



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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Chairman Senate all praise for role of Italian ambassador

Detailed News On Page-08

Noah targets Olympic medal after Uzbek win

Detailed News On Page-06



Turkish envoy hails RCCCI for excellent EXPO

Detailed News On Page-04



Briefs

Poll finds Israelis believe Iran won ME war

DNA

JERUSALEM: Israelis overwhelmingly believe that Iran emerged stronger from the Middle East war and its subsequent deal with the United States, a poll released on Sunday found. The poll of 3,644 respondents, conducted between June 17 and 20 by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in collaboration with the Agam Institute, paints a stark picture of public sentiment following the US-Iran deal. Of those surveyed, 92.1 percent said Iran had won or gained more from the conflict, while 82.9 percent felt that Israel's long-term security had been weakened. The survey found that even among voters who support the right-wing bloc, the electoral base of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, 93.1 percent believed Iran had won. Opposition to the US-Iran agreement was widespread, with 63.2 percent of respondents opposing it compared with just 12.1 percent expressing support. The findings pointed to a broader crisis of confidence in Israel's leadership.

King Charles to reveal tax details

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Britain's King Charles will tell the public for the first time on Thursday how much tax he pays as monarch, a royal spokesperson said on Sunday, as Buckingham Palace seeks to be more accountable and transparent. By law, Charles is not obliged to pay income tax, capital gains tax or inheritance tax on what he received from Queen Elizabeth, but Charles has voluntarily agreed to pay income tax and capital gains tax when he sells private assets. Details will come as part of annual royal accounts due for release on Thursday. Charles receives personal income from land, private estates and investments on top of the £132 million (\$175 million) he received from the government in the 2025/26 tax year to support royal duties. A Buckingham Palace spokesperson said the move aimed to "encourage wider understanding of our accountability."

Key budget grants okayed

FAISAL SHEIK

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly has approved 125 demands for grants pertaining to different ministries, divisions and departments for the next financial year. The demands for grants were moved by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb. There were no cut motions on eighty-nine demands for grants. These demands for grants were related to Atomic Energy, Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority, Naya Pakistan Housing Development Authority, National Security Division, Intelligence Bureau, Climate Change, Commerce Division, Communications Division, Pakistan Post, Defence Division, Airports Security Force, Defence Services, Defence Production Division, Economic Affairs Division, Federal Education and Professional Training Division, Higher Education Commission.

Swiss meet

Talks move ahead with cautious optimism

Standing alongside Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, US Vice President JD Vance praised Pakistan's leadership, calling their contributions "commendable"

CENTRELINE REPORT

SWITZERLAND: Technical negotiations between the United States and Iran are moving forward with cautious optimism, as mediators from Pakistan and Qatar play a central role in facilitating dialogue. Standing alongside Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, U.S. Vice President JD Vance praised Pakistan's leadership, calling their contributions "commendable" and describing Munir as "an excellent military commander." Vance added humorously: "There are two very important people in my life. An Indian, my wife, and a Pakistani, Field Marshal Munir." Vance emphasized that the ongoing technical negotiations mark a historic moment: "The technical negotiations may not solve every disagreement, but it will allow us to sit together as teams for the first time in history." He expressed hope for "additional progress" in the coming hours and reiterated

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FMs of Pak, KSA, Egypt, Turkey support talks

DNA

CAIRO: Foreign ministers from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan and Türkiye reaffirmed their support for ongoing negotiations between the United States and Iran during a meeting in Cairo on Sunday aimed at addressing regional tensions and promoting diplomatic efforts. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan joined Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan for the fourth meeting of

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After consultations

PPP, PML-N agree power-sharing formula for formation of GB govt

GB chief minister post will go to PPP while governor's position to be held by PML-N, reads statement

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Friday announced a power-sharing arrangement with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) to form a government in Gilgit-Baltistan. In a statement, the PPP said that both parties decided to form a government through political cooperation following mutual consensus. The organisations of both parties had finalised the proposed formula after a consultative process, it added. Under the proposed arrangement, the office of the GB chief minister will go to the PPP, while the governor's position will be held by the PML-N. The statement further said the opposition leader in the GB Assembly will be from the PML-N, along with the post of deputy speaker of the assembly. Later, the PML-N announced it would vote for the PPP's candidate for leader of the house in the GB Assembly under the agreed political ar-

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angement. Addressing a press conference alongside PPP leaders, PML-N GB president Hafeezur Rehman said that his party will vote for the PPP for the post of leader of the house and speaker. The offices of governor and deputy speaker will go to the PML-N under the formula agreed between the two parties, he added. PPP GB president Amjad Hussain Advocate said a decision on matters related to an alliance with the IPP would be taken by Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari. The announcement comes a day after the Election Commission of Gilgit-Baltistan issued a notification regarding the successful candidates in 21 of the 24 constituencies. The PPP emerged as the largest party with nine seats, followed by the PML-N with six and the Istehkame-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) with four seats. Although the IPP failed to win a seat in the election, four independent candidates joined the party during a meeting with

