The bid security of the second highest bidder shall be returned after approval of the bid by the competent authority.
- After approval of the bid, the first monthly installment shall be deposited within seven (07) days. The successful bidder shall execute a contract agreement with Rawalpindi Cantonment Board at his own cost and expense.
- The possession of site will be handed over after contract agreement. In case of non-execution of the agreement or non-compliance with contractual obligations, the bid security shall be forfeited.
- No claim for compensation or damages shall be entertained from the successful bidder under any circumstances.
- The successful bidder/contractor shall be required to submit monthly postdated cheques of the total contract amount, drawn on the 5th of each month.
- In case of delay from the 10th of the month, a penalty of Rs. 500/- per day shall be payable. In case of cheque bounce after the 10th of that month, the contract shall be considered cancelled and the security deposit shall be forfeited and further legal/contractual action may be initiated.
- Defaulter Firms/Groups of the Cantonment Board will not be allowed to participate in the auction.
- The Cantonment Board has the authority to cancel the contract for violation of any condition, in which case all the money deposited by the bidder including the security will be forfeited to the Cantonment Board.
- Road cutting shall not be permitted under any circumstances. The bidder shall lay all cables through trust boring or any other trenchless method. Any damage caused during the execution of the work shall be rectified by the bidder at his own cost and the road and adjoining infrastructure shall be restored to the satisfaction of the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB). Upon expiry or termination of the contract, all underground wiring/cabling (except SMDS) installed under the contract shall vest in and become the property of RCB without any compensation to the bidder.
- Income tax and other Govt taxes will be applicable as per the prevailing rules of the Government, which will have to be deposited in advance.
- In accordance with Rule 48 of PPRA Rules 2004, a Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC) has been constituted. The notification is available on the procuring agency's website and EPADS portal.
- This E-Auction Notice is also available on PPRA website: <https://ppra.gov.pk> and EPADS Portal: <https://eprocure.gov.pk>

Cantonment Executive Officer
Rawalpindi Cantt

PID(I)10079/25

Briefs

IRSA releases
259,300
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 259,300 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 241,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1447.29 feet which was 47.29 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 128,500 cusecs and 146,500 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1172.45 feet, which was 122.45 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 32,600 cusecs each. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 201,100, 156,000, 98,300, and 32,400 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 49,700 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 7,000 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Pak's global
standing reaches
unprecedented
level

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Monday said Pakistan had witnessed a historic moment, as the country's prestige and standing in the international community had risen to an unprecedented level through its successful diplomatic efforts for regional peace. Speaking in the National Assembly, the minister said the honour earned by Pakistan was unmatched in the country's 78-year history. "There is no doubt that we are passing through a historic moment. The respect and recognition Pakistan has received globally are unprecedented and reflect the wisdom, patience and statesmanship demonstrated by our leadership," he said. Khawaja Asif credited Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and their teams for steering the delicate process with prudence and determination, adding that the peace initiative had reached its final stages and was expected to be formally concluded with the signing of an agreement on Friday, June 19. He said the close coordination among the country's leadership had played a key role in achieving the breakthrough, adding that if such cooperation had existed consistently over the past decades, Pakistan might have achieved many more milestones. The minister said the leadership's commitment over the last two-and-a-half years to strengthening Pakistan and improving the wellbeing of its people had now borne fruit in the form of a major diplomatic success. Congratulating the people and leadership of Iran, he said the Iranian nation had demonstrated remarkable unity and resilience during a difficult and sensitive period.—APP

Police deploy
over 15,000
personnel for
177 Muharram
processions

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police has finalized a comprehensive security plan for Muharram-ul-Haram, deploying more than 15,000 personnel to ensure security of 177 processions and 929 religious gatherings across the federal capital from 1st Muharram to 19th Safar. An official told APP on Monday that a special control room had been established at Safe City Islamabad for round-the-clock monitoring of all processions and gatherings. Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi was personally monitoring all security arrangements and regularly reviewing operational preparedness. According to the official, 10 vigilance teams have been constituted to inspect security deployments and ensure effective implementation of the security plan. All DIGs, SSPs and AIGs of Islamabad Police have been assigned security duties, while daily search and combing operations are being conducted across the district to maintain law and order. The official said more than 3,000 cameras and drone technology were being utilized to monitor processions and religious gatherings, while Quick Response Teams had been placed on high alert to deal with any emergency situation.—APP

Pakistan Ulema Council hails
Pak role in Iran-US peace deal

Ashrafi thanks Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and other brotherly nations for supporting diplomatic efforts that led to the landmark agreement

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Coordinator and Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, on Monday hailed Pakistan's role in facilitating the Iran-United States peace agreement, saying the development had enhanced Pakistan's standing as a global advocate for peace and stability. Addressing a statement, Ashrafi said the peace agreement between Iran and the United States, announced by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, had become possible through continuous diplomatic efforts by Pakistan's leadership. He said through the Grace of Allah Almighty, Pakistan had attained an international stature that it had not achieved during the past 78 years, adding that the country was now being recognized globally as a center of peace and security. Ashrafi said the entire Pakistani nation was proud of its leadership, particularly Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, for their efforts in advancing peace. He also acknowledged the role played by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar in facilitating the diplomatic process. The Pakistan Ulema Council chairman expressed hope that the path of peace would also contribute to a brighter future for the Palestinian and Kashmiri peoples and help advance their legitimate rights and aspirations. He announced that the Pakistan Ulema Council had appealed



for Friday, June 19, to be observed as a "Day of Thanksgiving and Prayer" across Pakistan and among Pakistani communities worldwide in recognition of the peace agreement and Pakistan's diplomatic achievements. Ashrafi prayed for Pakistan's continued success and for lasting peace and stability around the world. He also thanked

Pakistan's brotherly countries, particularly Saudi Arabia and its leadership Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, as well as Qatar and Türkiye, for their support and contributions toward efforts for promoting peace. He further expressed appreciation to the leaderships of Iran and the United

States for placing confidence in Pakistan's mediation efforts. Ashrafi said Pakistan would continue moving forward toward a brighter future and expressed confidence that the pursuit of peace would contribute to stability, justice and the realization of the rights of oppressed peoples, including Palestinians and Kashmiris.

Pak, China arbitration
bodies expand legal coop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The International Dispute Resolution Institute (IDI), Pakistan, signed an MoU with the Karamay Arbitration Commission (KAC), China, a regional arbitration institution based in Karamay, Xinjiang, established to resolve civil and commercial disputes through legally binding arbitration. Through the MoU, both institutions have agreed to explore cooperation in institutional arbitration development, capacity-building and training programs, academic and professional exchange initiatives, and the promotion of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) frameworks within China-Pakistan legal and economic corridors. Talking to Gwadar Pro, Khalid Taimur Akram, representing IDI, said the partnership is expected to contribute significantly to strengthening modern arbitration practices, legal innovation, and sustainable economic cooperation across the wider region. "This agreement marks a significant milestone

in IDI's expanding international partnerships across China and Central Asia," he said. "It establishes a forward-looking cooperation framework aimed at strengthening institutional arbitration, improving cross-border dispute resolution mechanisms, and promoting legal collaboration between the two institutions," he added. The Karamay Arbitration Commission primarily handles trade, investment, construction, and energy-related disputes, particularly those linked to Karamay's oil and industrial sectors. The commission also facilitates arbitration for regional and cross-border commercial disputes and continues to expand its international engagement across Eurasia, including cooperation with neighboring countries connected through Xinjiang's strategic geographic location. The Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China shares land borders with Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Russia, and India. The commission is engaged in handling business-to-business and cross-border commercial disputes involving parties from these neighboring and Belt and Road partner countries.

174 Pakistani
fish processing
plants enlisted

ISLAMABAD: A total of 174 Pakistani fish processing plants have been enlisted with China, expanding market access for the country's fisheries sector and strengthening trade links with one of Pakistan's largest export destinations. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, China has emerged as an increasingly important market for Pakistani seafood products as bilateral agricultural and food trade continues to grow. "The enlistment of 174 fish processing plants with the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China enables a larger number of Pakistani exporters to supply seafood products to the Chinese market under approved regulatory arrangements. Pakistan has also made progress in expanding access to international seafood markets. Following the resumption of exports to the European Union, several consignments of fish, cuttlefish and

shrimp exported by four Pakistani companies successfully cleared 100 percent laboratory analysis requirements at EU borders. Official documents show that besides China, 11 Pakistani fish processing facilities are registered for exports to Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, registration of 16 facilities for exports to Russia is currently under process. Fisheries remain an important component of Pakistan's economy, providing livelihoods to thousands of people, particularly in coastal communities. In addition to marine fisheries, inland fishing activities are carried out in rivers, lakes, ponds and dams across the country. Official data shows that the sector contributes 1.29 percent to agriculture and 0.30 percent to Pakistan's gross domestic product (GDP). During July-March FY2025-26, total fish production reached 642,180 metric tonnes, comprising 427,180 metric tonnes from marine fisheries and 215,000 metric tonnes from inland waters. The federal and provincial fisheries departments are implementing a range of initiatives to improve sector performance and boost exports. These include strengthening extension services, introducing innovative fishing techniques, developing value-added seafood products, increasing per capita fish consumption and improving the socio-economic conditions of fishermen. Authorities are also reviewing the Deep-Sea Fishing Policy 2018 to align it with evolving industry requirements and emerging export opportunities.—DNA

Pakistan earns int'l recognition

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Monday said Pakistan had earned international recognition for its constructive and responsible role in promoting peace, describing the development as a matter of pride for the country and its people. Speaking in the National Assembly, he said the entire nation should thank Almighty Allah for the honour bestowed upon Pakistan in facilitating efforts that helped ease regional tensions and promote peace. "I congratulate the people of Pakistan on this honour. This is not the achievement of any individual; it is an honour for the entire nation," he said. The Speaker paid tribute to Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, saying that the progress achieved would not have been possible without his timely efforts and leadership. He also appreciated the contributions of Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim

Munir, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, National Security Adviser Lieutenant General Muhammad Asim Malik, and the entire team of the Foreign Office under the leadership of Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch. He further acknowledged the support and positive role played by friendly countries throughout the process. Welcoming Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan, Reza Amir Moghadam, who was present in the diplomats' gallery of the National Assembly, the Speaker described him as a respected and well-known figure with close ties to Pakistan. He said the Iranian envoy's efforts in the matter were highly commendable and deserved appreciation. Expressing hope for lasting peace, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq prayed that Pakistan would continue to play a constructive role in promoting regional stability and successfully carry the process forward to its logical conclusion.—DNA

Sherry hails Pakistan's efforts

She concluded by stating that the success of diplomatic engagement proves that serious and sustained efforts can bring major crises to the negotiating table, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to promoting peace, moderation, and constructive international relations

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Vice President Senator Sherry Rehman has welcomed the emerging understanding between the United States and Iran, describing it as a significant outcome of Pakistan's diplomatic efforts and a positive step toward reducing global tensions. In a statement, Sherry Rehman said that the establishment of consensus between the two countries sends an encouraging signal for peace and stability at the international level. She noted that recent developments have demonstrated that even complex disputes can be resolved through dialogue, mutual understanding, and constructive engagement. She said that this confidence-building phase between two important nations would generate new hope for the region and contribute to greater stabil-

ity. According to her, Pakistan played a responsible and balanced role in helping create an environment conducive to reconciliation. The PPP leader congratulated President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, and the entire Pakistani leadership for enhancing the country's prestige through their efforts on this important issue. Sherry Rehman praised Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's political foresight and active diplomacy, stating that his leadership was instrumental in advancing diplomatic engagement. She also commended Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for his contribution to promoting regional harmony and stability. She further acknowledged Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar's sustained

diplomatic outreach, saying it helped strengthen international engagement and facilitate positive outcomes. She added that Pakistan's diplomatic team played a constructive role through a prudent and effective strategy. Sherry Rehman emphasized that the development highlights the importance of mutual respect, cooperation, and political dialogue in resolving international disputes. She expressed hope that the agreement would open new avenues for regional peace, stability, and economic cooperation. She concluded by stating that the success of diplomatic engagement proves that serious and sustained efforts can bring major crises to the negotiating table, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to promoting peace, moderation, and constructive international relations.—DNA

Nation
mourns as
two PAF Pilots
embrace
martyrdom

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the crash of a Pakistan Air Force training aircraft near Mardan, paying tribute to the two pilots who lost their lives in the line of duty. In a statement issued following the tragic incident, the Interior Minister honored the sacrifice of Captain Qasim and Captain Talha, who embraced martyrdom while performing their professional responsibilities. He described their sacrifice as a testament to courage, commitment, and devotion to the nation. "Captain Qasim and Captain Talha have attained the exalted status of martyrdom," Mohsin Naqvi said, adding that the nation salutes the bravery and dedication of the fallen airmen. The minister extended heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families of the two martyrs, assuring them that the entire nation stands with them in this difficult time. "Our deepest sympathies are with the families of both martyred pilots," he stated, praying for strength and patience for the grieving relatives. Mohsin Naqvi also prayed for the speedy recovery of three individuals who were injured in the accident, expressing hope that they would regain full health soon.—APP

Pak plays key
role in reducing
regional
tensions

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and former federal minister Sheikh Aftab Ahmed Monday said that Pakistan has played an important role in easing tensions in the region. Speaking during the National Assembly debate on the federal budget 2026-27, he said the country's leadership had followed clear policy direction. He credited PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif for political guidance and praised Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for their strategic and security contributions. He also lauded Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, saying his government's policies helped improve Pakistan's international standing and avoided a potential financial default that was widely feared earlier. The lawmaker said Pakistan had achieved success in addressing war-related challenges. Commenting on the budget, he termed it a clear and structured financial plan focused on revenue generation and expenditure management, though he added that limited fiscal space remained a major challenge.—APP

Tianjin varsity, Civil
Careers Academy signs
MoU for students

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Punjab Tianjin University of Technology (PTUT) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Civil Careers Academy to expand professional development opportunities for students through competitive examination preparation and skills-based training programs. Under the partnership, PTUT students will gain exclusive access to a range of programs designed to strengthen their academic, professional, and communication capabilities, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Monday. The collaboration includes preparation courses for Pakistan's major competitive examinations, including the Central Superior Services (CSS) and Provincial Management Service (PMS) exams, as well as spoken English, public speaking, communication, and personality development training. As part of the initiative, Civil Careers Academy has launched an eight-week Communication and Personality Development Program exclusively for PTUT students. The online program, scheduled to begin on June 22, will focus on spoken English, public speaking, presentations, debates, and group discussions, allowing students to participate remotely during the summer vacation period. PTUT students will also receive an exclusive discounted fee for the founding batch through the university. University officials said the partnership reflects PTUT's commitment to equipping students with practical skills that complement technical education and prepare graduates for increasingly competitive professional environments. Civil Careers Academy is known for its structured training programs aimed at helping students and young professionals develop the competencies required for public-sector examinations, leadership roles, and career advancement. Both institutions expressed confidence that the collaboration will enhance students' employability, communication abilities, and professional confidence while creating new pathways for personal and career growth. The MoU is part of PTUT's broader efforts to strengthen industry and educational partnerships that support student development beyond the classroom.—DNA



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Alliances, energy and the future cargo

RABBI MARC SCHNEIER

ON Feb. 14, 1945, in the Great Bitter Lake of the Suez Canal, President Franklin D. Roosevelt met King Abdulaziz aboard the USS Quincy. The American president was returning from Yalta. The Saudi king had never been to sea. The two men spent one day together. The ship carried a transaction: American security in exchange for the steady flow of oil. It was necessary. It was consequential. And, for most of a century, those ties stood largely alone. America's 250th anniversary next month will be marked at home with parades and speeches. It should also be marked abroad with something more permanent. The deepest American partnership outside the Western alliance is the one with Saudi Arabia and, after 80 years, it is overdue for the commitment its peoples have already made and its diplomats have been reluctant to name. The anniversary is the moment to make a deposit on the next 80 years, in writing, with named programs that bind the next generation of Americans and Saudis to one another. The transaction that Quincy carried is no longer enough. The ship needs new cargo.

We have called this a partnership built on oil and security for 80 years and, on the surface, it was. Underneath, something deeper was holding: a recognition between two peoples of faith that neither side has fully acknowledged. What the diplomats have struggled to name, the people themselves have always understood. Americans who travel to the Kingdom and Saudis who travel to America have spent eight decades discovering in one another a recognition of shared humanity that surpasses the categories the foreign policy desks assigned to them. The relationship has survived three generations of strategic friction not because the oil arrangements were sound but because the deeper recognition was real.

The Kingdom of 1945 and the Kingdom that exists today are not the same country. Under Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia is opening to the world in ways its founders could not have imagined, hosting visitors of every faith, building museums and universities, and welcoming dialogue with cultures it had no relationship with a generation ago.



The Kingdom remains the custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. The Kingdom remains itself. What has changed is the confidence with which it engages the world. Consider what the children of the Gulf are now being taught; and that is tolerance. When a nation changes what it teaches the young, it is not adjusting a curriculum. It is changing what it believes about its own future.

The deepest change is the willingness, on both sides, to love the stranger – to build across the boundaries of faith rather than retreat behind them. I have said this everywhere, in Riyadh, in Doha, in Manama, in Baku: the children of Abraham were never meant to agree on everything but we were always meant to recognize one another. That recognition is no longer a hope. It is being built in stone. I am not naive. This region carries ancient wounds. But it is the work of this generation to build what the next will inherit.

The US-Saudi relationship has survived three generations of strategic friction because the deeper recognition was real. The 250th anniversary of the signing of the US' Declaration of Independence should spur a commitment, publicly and in writing, to expanded educational exchanges between American and Saudi universities; to interfaith initiatives that bring rabbis and imams into sustained engagement; to cultural diplomacy that lets each country's artists and scholars present themselves to the other directly; and to youth leadership programs that prepare the next generation of Americans and Saudis to lead an interconnected world. These are not concessions. They are investments. Every program that brings an American student to Riyadh or a Saudi scholar to Washington strengthens the relationship in ways no treaty can.

America was founded on a proposition: that human dignity is God-given and that no government may extinguish it. The nations of the Gulf, in their own idiom and on their own timetable, are reaching for that same truth. We do not share a creed. We do not share a history. But we share a faith in the possibility of human dignity and a common fate if we fail to defend it. More than 80 years ago, a ship carried oil in one direction and security in the other, and that was enough to change the world. It is no longer enough. The question before America and the Gulf is not what we can extract from one another. The question is what we are willing to build together and whether we have the courage to carry it. That is the cargo worth crossing the water for.

Iran's Strategic Victory and Israel's Growing Isolation

Qamar Bashir



The return of frozen assets and renewed access to international markets would strengthen the Iranian economy, stabilize the national currency, reduce inflationary pressures, and attract investment from around the world. Iran would be able to market its energy resources under normal commercial conditions, generating revenues that could be directed toward infrastructure, education, healthcare, scientific research, technology, and industrial modernization. The country's geographic location provides another extraordinary advantage

HISTORY may ultimately record June 2026 as the month when the strategic balance of the Middle East began to shift in a manner few thought possible. What started as an effort to weaken Iran, curtail its influence, and force it into submission instead produced a different outcome. Iran survived, endured, adapted, and emerged from the confrontation with its political system intact, its strategic position preserved, and its regional influence enhanced.