Continued on Page 06

LG polls defeat: PM Starmer to call it a day

The British leader said he would fight any challenge to his leadership and urged Labour not to tear itself apart with infighting



NEWS DESK

LONDON: Britain's Observer newspaper said Prime Minister Keir Starmer was expected to resign on Monday and set out a timetable for his departure, though a government source said Starmer remained focused on getting on with the job of governing. The threat to Starmer's position, which has been

building for months, increased sharply on Friday when his rival Andy Burnham won a seat in parliament that would allow him to launch a formal leadership challenge. The Observer report said Starmer was discussing the matter with his wife at his Chequers country residence before making a final decision, but that senior Labour figures expected a clear statement on his future as early as Monday. However, a government source said Starmer remained focused on his job and pointed to previous statements he has made to that effect. The British leader said he would fight any challenge to his leadership and urged Labour not to tear itself apart with infighting. Starmer's popularity has plummeted since he led the center-left Labour party to a landslide election win in 2024 but has become deeply unpopular after a series of scandals and policy U-turns that have given many voters an overall impression that he cannot deliver

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LAKE LUCERNE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and COAS & CDF Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir meeting with Vice President of the United States J.D. Vance and the US delegation on the sidelines of US-Iran technical level talks as a follow-up of Islamabad MoU being held in Burgenstock, Switzerland. - DNA

Pak targets 400,000 workers for FIFA WC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is targeting the training and deployment of 300,000 to 400,000 workers for projects linked to the FIFA World Cup 2034 as part of a broader strategy to expand overseas employment opportunities and strengthen the country's position in international labour markets. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, workforce planning is being aligned with anticipated demand arising from the FIFA World Cup 2034, with trained Pakistani workers expected to support infrastructure development, aviation, tourism and related service sectors between 2026 and 2034. The initiative forms part of the government's wider efforts to boost manpower exports and enhance the skills profile of Pakistani workers for

Continued on Page 06

Mistrust holds

Trump warns of hitting Iran 'very hard again'

The Iranian delegation temporarily boycotted the ongoing technical talks in Switzerland, protesting what it called "anti-Iran statements" made by US President Donald Trump

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has warned of attacking Iran again if it does not stop what he calls its proxies in Lebanon, to stop "causing trouble" as Israel continued bombing Hezbollah locations despite a ceasefire. "Iran must immediately stop their highly paid PROXIES in Lebanon from causing trouble," Trump said on his social platform, Truth Social. While top Iranian and US leadership meet in Switzerland along with mediators Pakistan and Qatar, the Strait of Hormuz - a critical oil supply route and a major talking point in talks between the warring

Continued on Page 06

Iran says Hormuz closed again

Iranian military links Lebanon ceasefire violations by US and Israel to closure of Strait of Hormuz

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran said on Saturday that it was closing the Strait of Hormuz again over Israeli attacks in Lebanon, jolting a fragile US-Iran agreement just as negotiators headed to Switzerland to try to

Continued on Page 06

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PIA enhances Beijing route services

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has announced enhanced travel facilities on its Beijing route, significantly increasing free baggage allowances and improving connectivity options for passengers traveling between Pakistan and China. Under the revised policy, Economy Class passengers will now be allowed 50 kilograms of free baggage, up from 40 kilograms, while Executive Economy passengers will benefit from an increased allowance of 60 kilograms, up from 50 kilograms. The airline said the move aims to offer one of the most competitive baggage provisions in the market, providing greater convenience and value to travelers, according to official sources here on Sunday. PIA Pakistan International Airlines also highlighted strengthened connectivity through its partnerships with Air China and Shenzhen Airlines, enabling passengers from 25 cities across China to travel seamlessly to Islamabad via Beijing. The airline noted that these interline arrangements offer smoother connections and competitive through fares. Combined with relatively low fares on the Beijing-Islamabad sector, the enhanced baggage policy and expanded network are part of PIA's broader effort to improve affordability, comfort, and customer experience. Reaffirming its commitment to strengthening Pakistan-China air links, the airline said the improvements are designed to better serve students, business travelers, families, and tourists, while further supporting the longstanding friendship between the two countries.—APP