At the outset of the conflict, expectations in many capitals were remarkably similar. The assumption was that the combined military, economic, technological, and intelligence capabilities of the United States and Israel would prove overwhelming. Iran was expected to retreat, compromise, or collapse under sustained pressure. The objective was not merely military success but strategic transformation: a weakened Iran, a diminished Axis of Resistance, and a Middle East reordered under terms favorable to Washington and Tel Aviv. That objective was not achieved.

The conflict demonstrated a reality that military planners will study for years. Modern warfare is no longer determined solely by aircraft carriers, stealth bombers, advanced fighter aircraft, and defense budgets measured in hundreds of billions of dollars. Iran relied on a different doctrine—one based on strategic patience, missile technology, drone warfare, cyber capabilities, underground infrastructure, and asymmetrical operations. Rather than matching its adversaries' weapon for weapon, it focused on raising the cost of confrontation and denying its opponents a decisive political outcome. This approach fundamentally challenged long-standing assumptions about military superiority. The lesson was simple but profound: overwhelming power does not automatically produce political success. Nations with determination, strategic depth, and resilience can survive pressures that many observers consider impossible to withstand.

The conflict also exposed a profound divide within the Muslim world. For nearly two years, the world witnessed the devastation in Gaza and the immense suffering of Palestinians. Yet many of the region's most influential states—including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, and Türkiye—chose caution, restraint, and strategic calculation over confrontation. Their leaders prioritized economic stability, national interests, and avoidance of a wider regional war. Iran chose a different path. It accepted the political, economic, and military risks associated with direct confrontation and positioned itself as the principal challenger of Israeli military power. Whether one agrees with Tehran's policies or not, that decision dramatically elevated Iran's standing across large segments of the Muslim world and transformed its image from a regional actor into a symbol of resistance.

The military consequences of the war may prove significant, but the diplomatic consequences may be even greater. Reports of expanding negotiations involving Iran, the United States, Israel, Lebanon, and Hezbollah suggest that the conflict may conclude not with regime change in Tehran but with arrangements that preserve Iran's core interests while reducing the likelihood of wider regional war. If such a settlement ultimately results in meaningful sanctions relief, access to frozen assets, normalized trade relations, and unrestricted energy exports, the greatest beneficiary may not be the Iranian military but the Iranian people. For more than four decades, sanctions and financial restrictions prevented Iran from fully utilizing its enormous economic potential. Despite possessing some of the world's largest oil and natural gas reserves, Iran often sold energy under difficult conditions and at discounted prices. Economic normalization would fundamentally change that equation. The return of frozen assets and renewed access to international markets would strengthen the Iranian economy, stabilize the national currency, reduce inflationary pressures, and attract investment from around the world. Iran would be able to market its energy resources under normal commercial conditions, generating revenues that could be directed toward infrastructure, education, healthcare, scientific research, technology, and industrial modernization. The country's geographic location provides another extraordinary advantage. Positioned at the crossroads of Asia, Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East, Iran has the potential to become a major transportation, logistics, and energy hub. Modern ports, rail networks, highways, industrial zones, and trade corridors could transform the country into one of the most important commercial gateways in Eurasia. Cities such as Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Mashhad, and Tabriz could experience rapid modernization. Universities could attract international talent. Research institutions could expand. Advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, aerospace industries, and digital technologies could emerge as pillars of economic growth. The transformation of Iran from a heavily sanctioned state into a major economic power would represent one of the most significant geopolitical developments of the twenty-first century.

Another major consequence of the conflict concerns regional security. Many governments in the Middle East have concluded that long-term stability cannot rest on overwhelming military imbalance. The existence of a significant strategic disparity has encouraged regional actors to explore new security arrangements, deeper defense cooperation, and alternative mechanisms for deterrence. In this environment, Pakistan assumes a unique role. As the only Muslim nuclear power, Pakistan occupies a position unlike any other state in the Islamic world. Therefore all middle eastern countries including

Turkey are scrambling to sign defense deals with Pakistan to provide them counterbalancing deterrence to Israel's nuclear capability. Its diplomatic engagement during the crisis elevated its profile, while its strategic capabilities make it an increasingly important factor in regional calculations. Whether through diplomacy, defense cooperation, or broader security dialogue, Pakistan is likely to become more influential in discussions about the future architecture of Middle Eastern security. The broader lesson is that stability is most likely to emerge when no state believes it can impose its will indefinitely through military superiority and on the strength of nuclear arms. Durable peace requires balance, mutual recognition, respect for sovereignty, and political settlements that address the underlying causes of conflict rather than merely managing their symptoms.

The war also raises important questions for Israel. For decades, Israel operated under assumptions that combined military superiority and unconditional strategic backing of the US would enable it to materialize its elusive dream of greater Israel. Iran's defiance and the US begging for a peace deal suggest that those assumptions are being reassessed. The costs of perpetual confrontation are rising. The political consequences of prolonged conflict are becoming more severe. Diplomatic solutions that once seemed distant may gradually become unavoidable. The ultimate lesson of this conflict is not military. It is political and economic. Nations are not judged solely by the wars they fight. They are judged by what they build after the fighting ends. If Iran succeeds in transforming resilience into prosperity, sanctions relief into development, and strategic endurance into national renewal, it will achieve a victory far greater than any military triumph.

The Middle East now stands at a crossroads. One path leads toward reconciliation, economic integration, regional cooperation, and coexistence. The other leads toward continued rivalry, arms competition, and recurring conflict. The decisions made in the coming years will determine which future emerges. My conclusion is straightforward. The greatest achievement of Iran was not defeating an adversary on the battlefield. It was demonstrating that overwhelming pressure could be resisted, that strategic patience could outlast coercion, and that endurance could preserve national sovereignty. If that resilience now opens the door to economic transformation, diplomatic influence, and a more balanced regional order, then June 2026 may indeed be remembered as the beginning of a new chapter in Middle Eastern history.

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Former Press Minister,
Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former Press Attaché to Malaysia
Former MD, SRBC
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The Ball and the Bridge: Pakistan's Quiet Contributions to the World

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The FIFA World Cup 2026, being staged across sixteen cities in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, once again captures the imagination of the world. Nations compete for glory, players strive for immortality, and billions of spectators follow every pass, tackle, and goal...

IN a world often divided by politics, geography, and competing interests, there are few forces capable of bringing humanity together on a common platform. Football is one of those rare forces. Known as soccer in some countries, it is far more than a sport. It is a universal language spoken by millions, transcending borders, cultures, races, and creeds. From the bustling streets of great cities to the remotest villages, the game inspires dreams, ignites passions, and fosters a sense of shared humanity that few other activities can rival.

The FIFA World Cup 2026, being staged across sixteen cities in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, once again captures the imagination of the world. Nations compete for glory, players strive for immortality, and billions of spectators follow every pass, tackle, and goal with unwavering devotion. Pakistan, regrettably, is not among the participating teams. Yet to conclude that Pakistan is absent from this grand spectacle would be to overlook a remarkable reality. At the very heart of the tournament lies a contribution that bears the unmistakable imprint of Pakistani craftsmanship. The official match ball of the FIFA World Cup 2026, aptly named "Trionda," has been manufactured in Sialkot, a city whose name has become synonymous with excellence in sports goods. For decades, Sialkot's skilled artisans and modern manufacturing units have supplied footballs to the most prestigious tournaments in the world. The footballs used in previous FIFA World Cups, UEFA Champions League finals, and numerous international competitions have often originated from this industrious city.

The story of Sialkot is one of perseverance, skill, and quiet achievement. Though the finished products may eventually carry the logos of international brands, the world is well aware of where these footballs are born. Every stitch, every panel, and every carefully engineered design reflects the expertise of Pakistani workers whose hands help shape the very game that captivates billions. Pakistan may not

be competing on the field, but it remains an indispensable participant in the tournament itself. Without the products manufactured in its factories, many of the world's greatest sporting occasions would be difficult to imagine.

This phenomenon is not unique to sport. Nations often contribute to global affairs in ways that extend beyond headlines and formal recognition. At present, the world faces another challenge of far greater consequence than any sporting contest. The tensions and conflict involving the United States and Iran have cast a long shadow over international stability. The disruption of energy supplies and the resulting uncertainty in oil markets have sent tremors through the global economy. Nations far removed from the immediate theatre of conflict have felt the effects through rising costs, economic anxiety, and concerns over regional security. The peace and prosperity of the Gulf region, so vital to global economic well-being, have also been placed under strain.

In these difficult circumstances, Pakistan has sought to play a constructive and responsible role. Recognising the dangers of prolonged confrontation, the country's civil and military leadership worked with determination to encourage dialogue and understanding. Diplomatic engagements intensified, consultations were held, and efforts were undertaken to facilitate communication between the concerned parties. Pakistan's objective was neither political gain nor international acclaim; rather, it was the pursuit of peace in a region whose stability affects the entire world. The endeavour demanded patience, persistence, and an unwavering commitment to reconciliation. Diplomacy is seldom dramatic. Its successes are often measured not by public celebrations but by crises averted and conflicts prevented. Yet such efforts matter profoundly. They represent the belief that dialogue is preferable to confrontation and that cooperation is more enduring than hostility.

Reports now suggest that an understanding between the

concerned parties may be within reach. While there had been hopes that a formal agreement might emerge in Islamabad, indications point towards Switzerland as the likely venue for any final accord. The location, however, is of secondary importance. What truly matters is the prospect of peace and the collective efforts that have contributed to bringing it closer. Pakistan can take satisfaction in having played its part in this process, helping to create conditions conducive to dialogue and mutual understanding.

There is an interesting parallel between Pakistan's role in global sport and its role in international diplomacy. In both instances, the contribution may not always occupy the centre stage, yet it remains significant and widely recognised. Just as the football used in the World Cup carries the craftsmanship of Sialkot regardless of the brand displayed upon it, efforts that promote peace retain their value regardless of where the final agreement is signed or who ultimately receives the spotlight.