CTO directs participants to strictly follow rules

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad CTO Kainat Azhar Khan on Sunday emphasized discipline and compliance with traffic rules for Muharram processions, urging participants to use only designated parking spaces as ICTP ensures strict enforcement for smooth traffic flow. While speaking exclusively with a local media outlet, the Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Islamabad stressed the importance of discipline and orderly conduct during Muharram processions, issuing a strong advisory to ensure smooth traffic flow and public safety. She urged participants to strictly follow traffic rules, use designated parking areas and cooperate with traffic police arrangements to avoid inconvenience and congestion on roads. The CTO warned that any violation of the traffic plan would not be tolerated, emphasizing.—APP

Court Notice

IN THE COURT OF SHAMA YASEEN JUDGE CIVIL/Family COURT RAWALPINDI

Petition u/s 25 of the Guardian and Ward act 1890 Arslan versus Muhammad Waris etc. Notice Muhammad Waris S/o Muhammad Waris R/o St No. 18/1 Chaman Abad Misrial Road irja Road Rawalpindi. The service through ordinary means failed, so you are informed to attend the court personally, through counsel or attorney on 23-06-2026 at 8 am avoid ex-parte proceeding.

Seminar explores water as weapon in modern-day conflict

Syed Muhammad Mehar Ali Shah, Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Waters, framed South Asian water governance as "hydrostrategy," blending infrastructure, law, and political signalling

DNA

LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS) Lahore organised a seminar titled, Water as a Weapon in Modern-day Conflict: From International Treaties to Maritime Chokepoints. As an independent think tank, CASS Lahore organises academic events for scholars and practitioners interested in national security in its wider context. The event was attended by academics, intellectuals, and domain experts. Air Marshal Irfan Ahmad, Director National Security at CASS Lahore, delivered the opening address. Syed Muhammad Mehar Ali Shah, Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Waters, framed South Asian water governance as "hydrostrategy," blending infrastructure, law, and political signalling. IWT has provided stability in post-1948 water sharing, while the Indus Basin underpins Pakistan's reliance on dams and barrage systems. He highlighted emerging challenges like data control, flow regulation and "hydro-coercion," where water management can be used as a tool of strategic pressure. He called for coordinated legal, technical, and diplomatic efforts, better storage, and evidence-based policies to achieve sustainable water governance. Vice Admiral Ahmed Saeed described waterways as strategic assets including ports, sea routes, chokepoints, and maritime law. UNCLOS 1982 ensures balance between navigation freedom and coastal states' rights. He highlighted Pakistan's advantageous position in the Indian Ocean, where around 95% of trade and energy imports move by sea, serving as a bridge with global maritime trade. He emphasised Pakistan's \$40 billion untapped maritime potential, and called for sustained investment, governance, and consistent policies for sustainable growth. Ahmer Bilal Soofi, President RSIL, explained that international law operates through peacetime, armed conflict, and occupation regimes. He described academic and institutional processes shaping doctrines like self-defence under Article 51, including anticipatory interpretations. Under UNCLOS 1982, freedom of navigation, blockades, and accountability for conflict damages were discussed. He referred to India's abrogation of Article 370, developments in IOJK, and hydrological measures, stating that "Sindoor 2.0" perpetuates a conflict mindset, undermining regional stability. In his



concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President CASS, Lahore, highlighted water's use as a geopolitical instrument. He emphasised Indus Rivers' importance to Pakistan's economy, raising concerns over India's use of water as a weapon of mass destruction, for which it has to face extreme consequences. India's unilateral decision to put the IWT in abeyance is not accepted by Pakistan, and denies it vehemently. He stated that IWT remains legally binding and cited PCA's ruling upholding Pakistan's position. He observed

that Iran used its prerogative according to the UNCLOS to block the Strait of Hormuz as its security was under threat. He concluded that weaponisation of IWT and Strait of Hormuz carry serious economic implications for the region and globe. The event concluded with a lively interactive session. It highlighted navigation charges, blockade's effects, and India's violations of international law. The participants appreciated CASS Lahore's initiative in hosting an engaging and thought-provoking discussion.

Over Rs 661b grants approved for energy sector

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Sunday approved six demands for grants related to the energy and power sectors for the next financial year worth Rs 661,265,815,000 (Rs 661.27 billion approx.), while rejecting 116 cut motions moved by opposition lawmakers. The demands for grants were presented in the House by Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb. The house approved allocations, Rs 578,837,216,000 were granted for the Power Division, while Rs 1,111,666,000 were approved for the Petroleum Division. An amount of Rs 1,201,001,000 was sanctioned for the Geological Survey of Pakistan. For development expenditures, the House approved Rs 3,196,630,000 for the Development Expenditure of the Power Division. In addition,

Rs 311,800,000 were allocated for capital outlay on the Petroleum Division. The National Assembly also approved Rs 76,607,502,000 for External Development Loans and Advances of the Power Division. Opposition members criticised the allocations during the proceedings, but their cut motions were rejected by the House. Responding to points raised by lawmakers during the National Assembly session, Minister for Power Division Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari rejected claims made by opposition members, saying the figures presented by them did not reflect the actual situation in the power sector. He said most of the criticism from the opposition related to consumer services, complaint redressal and customer facilitation, while

relatively no concerns were raised about the power infrastructure itself. He said the fiscal burden of the power sector had declined from Rs1,287 billion in FY2024-25 to Rs893 billion last year and was expected to fall further to Rs700 billion during the current fiscal year. "The government has succeeded in easing the burden on taxpayers by Rs587 billion within two years through prudent management and reforms in the power sector," he told the House. The minister said the circular debt of the power sector stood at around Rs2.4 trillion when the present government assumed office. He added that the government had reduced the circular debt stock by Rs780 billion through administrative and financial measures.—DNA

Safe City official briefs control room staff

ISLAMABAD: Assistant Director Safe City Abbas Mehdi briefed officers of the Mohafiz Muharram Control Room and issued directions aimed at strengthening surveillance, monitoring and response mechanisms during Muharram-ul-Haram. An official told APP on Sunday that the briefing focused on ensuring effective monitoring of Imambargahs and procession routes through the Safe City surveillance system. Abbas Mehdi directed control room officers to maintain constant vigilance and ensure comprehensive coverage of religious gatherings and processions across the federal capital. According to the official, special instructions were issued to prioritize and promptly address calls received through the Mohafiz Muharram App to facilitate timely response and public assistance. The briefing also emphasized effective coordination between the control room and field formations to ensure swift communication and response to any emerging situation.—APP

Drains, water channels and cleanliness operations reviewed

He also urged citizens to support the cleanliness campaign by disposing of waste only at designated locations and in waste bins

ABBOTTABAD: Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad, Sarmad Saleem Akram here on Saturday visited various locations along Link Road and reviewed natural water channels, drains, encroachments and drainage arrangements as part of the provincial government's Good Governance Roadmap and District Service Delivery initiative. During the visit, accompanied by Assistant Commissioner Abbottabad Afrasiab Zubair Hundal and Additional Assistant Commissioner Osama Khan, the Deputy Commissioner inspected natural watercourses, encroachments on drains, sewerage issues, and the overall drainage system. Officials from the Technical Team of TMA Abbottabad and the Tehsil Revenue

Staff briefed him on the current condition of drains, identification of encroachments, ongoing cleaning operations, and measures being taken to improve water flow. The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned departments to take immediate and effective steps to remove obstacles in water channels, address sewerage issues, and ensure thorough cleaning of drains to protect residents from potential flash floods and urban flooding during the upcoming monsoon season. He also instructed TMA and Revenue officials to continuously monitor choke points, prioritize the restoration of natural watercourses, and complete the identification of encroachments to maintain an efficient drainage system.

Meanwhile, on the directions of the district administration, sanitation workers of the Local Government Department continued extensive cleaning operations in Banda Qazi, Jhangi, and Baldhri areas, clearing drains and removing accumulated waste to improve sanitation and water flow. Deputy Commissioner Sarmad Saleem Akram said the district administration was working in close coordination with all relevant departments to safeguard lives and property, improve drainage infrastructure, and eliminate encroachments, adding that negligence in this regard would not be tolerated. He also urged citizens to support the cleanliness campaign by disposing of waste only at designated locations and in waste bins.—DNA

Pakistani publishers eye broader copyright coop with China

BEIJING: "China and Pakistan cooperate closely across all sectors, but there remains ample room to deepen bilateral publishing cooperation, as we have yet to carry out extensive joint work," said Daniyal Salam, Director of Head Office, Sales, Marketing & Editorial of Pakistan's century-old publishing house Ferozsons (Pvt.) Ltd., on the sidelines of the 32nd Beijing International Book Fair (BIBF). This year's BIBF has attracted more than 1,700 exhibitors from 82 countries and regions, including over 1,100 overseas participants such as Elsevier, Springer Nature, Cengage, Pearson and Wiley, creating a global platform for copyright negotiation and cultural industry communication. Ferozsons is the sole Pakistani publisher in attendance this year. While this marks the firm's debut at BIBF, it has already translated around 45 Chinese children's illustrated books into Urdu through partnerships with Chinese publishers including CITIC Press Group. "These short stories covering weather, seasons, food and Chinese culture are well received among Pakistani children," Salam noted. Meanwhile, Salam brought about fifty Pakistani titles to display at the fair, including a decades-old 10-volume Urdu classic bestseller newly translated into English, as he seeks potential copyright partners from China. "I believe that if this series is introduced here, it could be comparable to iconic series such as Harry Potter," he said. Salam identified insufficient exchanges between publishers of the two countries as the main obstacle to deeper cooperation, and called for government funding support for literary translation and reciprocal industry visits. CEN reported on Sunday. "Beyond books for children, we're planning to bring more Chinese publications on politics and strategies to Pakistani readers within the next two to three years," he revealed. Furthermore, he expressed interest in bringing China's interactive reading robots to Pakistan's printing and education sectors. Released on September 4, 2025, the Action Plan to Foster an Even Closer China-Pakistan Community with a Shared Future (2025-2029) advances literary translation, cross-border copyright collaboration, co-publishing and mutual participation in global book fairs. During Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's May visit, both sides agreed to implement cultural and educational exchange frameworks, paving the way for deeper cooperation between publishers of the two countries.—DNA