The modern world often celebrates visible achievements while overlooking the foundations upon which they rest. Yet true influence is not always measured by appearances. Sometimes it is found in the skilled hands that craft the ball before it reaches the stadium, and sometimes in the patient diplomacy that helps avert conflict before it reaches the battlefield. In both spheres, Pakistan has demonstrated qualities worthy of recognition: industriousness, resilience, and a commitment to contributing positively to the international community.

As the world cheers the goals scored on football's grandest stage and hopes for peace in regions troubled by uncertainty, Pakistan's contributions offer a reminder that meaningful participation is not confined to the spotlight. Whether through the craftsmanship of Sialkot or the pursuit of dialogue among nations, Pakistan continues to leave its mark on a world that knows well the value of both the ball and the bridge.

Briefs

World leaders hail Pakistan...

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as to all regional and international parties" that contributed to the agreement. The statement highlighted Pakistan's role in creating conditions for the Memorandum of Understanding on outstanding issues, including freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. French President Emmanuel Macron, in a statement, said that the agreement was the result of a diplomatic effort to which several partners have contributed, and called for its rapid and complete implementation by all belligerents. He said the deal also paved the way for comprehensive negotiations in service of peace and security for all in the Middle East. Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi commended "the efforts of the relevant countries that have played a mediating role to date." "We welcome the agreement on this memorandum as a major step toward resolution of the situation. This is the result of the parties concerned pursuing a diplomatic solution and engaging in persistent negotiations. At the same time, we highly commend the efforts of the relevant countries that have played a mediating role to date." Sanae Takaichi expressed the hope that this memorandum will be steadily implemented, that free and safe navigation in the Strait of Hormuz will be actually ensured, and that a final agreement on Iran's nuclear issue and other matters will be realized at the earliest possible date. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz also welcomed the US-Iran deal and congratulate President Trump and the Iranian side on this diplomatic breakthrough. "This can pave the way towards a reinvigorated global economy and a more secure Middle East. It is crucial to implement it with determination," he added. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer warmly welcomed the agreement, describing it as "a hugely important step forward in ending the war, ensuring regional stability and re-opening the Strait of Hormuz." He specifically congratulated President Trump and "the mediators from Pakistan, Qatar and elsewhere who have contributed to this breakthrough." Starmer stressed the need for full implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding to ensure permanent freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and to finalise details of the nuclear agreement. Foreign Minister New Zealand Winston Peters welcomed the deal calling it a step towards reducing tensions and promoting stability in a region that is critical to global economic security. "The disruption to the Strait of Hormuz has had serious impacts on New Zealand's economy, as well as on our Pacific partners," Mr Peters says. We welcome steps that will enable the safe reopening of this vital maritime route and restore confidence in key supply chains, he added. Earlier Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and US President Donald Trump announced on social media that the US-Iran deal had been reached. "Following intensive talks, we are pleased to announce that the Peace Deal between the United States of America and Islamic Republic of Iran has been REACHED. Both sides have declared the immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon. The official signing ceremony will be on Friday, 19 June in Switzerland," the prime minister wrote on his X timeline. He said that with the agreement now in place, mediators would facilitate a series of meetings this week. These pre-implementation discussions will lay the foundation for the technical talks and the official signing ceremony, he added. US President Donald Trump, in a post on his social media platform Truth Social also announced that the deal with the Islamic Republic of Iran was now complete. "Congratulations to all! I hereby fully authorize the toll free opening of the Strait of Hormuz, and, simultaneously herewith, authorize the immediate removal of the United States Naval blockade.

Sweden smash five past Tunisia in World Cup opener

Sweden become top team of Group F with three points went ahead of Japan and Netherlands

DNA

NEW YORK: Sweden's Yasin Ayari scored two sensational goals and Alexander Isak and Viktor Gyokeres also got on the score-sheet as they cruised to a 5-1 World Cup Group F victory over Tunisia on Sunday. After scraping through to the finals after a dismal qualifying campaign, they responded by scoring five goals in a World Cup match for the first time since 1938 when they defeated Cuba 8-0. Ayari – the son of a Tunisian father and a Moroccan mother – put Sweden ahead in the seventh minute after goalkeeper Mouhib Chamakh fluffed his lines trying to clear under pressure from Isak, and what followed set the tone for the evening. The ball fell to Gyokeres, whose shot was blocked, but Ayari picked up the loose ball and blasted home a rocket of a shot to send the yellow-clad fans in the stands into raptures, though the player's own celebrations were more muted. Set up to defend and hit Sweden on the break, Tunisia then got a taste of their own medicine as they committed players forward and chased an equaliser on the half-hour mark, only to



come undone on the counterattack. The Swedes won the ball in their own box and played it to Gyokeres, who took it on his chest and instantly released Isak down the left. The striker ran at defender Montassar Talbi before cutting inside and slotting the ball past Chamakh, who should have done better. The Tunisians did little in the opening half and struggled to recalibrate their game-plan after going behind, but they still managed to pull a goal back before the break, defender Omar Rekik scoring with a superb glancing header that was his side's first effort on target. Isak and Gyokeres have both proven to be fearsome forwards individually but there were a number of miscues early in the second half as they struggled to play on the same wavelength. They eventually clicked again on the hour mark when Isak stole the ball from Ellyes Skhiri and teed up his strike partner to make it 3-1 with a simple finish, and Gyokeres could have added a couple more to his total with some better finishing. Substitute Mattias Svanberg scored straight after coming off the bench in the 84th minute, and though the goal was initially disallowed for offside, it was allowed to stand after a VAR review.

Germany cruise to 7-1 win over debutants Curacao in Houston

Felix Nmecha scores fastest goal of tournament after just six minutes for Germany

MEXICO: Germany began their World Cup campaign with a thumping 7-1 victory over debutants Curacao on Sunday in a match where history was made on several fronts and the one-sided result could not overshadow the occasion for the island nation. Germany's Felix Nmecha scored the fastest goal of the tournament so far after six minutes and Nico Schlotterbeck, Kai Havertz (two), Jamal Musiala, Nathaniel Brown and Deniz Undav also netted in an easy outing for Julian Nagelsmann's side. But the biggest cheer from the 68,021 crowd came for Livano Comenencia's 21st-minute equaliser for Curacao to score their first goal at a World Cup as they became the smallest nation by population size and area to play at the global finals. Curacao's sizeable support enjoyed their historic day under Dick Advocaat, who became the oldest

coach in World Cup history at the age of 78, and cheered to the end on an occasion perhaps most believed would never come. "We expected to do more against Germany, but they were too strong," Advocaat said. "We conceded three easy goals and 4-1 would have been a better score. Curacao players look dejected after match, Houston Stadium, Houston, Texas, US, June 14, 2026. "Despite this 7-1 outcome, the joy of the fans is fantastic. This is not a disgrace, we can still be proud. We still have two games to go and those could end differently. "The players will not be downcast, it was still great to play in this game." Recalled goalkeeper Manuel Neuer is now also the oldest player to feature for Germany at a major tournament aged 40, beating the previous record holder Lothar Matthaus. "It

around potential winners.

Germany's Kai Havertz scores seventh goal past Curacao's Eloy Room, Houston Stadium, Houston, Texas, US, June 14, 2026. Curacao are known as The Blue Wave but instead it was wave after wave of white shirts that confronted them from the start. Parity lasted six minutes before Germany's quick passing on the edge of the box created a scoring chance for Nmecha, but the second goal was scored by Curacao as the plan to hit their opponents on the break worked. Comenencia's shot from 15 metres took a deflection that lifted the ball past Neuer. Germany were back in front after 38 minutes, though, with a simple glancing header by Schlotterbeck and from there it became a procession. Germany won a penalty that Havertz converted before Musiala extended the lead early in the second period leaving Brown, Undav and Havertz, with his second goal, to complete the rout. – APP

Pakistan to host Geneva ceremony on Jun 19: PM

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the deal, Iran and the US have announced the immediate and permanent end to military operations on all fronts, including Lebanon. "This is not just an agreement between two nations, but a victory for peace, dialogue, and diplomacy over the devastation of war," the prime minister said, adding that the prestige and honor Allah has bestowed upon Pakistan today is something nations seek for centuries. Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed deep gratitude to Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Chinese President Xi Jinping, US President Donald Trump, Iranian Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei and President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, alongside the negotiation teams of both countries, for demonstrating immense wisdom, prudence, and patience under extremely difficult circumstances. He extended heartfelt congratulations to the entire Pakistani nation including President Asif Ali Zardari, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, PML-N leader Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, and other party heads for their guidance and support. He particularly praised the extraordinary role played by Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, who devoted day and night to bring an end to the war and securing peace. He said that there were some critical moments when negotiations seemed close to falling apart, but the Field Marshal remained steadfast which ensured this monumental success. The prime minister also lauded Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, and Foreign Ministry's team and other institutions for their tireless efforts. The prime minister called upon the nation to offer prayers of gratitude to Allah Almighty for bestowing unprecedented honour and dignity upon Pakistan.

Saudi Arabia among teams wearing cooling vests at World Cup 2026

DNA

JEDDAH: Saudi Arabia's footballers are set to use high-tech cooling devices with a pre-frozen gel lining to combat high temperatures during the FIFA World Cup. The Green Falcons kick off their campaign against Uruguay at Miami's Hard Rock Stadium on Tuesday, when temperatures are expected to reach 32 C with high humidity. Adidas developed the Climacool system especially for high-temperature environments, using technology derived from that used by Formula 1 drivers. The cooling vest includes a special gel which is frozen before play and which can lower skin temperature by as much as 13 C. The Saudi Football Federations said the high-tech sports equipment was used as part of the team's training regime, which also takes place in soaring temperatures during the summer months. Dr. Nasser Al-Eid, who specializes in diagnosing, treating and preventing injuries related to physical activity, told Arab News the use of cooling equipment was becoming increasingly popular among professional athletes. "It has three components – a cooling vest, jacket and overshoe. When combined, the vest and jacket can lower core body temperature by as much as 0.5°C and skin temperature by 13°C, keeping players cool as they prepare to take the field," he said.