ANP accuses PTI of buying lawmakers' loyalty with empty projects

Calling the budget a failed attempt to hide political expediencies, ANP demanded that provincial government stop misleading masses, bring true financial facts, and redirect public resources toward genuine development, education, healthcare, and employment.

PESHAWAR: Awami National Party (ANP) has categorically rejected Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial budget for fiscal year 2026-27, labelling it a systematic conspiracy designed to push the province toward economic, educational, and administrative disaster. In a statement issued from Bacha Khan Markaz on Saturday, ANP Provincial President Mian Iftikhar Hussain slammed fiscal plan as mere wordplay and a manipulation of figures. He criticized ruling government of PTI for continuing to mislead public despite being in power for 13 years, pointing out stark contradictions in numbers. He said that while the government claims a budget deficit of Rs 48 billion, it simultaneously allocated Rs 52.8 billion to non-existent district governments, an act he described as a deliberate attempt to throw dust in eyes of public. He charged that this is not a genuine development strategy but rather






a calculated plan to buy political loyalty of disgruntled assembly members, effectively putting future of entire province at stake for personal interests. Furthermore, Iftikhar Hussain highlighted a severe neglect of human development, education, and health. He pointed out that while 4.5 million children remain out of school in the province, a paltry Rs 5 billion was allocated to address crisis, whereas road infrastructure received nearly three times funding of entire educational development sector. He also questioned why Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) continues to guzzle billions in subsidies and why Medical Teaching Institutions (MTIs) expenses keep skyrocketing while basic healthcare projects across province remain starved of funds, warning that thousands of public projects are now left in a limbo that could take up to 30 years to complete. He added that budget

offers little to no meaningful relief for salaried class, laborers, farmers, small traders, and struggling middle class. Hussain lamented that after more than a decade of rule, province's internal revenue generation remains negligible, leaving it financially crippled and heavily reliant on Islamabad. With 92 percent of current budget dependent on federal transfers, Hussain declared that past claims of provincial autonomy, economic revolution, and systemic change have proven to be entirely false, leaving Khyber Pakhtunkhwa more financially fragile and dependent than ever. Calling the budget a failed attempt to hide political expediencies, ANP demanded that provincial government stop misleading masses, bring true financial facts, and redirect public resources toward genuine development, education, healthcare, and employment.—DNA

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JUNE

- June 02/Italy National/Independence Day
- June 04/Finland Armed Forces Day
- June 06/Sweden National Day
- June 10/Portugal Portugal Day (National Day)
- June 10/Jordan Arab Revolution & Army Day
- June 11/United Kingdom Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth
- June 12/Philippines Independence Day
- June 12/Russian Federation Day of Sovereignty of the Russian Federation(National Day)
- June 13/Zambia Armed Forces day
- June 17/Iceland National Day
- June 18/Seychells National Day
- June 25/Croatia National Day
- June 25/Mozambique National Day
- June 26/Azerbaijan Army Day

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- RGH.....9290301-7
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- PIMS.....9261170-79
- Polyclinic.....9218300-09
- Shifa International 4603666



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Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Flag march held to reinforce Muharram security

The SSP said protection of citizens and maintenance of peace remained the foremost priority of Islamabad Police during Muharram-ul-Haram and beyond.



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police conducted a flag march in the City Zone under the leadership of SSP Operations Qazi Ali Raza to reinforce security measures and ensure a peaceful environment during Muharram-ul-Haram. An official told on Sunday that the flag march

was organized as part of Islamabad Police's efforts to maintain law and order and enhance the sense of security among citizens during the holy month. The official said police officers and personnel participated in the march, which passed through various areas of the City Zone to demonstrate the force's operational readiness and commitment to public safety. According to the official, the objective of the flag march was

to maintain a peaceful atmosphere during Muharram-ul-Haram and reassure citizens regarding the security arrangements in place across the federal capital. The official said comprehensive security measures had been adopted to safeguard religious gatherings, processions and public places during the month. SSP Qazi said Islamabad Police remained fully committed to protecting the lives and property of citizens and ensuring

the maintenance of law and order. He said operations against criminal elements were continuing without interruption and that all available resources were being utilized to prevent crime and strengthen security. The SSP said protection of citizens and maintenance of peace remained the foremost priority of Islamabad Police during Muharram-ul-Haram and beyond.

COMSTECH coordination office to strengthen scientific coop

ISLAMABAD: The OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) has established a coordination office at Indonesia's Universitas Airlangga (UNAIR) in collaboration with the World University Association for Community Development (WUACD) to promote scientific, academic and research cooperation among universities across OIC member states. The COMSTECH-WUACD Coordination Office was inaugurated at the WUACD Secretariat in Surabaya on Sunday which will serve as a regional platform to support joint research, academic exchanges, institutional partnerships and capacity-building programmes in the fields of science, technology, higher education, innovation, health and agriculture. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, COMSTECH Coordinator General, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary said that the office would facilitate research mobility, academic

networking, knowledge sharing and institutional cooperation among universities in OIC countries. He said that special emphasis would be placed on creating educational opportunities and professional training programmes for students and researchers from across the Muslim world. Future collaboration, he added, will focus on water resource management, climate resilience, health sciences, emerging technologies and youth skills development. Rector of Universitas Airlangga and President of World University Association for Community Development, Prof. Dr. Mohammad Madyan described the establishment of the coordination office as a strategic step towards expanding international academic cooperation and addressing common development challenges through science, technology and innovation. He said that the initiative would promote collaborative research projects, joint publications, faculty and

student exchanges, while supporting the COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence aimed at strengthening cooperation among leading universities and research institutions across OIC member states. Pakistan's Ambassador to Indonesia, Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri welcomed the establishment of the office, saying that it would significantly strengthen scientific cooperation and research partnerships across the Muslim world. He stressed the importance of building stronger research ecosystems and enhancing scientific collaboration to address emerging global challenges, including climate change, food security, public health and technological transformation. The ambassador also highlighted growing Pakistan-Indonesia cooperation in higher education, health sciences and vaccine development, describing scientific collaboration as a key pillar of long-term strategic development.—DNA

NA offers Fateha for Shaheed Benazir

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Sunday offered Fateha for former prime minister and Pakistan Peoples Party leader Shaheed Benazir Bhutto on her 73rd birth anniversary, paying tribute to her contributions to democracy and public service. Speaking in the House, PPP Parliamentarians lawmaker Aijaz Hussain Jakhri paid tribute to Benazir Bhutto, describing her as a symbol of democracy, women's empowerment and political courage. He recalled that Benazir Bhutto served as prime minister twice and consistently advocated democratic values throughout her political career. The lawmaker said she sacrificed her life for democracy and remained committed to democratic principles until her martyrdom. He said her contributions to Pakistan, South Asia and the wider world were significant, adding that her loss was not only for Pakistan but for the entire region. Aijaz Jakhri said Benazir Bhutto was the first woman prime minister of Pakistan and the first woman to lead a government in the Muslim world. He said she always promoted women's rights, social development and democratic governance. He said Benazir Bhutto also played a role in strengthening Pakistan's defence capabilities. He said missile technology introduced during her tenure helped enhance the country's response to external threats. He said Benazir Bhutto continues to live in the hearts of the people and will always be remembered for her sacrifices and services to the nation.—APP

ICT acts against illegal LPG use

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad district administration has stepped up action against the illegal use of LPG cylinders in weekly markets, with nine shopkeepers taken into custody during an operation at the H-9 Sunday Bazaar. The move is part of efforts to enforce a ban on LPG cylinder use in public market areas and improve safety arrangements for visitors and vendors, said the spokesman of ICT administration here. The district administration announced that the use of LPG cylinders has been prohibited in Sunday bazaars across the federal capital. Officials said the restriction was introduced to reduce safety risks in crowded marketplaces and ensure smoother movement for shoppers. During an inspection at the H-9 Sunday Bazaar, the Assistant Commissioner found several vendors using LPG cylinders in violation of the ban. Authorities also noted that some cylinders had been placed in the middle of market pathways, causing obstructions for customers. As a result, nine shopkeepers were detained and shifted to a local police station. According to officials, the action was taken for blocking public passageways and for the unauthorized use of LPG cylinders despite clear instructions from the administration.—APP

Summer fiesta offers different vocational skills

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad College for Girls (ICG), F-6/2 of Federal Directorate of Education has started two-week Summer Fiesta-2026 offering its students an opportunity to develop technological, creative, and vocational skills through a variety of summer courses and workshops. According to the ICG, this will include the colourful festivities and events to give students a chance to enhance their creative skills through various summer courses and hands-on workshops. On the occasion, Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Nadeem Mehbub said that this exciting initiative provides students with a valuable opportunity through a range of summer courses and practical workshops. He said that the fiesta is designed to encourage learning beyond the classroom by combining education with fun and creativity.—APP