India register commanding win over Pakistan in Women's T20 World Cup clash

Girls in Blue bowl out Pakistan for 106 in 17 overs after setting 171-run target

LONDON: Deepti Sharma led India's bowling attack with a five-wicket haul as they beat Pakistan by 64 runs in their Women's T20 World Cup 2026 encounter at Edgbaston in Birmingham on Sunday. Chasing 171, Pakistan were bowled out for 106 in 17 overs, as India's disciplined bowling attack staged a strong comeback after a steady start from the opposition. Pakistan began positively, with the openers putting on crucial runs. Muneeba Ali led from the front and applied early pressure on the Indian attack. Deepti made the breakthrough by ending the 38-run opening stand, dismissing Gull Feroza for 12 off nine deliveries, which included two boundaries. Muneeba and Ayesha Zafar then steadied the innings and took Pakistan past the 50-run mark, but Deepti struck again to remove Ayesha for 12 off eight balls, leaving Pakistan at 53/2 in 6.3 overs. Despite Muneeba's resistance, Pakistan continued to lose wickets at regular intervals. Shree Charani added to the pressure by dismissing Saira Jabeen for two runs. Muneeba was eventually run out after a composed 41 off 35 deliveries, including five boundaries, leaving Pakistan struggling at 75/4 in 10.5 overs. Captain Fatima Sana fell for a duck, dismissed by Shafali

Verma, while Natalia Pervaiz contributed seven runs before becoming the sixth wicket to fall. Charani claimed her third wicket by removing Rameen Shamim, reducing Pakistan further after she managed just four runs from six deliveries. Deepti then returned to clean up the tail, dismissing Aliya Riaz and Tasmia Rubab before Nashra Sandhu became the final wicket, sealing a dominant Indian victory. Deepti finished with outstanding figures of 5/10 in four overs, while Charani took three wickets. Shafali Verma also chipped in with a wicket as India wrapped up a comprehensive win. Batting first, the Girls in Blue posted 170-6 in their allotted 20 overs, courtesy of a crucial partnership between Smriti Mandhana and Harmanpreet Kaur. India made a mixed start as opener Shafali Verma opened the scoring with a six off the very first delivery, but was dismissed later in the same over by spinner Sadia Iqbal. Jemimah Rodrigues came to the crease after Mandhana was already finding runs at the other end following an early dismissal, aiming to steady the innings and rebuild momentum towards a competitive total. However, India suffered another setback as Rodrigues was dismissed cheaply for one off seven balls by Tasmia Rubab, leaving the team reeling at 18-2 after 3.2 overs. Kaur quickly found her rhythm after walking in, and alongside Smriti, she built a solid partnership that helped India cruise past the 50-run mark in the ninth over. – APP

Saudi Arabia unveils plan for impressive new home of international tennis

RIYADH: The Qiddiya Investment Company announced on Monday plans for a 33,000-capacity National Tennis Centre – a world-class sports and entertainment landmark that will position Saudi Arabia as a future hub for international tennis, local grassroots participation and year-round community play. Located in Qiddiya City – Saudi Arabia's capital of entertainment, sport and culture – the National Tennis Centre will be the region's largest tennis complex, built to ATP, WTA and ITF standards across all courts to attract and host some of the world's most prestigious events, reported the Saudi Press Agency. Construction is already well underway and the facility is being designed by globally renowned sports architecture firm Populous. The National Tennis Centre is an important step forward in Qiddiya City's ambition to become a global destination for entertainment, sport and culture. It aims to create a new home for tennis in Saudi Arabia while inspiring future generations through the power of play. The announcement adds to the remarkable momentum at Qiddiya City

which includes the recent opening of Six Flags theme park; Aquarabia, the largest water park in the Middle East; and Play-Maker Studios, the new purpose-built film production hub. The National Tennis Centre will feature 30 courts – 28 hard courts and two clay – integrated into the dramatic landscape of Qiddiya City, 45 km west of Riyadh, with layered green facades woven into the surrounding Tuwaiq Mountains. It will combine world-class competition infrastructure with elite training and wellness facilities, a vibrant public realm, and two multi-purpose arenas, with retractable roofs for climate control, to host concerts and major events beyond tennis. The National Tennis Centre is located next to Nick Faldo's signature designed 18-hole championship golf course, set to open later this year, as well as new homes, offices, and retail which form part of a new city planned to be three times the size of Paris. The National Tennis Centre will play a major role in the broader ambitions, led by the Ministry of Sport, to further elevate sports in the Kingdom and encourage increased

participation. It will support all levels of the game, from grassroots initiatives introducing tennis to children for the first time, to supporting Saudi Arabia's elite talent. The centre court will boast 15,000 seats and will be the flagship arena. It will boast a retractable roof and is designed for the world's biggest matches as it is comparable in scale to leading international tennis venues. Designed to host events beyond tennis, the complex will be a multi-use area for sport, concerts, and major events. There will be six match courts, six indoor courts and 14 practice courts, including clay, with a total seating capacity of 33,000. The prime Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal, the minister of sport and president of the Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee, said the launch of the complex reflected the support and attention the sports sector received from the leadership. He also stressed that the complex represented an important pillar in developing tennis in the Kingdom, a sport that enjoyed wide popularity among both participants and fans. Prince Abdulaziz added: "The

complex has the necessary capabilities to host major tournaments and elite players, having been built according to the highest international specifications and standards. "This reflects the commitment to developing the tennis ecosystem in the Kingdom, as with other sports, by enhancing infrastructure and programs that support the scouting and development of Saudi talent. These efforts help guide players from the amateur stage to professionalism while contributing to the achievement of the sports objectives of Saudi Vision 2030." Abdullah Aldawood, the managing director at Qiddiya Investment Company, said: "At Qiddiya City we believe in the power of play; the idea that play, in all its forms, has the ability to transform lives, build communities and inspire generations. The National Tennis Centre demonstrates this philosophy. "We are building a world-class home for tennis at every level, where the world's best players can compete, the next generation of Saudi talent can reach their potential, and families and communities across Saudi Arabia can experience this great sport." – APP

Trump, Vance and Ghalibaf signed...

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Still, the signing ceremony is being hailed as a symbolic step toward dialogue. Meanwhile, The United States and Iran are to hold indirect meetings in Doha this week ahead of the formal signing of a deal aimed at ending the Middle East war, a diplomat. "Separate preparatory meetings with each side will now take place in Doha this week, ahead of the official signing in Switzerland and the start of the technical talks," the diplomat said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive arrangements. The source added that Qatari mediators had departed Tehran after "17 hours of intensive negotiations," which began on Sunday and culminated in an agreement being reached. The US and Iran have reached an agreement to end the war and open the Strait of Hormuz, offering relief to the global economy more than three months since fighting began. Details of the deal were not immediately available. Key mediator Pakistan said the signing will be Friday in Switzerland. Key issues like Iran's nuclear program are expected to be addressed later.

PAF, Navy pilots martyred in trainer...

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In separate statements, President Zardari paid tribute to Flight Lieutenant Muhammad Qasim Abdullah and Lieutenant Taha Abbasi, who embraced martyrdom in the accident. The president prayed for the elevation of the martyrs' ranks and for strength and patience for their bereaved families. He said the nation would always remember the sacrifices of its brave sons who laid down their lives in defence of the country, and extended heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the grieving families. Prime Minister Shehbaz also expressed sorrow over the crash and offered condolences on the martyrdom of Flight Lieutenant Muhammad Qasim Abdullah of the Pakistan Air Force and Lieutenant Taha Abbasi of the Pakistan Navy. The premier prayed for the departed souls and for the bereaved families to bear the loss with courage and fortitude. He said the professionalism and dedication of Pakistan's armed forces in defending the country were unparalleled, and extended his sympathies to the families of the two martyred officers.

Dar briefs Romanians FM on Middle...

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dialogue dating back to the beginning of the Islamabad peace process. Romania is part of both the coalition coordinated by the U.S. Department of State to support the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and the broader European coalition engaged in these efforts. Minister oiu emphasized that continued international coordination, regional stability, and the deterrence of armed attacks remain essential. The deepening Romanian-Pakistani partnership is expected to play a supportive role in the post-agreement phase, particularly in nuclear governance and global market stability.

'Deep mistrust' in US remains despite...

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rather than imposing tolls, under a framework deal with the US, AFP reports. "We have always maintained that we do not seek to collect transit tolls, but fees for navigation services, environmental protection, ship insurance and other necessary services will be charged," says foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei during a press briefing.

Briefs

Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.31 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 278.32. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 279 and Rs 279.50, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee increased by Rs 1.03 and closed at Rs 322.99 from the previous day's closing of Rs 321.96, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.73, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs 0.82 and closed at Rs 373.75 compared to the previous day's Rs 372.93. The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham declined by 01 paisa and closed at Rs 75.77, while the Saudi Riyal went up by 02 paisa to close at Rs 74.16.—APP

Gold price surges by Rs 10,800 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold registered a sharp increase in the local market on Monday, with 24 karat gold per tola rising by Rs 10,800 to settle at Rs 455,136 compared to Rs 444,336 on the previous trading day, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 9,720 to Rs 389,600 from Rs 379,880, whereas 10 grams of 22 karat gold went up by Rs 8,824 to Rs 357,317 against Rs 348,493. In the international market, the price of gold increased by \$108 to \$4,327 per ounce from \$4,219 per ounce. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola increased by Rs 230 to Rs 7,509 from Rs 7,279, while the price of 10 grams of silver rose by Rs 6,396 from Rs 6,199. The price of silver in the international market also increased by \$2.30 to \$70.30 per ounce from \$68.00 per ounce.—APP

Chinese Consortium to expand investment in capital market

ISLAMABAD: Chinese investors have reaffirmed their long-term commitment to Pakistan's capital markets following the resolution of key regulatory matters by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), paving the way for increased investment and deeper cooperation between the two countries. A delegation of the Chinese consortium, led by the China Financial Futures Exchange (CFEX) and comprising the Shanghai and Shenzhen stock exchanges, met SECP Chairman Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu and senior officials to discuss future collaboration and expansion plans. The meeting marked a significant step forward in Pakistan-China financial sector cooperation said a press release issued by the SECP on Monday. The consortium welcomed regulatory approvals that enabled it to increase its shareholding in the Central Depository Company (CDC) and the National Clearing Company of Pakistan Limited (NCCPL). The delegation also appreciated SECP's support for the restructuring of the Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) property management function, allowing the exchange to focus more effectively on its core business and strategic growth. The meeting was attended by senior representatives of the Chinese consortium, including Mr. You Hang, Chief Representative of CFEX, Mr. Lou Fengsen, Senior Vice President of CFEX, and Mr. Zhang Xiaofeng, Director of CFEX. Also present were Mr. Sung Zhenwen, Managing Director of Pak China Investment Company and Director of PSX, PSX Managing Director.—APP

Palestine thanks Pakistan for regional peace efforts

The Embassy of the State of Palestine reiterates its deep appreciation for the steadfast support extended by the Government and people of Pakistan to the Palestinian cause and looks forward to continued cooperation in advancing peace, justice, and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the State of Palestine in Islamabad has forwarded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan a message from Dr. Varsen Aghabekian Shahin, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine, addressed to Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Kashmir conflict analysis In her message, the Palestinian Foreign Minister expressed the sincere appreciation of the State of Palestine for Pakistan's constructive efforts in support of de-escalation and the promotion of peace and stability in the region. She highlighted Pakistan's longstanding commitment to dialogue, diplomacy, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, emphasizing the important role such efforts play in strengthening

regional security, stability, and international cooperation. The Minister further expressed hope that the international momentum generated by these diplomatic initiatives would contribute to renewed and intensified action aimed at ending the ongoing suffering of the Palestinian people, bringing an end to the war in Gaza, halting violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and creating the necessary conditions for achieving a just, lasting, and com-

prehensive peace. Geographic Reference The Embassy of the State of Palestine reiterates its deep appreciation for the steadfast support extended by the Government and people of Pakistan to the Palestinian cause and looks forward to continued cooperation in advancing peace, justice, and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.



ISLAMABAD: Russian Trade Counsellor met Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi at the Ministry of Railways to discuss avenues for enhancing bilateral cooperation in the railway sector.

Startups, industry leaders gather in Delhi

NEW DELHI: Policymakers, representatives of global space agencies and industry leaders gathered in New Delhi on Monday for the India Space Congress 2026 to discuss new partnerships, market creation and industrial scale-up. Organized by the Space Industry Association of India, the congress is one of the largest gatherings of the space ecosystem in the region. It is taking place in the Indian capital for the fifth time, bringing together some 600 participants from over 20 countries. Over three days, sessions and workshops will focus on satellite communications, direct-to-device connectivity, Earth observation, geospatial intelligence, launch systems, in-orbit servicing, navigation, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, space sustainability, and space manufacturing. "We bring in experts in space technology, space law, policies, new technologies... (It) is about re-imagining the entire space program more in the collaborative mode because India has a lot of expertise," said Dr. Subba Rao Pavuluri, president of the Satcom Industry Association, which co-organized the event. The event also serves as a platform for private sector cooperation, as India's space economy seeks to expand to \$44 billion by 2033. Private companies have been a major driver in this effort since 2020, when the government opened the space sector more broadly to their participation by allowing them to build and operate satellites and offer private launch services. This transformed the role of private firms from suppliers into independent space operators, with partnerships across the country and abroad. "Government only looks after the exploration activities — on the moon, Mars, planetary positions — and the private sector is getting to manufacture the satellites, launch," Pavuluri said. "With countries in the Middle East, we also have collaborations... We can make satellites for them, we can have them launched in India, and from the education point of view, we can collaborate with them in order to bring their students to India, so they can be trained in making satellites. In other words, the satellites don't need to be imported from the Western world." By participating in the congress, companies gain broader access to the space ecosystem "It's a good and very ambitious place to be looking at all the companies and the ecosystem that is evolving in India with the support from the government," said Shivam Singh, business development manager, VyomIC, a space-tech startup building India's first private low-earth orbit positioning, navigation, and timing satellite constellation. "It's always great to collaborate and work with other companies to come up with fruitful results or to benefit the larger ecosystem and to benefit the country and the world as a whole." For Aavek Pal, chief of staff at ULOOK, a startup focused on space-based radio-frequency intelligence, it also offers the opportunity to present the company's work and achievements.—Agencies

WHO, Lula urge G7 action on finishing pandemic treaty

GENEVA: The WHO chief and Brazil's president on Monday urged the G7 to summon the "courage" to finish the international treaty on handling future pandemics. Wealthy countries and developing nations are at loggerheads over how the pandemic agreement, which was adopted last year, will work in practice. In a joint open letter, the World Health Organization's chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva demanded that the G7

leaders show "political will at the highest level" to finalize a key missing part. "The world must finish what it started," they wrote. The agreement's unfulfilled Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing (PABS) mechanism deals with sharing access to pathogens with pandemic potential, then sharing benefits derived from them, such as vaccines, tests and treatments. The sticky part is deciding how the benefits deriving from pathogens are defined and then shared, how the system is governed, and how equity is guaranteed. WHO member states' negotiators are due to meet again for more talks from July 6 to 17. Tedros and Lula said they would need a lift from world leaders to make a breakthrough. "Instruct your negotiators to come to the July session ready to conclude," they said. "Treat July 17 as a deadline, not a milestone," he agreement — aimed at preventing a repeat of the international disarray in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic — cannot enter into force until the annex is finalized. "Estimates from the WHO and others put the lives lost at up to 20 million," said Lula and Tedros. "Humanity promised itself, in the rawness of that grief, that it would not face such a day again unprepared.—APP

Self-Reliance: The cure for poverty

TANVEER HUSSAIN



EVERY year, as the national budget is presented in Pakistan, the government makes ambitious promises regarding poverty reduction, economic justice, and the welfare of vulnerable segments of society. Various schemes are announced to combat poverty, with billions of rupees allocated for their implementation. These initiatives include financial assistance for poor families, support programs for women, loan schemes for youth, and a range of social protection projects. In the current budget, PKR 838 billion has been allocated to the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). The government's claim is that this allocation will provide relief to millions of families. However, one question remains unanswered: if such pro-

grams have been operating for decades, why is poverty increasing instead of declining? Over the years, numerous poverty alleviation initiatives have been introduced in Pakistan. Bait-ul-Mal, Zakat and Ushr departments, the Ehsaas Programme, the Benazir Income Support Programme, community kitchens, and various welfare schemes are all part of this effort. At different times, sewing machines, laptops, tractors, poultry, and other items have also been distributed among citizens. Each new initiative is launched with the promise that it will pave the way toward eliminating poverty. Yet the realities on the ground fail to support these optimistic claims. The truth is that welfare programs do not provide a permanent solution to poverty; they merely soften its immediate effects. Providing a family with a few thousand rupees per month may offer temporary relief, but it does not fundamentally transform their economic condition. At a time when inflation continues to rise and the costs of food, education, healthcare, and housing are increasingly beyond the reach of ordinary citizens, such modest financial assistance cannot lift families above the poverty line. Poverty is reduced when people have access to stable and dignified employment, not when they rely solely on government handouts. The transparency of these government programs is also an important concern. From time to time, cases have emerged in which financially well-off individuals were found to be benefiting from welfare schemes. A few years ago, the government itself identified people holding

senior positions, earning substantial salaries and enjoying generous benefits, who were nonetheless receiving government assistance. If billions of rupees are being spent without achieving a significant reduction in poverty, it suggests that there are fundamental flaws either in the design of these policies or in their implementation. The real problem is that poverty alleviation is often equated with the distribution of aid. Successful countries, however, have fought poverty through employment, industrial growth, and business development. China is a prominent example. It lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty by prioritizing industrial expansion, exports, and job creation. Other Asian nations have followed similar paths, combining social welfare programs with strong economic policies that enable citizens to increase their incomes on a sustainable basis. If Pakistan is serious about winning the battle against poverty, it must adopt a strategy centered on employment alongside welfare support. The government should ensure that the nearly one trillion rupees spent annually under various assistance programs are utilized more effectively. In collaboration with major industrialists and investors, small and medium-sized industries should be encouraged and established at the district and tehsil levels. Agro-based industries, food processing units, handicraft centers, and other local enterprises can generate employment while simultaneously strengthening local economies. If at least one member of every poor family is provided with stable

employment, thousands of families could permanently escape poverty. At the same time, greater emphasis must be placed on technical education and skills development. Providing loans to young people is not enough; they must also receive the training necessary to compete in both domestic and international labor markets. A skilled workforce is one of the most valuable assets of any economy, whereas an unskilled population can become a burden on the state. Another important aspect of this issue is human dignity. To receive financial assistance, many poor women are forced to stand in long queues for hours, travel from remote areas, and endure extreme heat and other hardships. Such struggles for the sake of a few thousand rupees should concern any civilized society. The responsibility of the state extends beyond providing financial aid; it must also create opportunities that allow citizens to live with dignity and self-respect. Pakistan needs a vision that can reduce poverty on a permanent basis. Welfare programs certainly have their place, and their importance for the most vulnerable segments of society cannot be denied. However, it is unrealistic to view them as the sole solution to poverty. The real cure for poverty lies not in charity but in self-reliance. Until government policies focus on employment, industrialization, investment, education, and skills development rather than merely distributing aid, promises of poverty reduction will continue to be made every year, while the shadow of poverty continues to loom over society.