Dengue enforcement drive 24 people held, 5 premises sealed

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad district administration has intensified its anti-dengue campaign, detaining 24 individuals and sealing five premises during operations carried out across different sectors of the federal capital. The action was taken against violations of dengue prevention regulations as authorities continue efforts to keep the city protected from the spread of the mosquito-borne disease. According to the district administration on Sunday, daily inspections and enforcement activities are being conducted to identify and remove conditions that can

lead to mosquito breeding. Teams have been directed to take action against individuals and businesses that fail to follow dengue prevention guidelines. During operations in the F-6 and F-7 sectors, the authorities detained 13 people for violating anti-dengue standard operating procedures (SOPs). In G-6, four more individuals were taken into custody over similar violations. The administration also carried out inspections in the Red Zone, where five people were shifted to a local police station after being found in breach of dengue prevention regulations.

In E-11, the enforcement teams sealed two offices and three shops for failing to comply with anti-dengue measures. Four individuals were also detained and transferred to a police station during the operation. Meanwhile, in G-13, two people were taken into custody and one office was sealed following violations of dengue-related rules and regulations. Officials said the operations focused on locations where stagnant water, poor sanitation conditions, or other factors could contribute to the breeding of dengue-carrying mosquitoes.—DNA

IESCO to ensure uninterrupted power supply during Muharram

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has finalized comprehensive arrangements to ensure uninterrupted, safe and reliable electricity supply across its operational areas during Muharram-ul-Haram, particularly on the 9th and 10th of Muharram (Ashura). According to an IESCO spokesman on Sunday, on the directions of Chief Executive IESCO, Engr. Ch. Khalid Mahmood, an emergency response plan has been implemented throughout all Operation Circles, Divisions and Sub-Divisions, while concerned officers and staff have been instructed to remain on high alert. Chief Executive IESCO Engr. Ch. Khalid Mahmood stated that facilitating mourners and ensuring continuous electricity supply during Majalis and Muharram processions was among IESCO's top priorities. In this regard, detailed inspection, maintenance and rehabilitation work of feeders, transformers and other electrical installations supplying power to Imambargahs, Majalis venues and procession routes had been completed. He said a comprehensive survey of electricity

poles, conductors and other installations along procession routes had also been conducted, and all necessary preventive measures had been taken to eliminate potential safety hazards and avert any untoward incidents. To ensure round-the-clock monitoring of the power system during Muharram-ul-Haram, special control rooms have been established and will remain operational 24/7. Additional technical staff, cranes, vehicles, transformers and other essential equipment have been strategically deployed to respond promptly to any emergency situation. The leaves of field officers and operational staff had been cancelled and all concerned personnel had been directed to remain available within their respective jurisdictions. The Chief Executive further stated that close coordination is being maintained with district administrations, law enforcement agencies and organizers of Majalis and processions to ensure immediate resolution of any electricity-related issues. He directed all concerned officers to ensure effective monitoring of the power distribution network and prompt redressal of consumer complaints.—APP

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SCAN TO VISIT WEBSITE

Briefs

Uzbekistan appreciates Pak's efforts as a mediator for global peace

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, Saturday, received a telephone call from Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov who appreciated Pakistan's efforts as a mediator and acknowledged its significant contribution to advancing international peace efforts, as well as promoting regional peace and stability. During the call, FM Saidov felicitated, on behalf of his President and himself, DPM/FM on the signing of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding and commended the leadership of Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, DPM/FM and Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Asim Munir for the constructive role in facilitating the process, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. Both leaders expressed hope that the progress achieved would be carried forward in the next phase of engagement, contributing to lasting peace, stability, and prosperity in the region and beyond. The two leaders agreed to maintain close contact on matters of mutual interest.

Minister: Fuel cuts must slash essential goods prices

NOW

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Saturday called for a transparent and efficient mechanism to ensure that reductions in fuel prices are immediately reflected in the prices of essential commodities and daily-use items. Speaking to the media outside Parliament House, the minister highlighted the importance of technology and the role of local administrations in this regard. He expressed the confidence that provincial governments could implement technology-based systems to provide immediate relief to the public by ensuring prompt adjustments in commodity prices. Responding to public concerns over delays in fuel price reductions at retail outlets, Jam Kamal explained that oil marketing companies and dealers often hold stocks purchased at higher prices, making it difficult to reduce prices immediately without incurring losses. "If retailers have been purchasing fuel at higher rates over the previous 15 to 20 days, they cannot immediately reduce prices the very next day," he said, adding that some adjustment period was unavoidable. The minister emphasized that the pricing mechanism should be robust, transparent and free of flaws to ensure consumers receive the full benefit of fuel price reductions as quickly as possible. He added that while improvements had been made, further reforms were needed to strengthen the system and enhance price monitoring.—DNA