UK court upholds ban against Palestine Action

LONDON: The British government's decision to ban on the pro-Palestinian campaign group Palestine Action as a terrorist organization is lawful, London's Court of Appeal ruled on Monday. Palestine Action, which had increasingly targeted Israel-linked defense companies in Britain with a particular focus on Israel's largest defense firm Elbit Systems, was proscribed under terrorism laws last year. London's High Court ruled in February, after a legal challenge by the group's co-founder, that the ban unlawfully interfered with freedom of expression, although it remained proscribed pending the government's appeal. Lady Chief Justice Sue Carr, the most senior judge in England and Wales said the group's behavior was not that of a non-violent, direct action organization, and the appeal court had concluded proscription was justified and proportionate. Lawyers for Britain's interior minister, Shabana Mahmood, had argued at a hearing in April that the conclusion the ban had a significant impact on freedom of expression was "overstated and wrong." But Huda Ammori, who co-founded Palestine Action in 2020, said proscription had imposed "severe restrictions on the fundamental free speech and assembly rights of vast numbers of people" who supported the Palestinian cause.—APP

Saudia signs 6 China deals

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has signed six agreements and memorandums of understanding with Chinese entities and awarded housing projects worth more than \$1.9 billion (\$506 million) in Riyadh and Dammam. The deals, announced during an official Saudi visit to China running from June 13 to 16, cover investment in the construction sector, the adoption of modern building technologies, knowledge transfer, human capital development, and support for public-private partnership, the Saudi Press Agency reported. The agreements also include engineering design, financing solutions, and project studies and pricing aimed at improving implementation efficiency, accelerating project delivery, and enhancing the quality of housing developments. The announcements underscore China's growing role in Saudi Arabia's construction and infrastructure sectors, where Chinese firms are increasingly involved in housing, transport and major development projects aligned with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 diversification agenda. In a post on X, Saudi Minister of Municipalities and Housing Majed Al-Hogail said: "Our partnerships with Chinese companies continue to affirm, day by day, their ability to transform ambitions into tangible achievements."—APP

Saudi inflation remains contained at 1.8% in May

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's annual inflation rate edged up to 1.8 percent in May with housing rents continuing to drive price gains in the Kingdom, official data showed. According to the latest report released by the General Authority for Statistics, the Kingdom's Consumer Price Index edged up 0.2 percent month on month in May, reflecting moderate increases across several categories, including food, housing and transportation. Compared with neighboring Gulf economies, Saudi Arabia's inflation rate remained relatively contained. Kuwait recorded annual inflation of 2.57 percent in April, while Qatar's latest inflation reading stood at 2.62 percent. In its latest report, GASTAT stated the latest increase was "mainly driven by a rise in housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuel prices by 3.7 percent, transport prices by 1.5 percent, and prices of restaurant and accommodation services by 1.7 percent." The figures showed that actual housing rents increased by 4.7 percent, underscoring continued demand for residential properties in the Kingdom. According to the report, personal care, social protection, and other goods and services posted the highest annual gain at 5.6 percent.—APP

Australia to probe Israel's alleged abuse of flotilla activists

SYDNEY: Australia's federal police said Monday they are investigating claims of abuse by Israeli officials made by citizens who were detained following the interception of their Gaza-bound aid flotilla last month. Some members of a group of Australian activists have alleged they were subjected to "physical, psychological and sexual abuse" by their Israeli captors and demanded Canberra take action. Following a meeting with Foreign Minister Penny Wong on Monday, the group said the Australian government had "committed to undertaking an independent investigation" into those allegations. In a statement, Australia's federal police confirmed they had "begun inquiries into allegations made by a representative of the group." "The (police force) engages with a victim centric, trauma-informed approach," a spokesperson said, adding they would "provide an update at an appropriate time." Foreign Minister Wong said this month she believed women who said they had been subject to sexual abuse and assault by Israeli forces. Israel's embassy in Canberra did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment. Israel detained more than 430 activists from countries around the world in May after intercepting them in international waters. It was the latest in a string of attempts by activists to break the Israeli blockade of the Palestinian territory. Israel's National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir sparked widespread condemnation after he posted a video mocking the flotilla activists while their hands were bound. A number of European countries have banned Ben Gvir from entering over his conduct. The far-right minister has been under a travel ban barring him from entry to Australia since last year.—DNA

Sudan drone strikes kill over 1,000 in first five months: UN

GENEVA: The UN rights chief on Monday condemned a "sharp increase" in the use of drone warfare in conflict-torn Sudan where more than 1,000 civilians were killed in such strikes in the first five months of this year. Drone warfare has become an increasingly prominent feature of Sudan's conflict since it erupted in April 2023 between the regular army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). "In Sudan, the horrific conflict has expanded and escalated, marked by a sharp increase in the use of drone warfare," said UN rights chief Volker Turk. "Between January and May 2026, our office documented more than 1,000 civilians killed by drone strikes," he said in an opening address to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. He also said that "rape and sexual violence are rampant." Now in its fourth year, the conflict in Sudan has killed tens of thousands of people and forced more than 11 million from their homes, creating what the United Nations describes as the world's largest displacement and hunger crises. Drone strikes on the strategic city of El-Obeid killed 23 people, a rights group and witnesses said last week, in one of the deadliest aerial attacks the city has seen since the war began. "The roofs of houses collapsed on their occupants," a resident of the Al-Matar neighborhood in the city's east said. El-Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan, has been partially encircled for months by paramilitary forces and sits along a key route linking RSF-held areas in the western Darfur region to army-controlled regions in the east. Fighting has intensified in recent months in the Kordofan region and Blue Nile state near the Ethiopian border, particularly after the RSF captured El-Fasher in October, the army's last major stronghold in western Darfur. Kordofan — home to oil deposits, arable land and the RSF's most powerful paramilitary allies — remains a key and fiercely contested battleground. The war in Sudan, where two rival generals are competing for power, was described as one of the world's most neglected crises this month by the Norwegian Refugee Council.—APP

Briefs

Myanmar Junta chief to visit China

BEIJING: Myanmar's Min Aung Hlaing arrived in Beijing on Monday for a five-day visit at the invitation of Chinese leader Xi Jinping, China's state media reported, marking his first trip to the world's second-largest economy since being elected president. Min Aung Hlaing, 69, the former junta chief who was the architect of a 2021 coup that led to civil war in Myanmar and a wave of international sanctions, was elected president by parliament in early April. His journey from top general to civilian president formalized his hold on power after a coup that ended a decade of tentative democracy and sparked an exodus of foreign investors from what was once one of Asia's most promising frontier markets. — APP

Pak welcomes US-Iran deal, says Dar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday warmly welcomed the understanding reached between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran, appreciating the trust reposed in the country by the leadership of both nations. "This significant breakthrough reflects the power of sustained diplomatic engagement and the collective resolve of friendly nations to choose dialogue over confrontation," Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar wrote on his X timeline. He said that the development also sent a reassuring message to the international community and provided much-needed confidence and stability to global markets and the world economy, particularly for developing countries that were most vulnerable to regional instability. The deputy prime minister said that throughout this period, Pakistan remained actively engaged with all concerned parties and consistently advocated restraint and constructive engagement, maintaining that dialogue and diplomacy remained the only viable means for the resolution of all issues. "We appreciate the trust reposed in Pakistan by the leadership of both the United States and Iran and commend their commitment to remaining engaged in pursuit of a peaceful and negotiated outcome." — APP

PSX surges as US-Iran deal

DNA
KARACHI: The equity market surged on Monday as investors cheered a US-Iran breakthrough, tumbling oil prices and what analysts described as a growth-tilted federal budget, easing fears of renewed inflationary pressure and an interest-rate hike. The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index settled at 177,039.82 points, up 4,639.92 points, or 2.69%, from the previous close of 172,399.90. During the session, the index climbed to an intraday high of 177,176.72, gaining 4,776.82 points, or 2.77%, before retreating to a low of 175,085.79, reflecting an increase of 2,685.89 points, or 1.56%. "A budget that has directionally changed from consolidation to growth, along with the solution to the Iran-US conflict, has buoyed sentiment," said Ahfaz Mustafa, CEO of Ismail Iqbal Securities. "It has also tamed expectations of a rate hike and triggered buying across all sectors, especially construction," he said, adding that the key market drivers were "budget, oil and interest rate expectations". Oil prices tumbled and global stocks rallied on Monday after the United States and Iran said they had reached a deal to end their war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, sending relief through global markets. The two sides confirmed an announcement from mediator Pakistan, with a signing ceremony set to take place in Switzerland on June 19, bringing an end to three months of conflict that had sent energy prices soaring and revived fears of another inflation spike.

US-Iran peace deal gets global support, says UN

"The Secretary-General expresses deep appreciation for the constructive role played by Pakistan, Qatar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and other regional countries in supporting the negotiations that led to the peace deal"

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States and Iran reached a Pakistan-brokered cease-fire agreement on Sunday, paving the way for further talks that could ultimately end a months-long war that has killed thousands and rattled the global economy. "The Deal with the Islamic Republic of Iran is now complete," US President Donald Trump said in a post on social media. On the other hand, Iran's Supreme National Security Council said in a statement that the country had finalized a memorandum of understanding with the United States after "months of long and difficult negotiations." Pakistan, which has friendly ties to both the United States and Iran, has served as the key mediator between the two countries. Announcing the agreement in Islamabad, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said, "The official signing ceremony will be on Friday, 19 June in Switzerland." In New York, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres immediately welcomed the deal which he said represents a critical step towards the peaceful settlement of the

conflict. "The Secretary-General expresses deep appreciation for the constructive role played by Pakistan, Qatar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and other regional countries in supporting the negotiations that led to the peace deal," the UN chief said in a statement, hoping that the parties will redouble their efforts towards a final resolution of the conflict. "The Secretary-General reaffirms that the United Nations stands ready to support the parties in achieving a durable and comprehensive peace." In his post, Trump said that the deal would reopen the Strait of Hormuz, an economically vital waterway, and that he had authorized "the immediate removal of the United States Naval blockade" on Iranian ports. "Ships of the World, start your engines," he wrote. "Let the oil flow!" The text of the agreement was not immediately released. But MTrump's post aligned with what American and Iranian officials had previously said an initial agreement might contain. The deal would include a 60-day cease-fire, the officials said. Each side sought to portray the agreement as a diplomatic victory after nearly four months of war. But some of the thorniest issues — including the fate of Iran's nuclear programme, and sanctions relief for Tehran — remain unresolved and have been pushed to a further round of negotiations. In a statement, Supreme National Security Council said the agreement called for an immediate end to military operations on all fronts, including Lebanon, where Israel and the Iranian-backed Hezbollah fighters are locked in a conflict. Israel, which was not a party to the U.S.-



Iran negotiations, has not yet commented on the agreement. An agreement appeared at risk earlier in the day after Israel bombed the southern suburbs of Beirut. An angry Trump said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel had shown "no judgment" in ordering those strikes and called on all sides to "stand down." A last-minute flurry of negotiations, led by Qatar, eased the tensions, and the final agreement appeared to come together late in the night in Tehran. Iran held off agreeing until the early hours of Monday there, allowing it to claim it had not signed on Trump's birthday, on Sunday, as he had wanted, according to two Iranian officials who spoke on condition of anonymity. On Iran's nuclear programme, officials have previously said both sides would hold detailed negotiations over it, as well as over the lifting of U.S. sanctions on Iran, during the 60-day cease-fire. Lebanon may prove to be another stumbling block. Any deal that includes the conflict there would depend on both the United States being able to compel Israel to wind down its military campaign and Iran's cooperation in restraining Hezbollah.

PMD forecasts below-normal rainfall

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The PMD said in its three-month outlook that the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is currently in a neutral phase and is expected to gradually transition into a positive phase during the season. Meanwhile, sea surface temperatures over the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean are currently exhibiting a warming trend, indicating the development of El Niño conditions, which are generally associated with suppressed rainfall anomalies over Pakistan. "Current projections suggest that these warming conditions are likely to persist throughout the July-September 2026 period, with a tendency to strengthen further as the season progresses," the PMD report said. The report noted that a positive IOD phase is generally associated with slightly above-normal monsoon rainfall over Pakistan. "However, owing to the anticipated late development of the positive IOD conditions, its influence on the overall monsoon rainfall over the country may remain limited," it added.

Australian PM calls for 'transparent inquiry' into killing of girl by CCD

NEWS DESK

CANBERRA: Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Monday called for a transparent inquiry into the shooting of Hania Ahmad by the Punjab Crime Control Department (CCD) earlier this week, according to The Guardian. Adeel Ahmed, 39, his wife Dr Sidra Khan, their daughter Hania Ahmed, 9, and son Aafan Ahmed, 10, were shot at during a robbery when CCD personnel opened fire on their vehicle, mistaking it for that of robbers. As a result, Hania died on the spot, while Adeel and Aafan were critically injured. Dr Khan remained unhurt. Australian media have reported on the case, as the family were Australian nationals based in Perth. The incident was covered by ABC, The Guardian, and SBS, which highlighted that the family was on holiday in Pakistan at the time of the incident. In its report,



The Guardian quoted Albanese as saying that the incident needed to be properly examined by authorities. "These circumstances do need to be examined. They need to be examined in a transparent way, so that everyone can know, the family, most importantly, but others as well," he told reporters in Canberra on Monday. "Australia expects there to be transparency and a proper investigation of these circumstances." According to the paper, Albanese expressed his condolences to the victims' family and friends, adding that the Pakistani Australian community "will be really feeling this today." "A nine-year-old girl visiting Pakistan with her family should have been a time of joy," he said. Meanwhile, The Guardian reported that Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade was providing consular assistance to the family, while Western Australia Attorney General Tony Buti on Sunday described the incident as a tragic case of "mistaken identity". "Our thoughts and concerns are with the family and the Pakistani community that live in Western Australia," he was quoted as saying. Additionally, the Pakistani Association of Western Australia said the Ahmad family had requested privacy for now, the newspaper reported.

With Europe closed, migrants stalled in Mauritania limbo

NOUADHIBOU: From the Mauritanian coast, Ahmed, a Senegalese man, looks toward Europe, the place he dreams of being but fears he will never reach due to heightened security against migrants in the west African country. "Everyone wants to leave," said the 34-year-old, who keeps a low profile in Mauritania to evade constant police checks. But "since security was stepped up, no one can get through," added Ahmed, whose name has been changed for security purposes. Thousands of west Africans are living in Nouadhibou, hoping to board large, rickety canoes known as pirogues and head on a two-day journey to Spain's Canary Islands. Such irregular migration has come to a sudden halt, however, following a crackdown by Mauritania, a vast, desert nation on the edge of the Atlantic, which serves as a major migration departure point. Document checks, mass expulsions, coastal surveillance and smuggler arrests have caused migration to plummet over the past year. A few months after signing a migration management partnership with the European Union, Mauritania launched its sometimes brutal campaign, outraging some of its neighbors who say migrants' human rights have been violated. "You have to keep a low profile," said Ahmed, adding: "Police come looking for people including inside their homes." He was already expelled back to Senegal once in 2024, but returned to Mauritania where he now works as a mason, hoping to save the 1,200 euros (\$1,400) necessary to embark on the journey again. Nouadhibou is teeming with young men like Ahmed who are fleeing poverty. A massive fishing port located on a peninsula shared with Western Sahara, the city is a key departure point for migrants. They come to work in Nouadhibou before setting sail from the peninsula's Western Sahara side, a quasi no man's land under Moroccan control. — APP

Türkiye foreign minister to visit Moscow

DNA

ANKARA: Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan will repeat Türkiye's offer to host talks between Russia and Ukraine on a visit to Moscow this week at which he will also discuss Black Sea shipping safety and the South Caucasus, a diplomatic source said on Monday. The visit on Tuesday and Wednesday comes ahead of Türkiye hosting a NATO summit on July 7-8, and after Kyiv asked Ankara in April to mediate by hosting a leaders' level meeting. Türkiye has maintained cordial ties with Moscow and Kyiv since Russia's invasion in 2022. The Turkish source said Fidan would meet Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov and later meet Russian President Vladimir Putin. He will warn against further escalation in the Black Sea and repeat Türkiye's proposal of a limited ceasefire on ports and energy infrastructure, the source said.

SBP maintains policy rate at 11.5% as US-Iran deal cools inflation fears

MPC projects inflation to remain in double digits for the next few months before gradually easing

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on Monday left its benchmark policy rate unchanged at 11.5%, noting a recent decline in global oil prices following a US-Iran deal. "The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to keep the policy rate unchanged at 11.5% in its meeting today," the central bank said in a statement. During the meeting, the MPC noted that global oil prices had eased after the recent US-Iran deal, although they remained higher than pre-conflict levels. It added that the impact of the Middle East conflict was now visible in economic indicators, with headline inflation

rising into double digits in April and May, while core inflation also edged higher. "Moreover, economic activity is showing some signs of moderation, reflecting the impact of elevated prices, austerity measures and prevalent economic uncertainty," the central bank said. It said that pressures on the external account remained moderate and the broader macroeconomic outlook was largely unchanged from its previous assessment. In this context, the MPC said that the current monetary policy stance remained appropriate to steer inflation towards its medium-term target range of 5% to 7%. The committee highlighted several developments since its last meeting, including a provisional estimate of 3.7% real GDP growth for the fiscal year 2026 by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, an improvement in consumer and business confidence, and a rise in SBP's foreign exchange reserves to \$17.2 billion as of June 5 following successful reviews under the International Monetary Fund's Extended Fund Facility and Resilience and Sustainability Facility programmes.

'Clinically stable'

Imran Khan receives fifth eye injection



FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan was brought to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) on Monday for a scheduled follow-up eye treatment, where doctors administered his fifth intravitreal injection after medical examinations indicated clinical improvement in his condition. According to a statement issued by the Pims administration, the 74-year-old politician — who is currently incarcerated at Rawalpindi's Adiala jail — underwent the procedure as part of ongoing treatment for an eye condition that has required a series of intravitreal injections. Hospital officials said ophthalmologists examined the ousted prime minister before the procedure and found him

"clinically stable". "[Imran's] optical coherence tomography was performed, which showed clinical improvement," the statement added. Pims officials said the procedure was performed under microscopic guidance by specialist surgeons and was completed as a day-care intervention without complications. "During the course of his stay, he remained vitally stable before, during and after the procedure and was discharged along with instructions for further care and follow-up advice and documents," it added. The latest procedure marks the fifth intravitreal injection administered to Imran Khan as part of his ongoing ophthalmic treatment. He was earlier shifted to the hospital from Adiala jail on April 28, when he received the fourth dose following a comprehensive examination. While PIMS did not disclose the exact diagnosis or medication used, intravitreal injections are commonly employed in the management of retinal diseases, including diabetic eye disease, retinal vein occlusion and age-related macular degeneration. Officials did not indicate when the next follow-up examination would take place, but sources familiar with the treatment process said patients receiving serial intravitreal injections are usually monitored periodically to assess response and determine the need for further doses. The jailed PTI founder was diagnosed with central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO), a serious eye condition, according to a report submitted to the Supreme Court by his lawyer and the court's amicus curiae, Salman Safdar. The condition occurs when the main vein draining blood from the retina becomes blocked and is often associated with cardiovascular risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and heart disease.

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