Envoys show keen interest in RCCI medhealth, beauty expo

Ambassador Irfan Neziro lu praised the Expo for promoting innovation, investment, and cross-border business collaboration, calling it a valuable initiative to further strengthen the longstanding friendship and economic partnership between Pakistan and Türkiye



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) continued to strengthen Pakistan's international engagement in the healthcare and wellness sectors as the RCCI MedHealth & Beauty Expo 2026 received high-level diplomatic visits from Türkiye and Sri Lanka. His Excellency Irfan Neziro lu, Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan, and Rear Admiral Fred Seneviratne, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan,

visited the Expo and were warmly welcomed by RCCI President Usman Shaukat and members of the chamber leadership. The dignitaries toured the exhibition, visited various stalls, interacted with exhibitors, and appreciated RCCI's efforts in bringing together stakeholders from the healthcare, pharmaceutical, wellness, and beauty industries on an international platform. Ambassador Irfan Neziro lu praised the Expo for promoting innovation, investment, and cross-border business collaboration, calling it a valuable initiative to further strengthen the longstanding

friendship and economic partnership between Pakistan and Türkiye. High Commissioner Rear Admiral Fred Seneviratne commended RCCI for fostering international cooperation, knowledge sharing, and business partnerships, emphasizing the role of such platforms in advancing healthcare innovation and enhancing bilateral relations. RCCI President Usman Shaukat said the Expo reflects RCCI's commitment to connecting Pakistan's healthcare sector with global markets and attracting international investment, adding that the diplomats' participation demonstrates growing confidence in Pakistan's healthcare and wellness industries.

ICCI-NACTA to celebrate women's role in national resilience

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in collaboration with the National Counter Terrorism Authority, will host a landmark event titled "Women as Peace Leaders" on Tuesday, June 23, 2026, at the S.M. Muneer Auditorium, ICCI. The event aims to recognize and promote the pivotal role of women in fostering peace, social harmony, economic development, and national resilience. The ceremony will be graced by Minister of State for Interior, Talal Chaudhry as the Chief Guest, alongside distinguished policymakers, development experts, business leaders, academicians, and prominent women entrepreneurs from across the region. The gathering will provide a dynamic platform to discuss how women's leadership can contribute to countering extremism, strengthening communities, and advancing sustainable development. President ICCI, Sardar Tahir Mehmood, will deliver the welcome address and highlight the Chamber's significant contributions toward women's empowerment, entrepreneurship development, and industry-academia collaboration. He will showcase ICCI's initiatives aimed at creating inclusive economic opportunities for women, promoting skills development, encouraging innovation, and facilitating greater participation of women in business and public life. The event reflects the shared commitment of ICCI and NACTA to building a more peaceful, tolerant, and prosperous society by empowering women as agents of positive change. Through meaningful dialogue and collaboration, the forum will underscore the importance of women's leadership in promoting social cohesion, preventing violent extremism, and shaping a secure future for coming generations.—DNA

Pak, Alibaba discuss plan for digital skills coop

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Alibaba Group have discussed plans to move earlier digital cooperation agreements into practical e-commerce, training and startup-support programmes for young Pakistanis, officials said, according to a Gwadar Pro's report. Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, met senior

Alibaba executives in Beijing to review projects linked to MoUs signed during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China. The discussions focused on cross-border e-commerce, digital skills, entrepreneurship and innovation. Under the proposed cooperation, Pakistani youth entrepreneurs, artisans and small businesses would be encouraged to use Alibaba platforms, including Alibaba.com, AliExpress and Lazada, to reach international buyers. The two sides also discussed training programmes through Alibaba Cloud and related education platforms. These would cover data analytics, artificial intelligence, cloud infrastructure and digital marketing, with the aim of helping young Pakistanis build skills needed for online business and technology-driven jobs. Startup support was also part of the talks. The cooperation is expected to help connect young Pakistani entrepreneurs with Alibaba's wider innovation ecosystem, including mentorship, incubation and exposure to digital business models. Pakistan, with a large youth population and rising internet use, is seeking to expand digital employment, support small businesses and increase participation in global online trade.—DNA

Pak allocates funds for rail, industry and research

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has allocated funds for railway modernisation, industrial cooperation, policy research and academic exchanges under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in its Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for 2026-27, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday. The allocations are part of Islamabad's push to move CPEC into a second phase focused on industry, technology, investment and economic cooperation, after years of emphasis on energy and transport infrastructure. PSDP sets aside Rs1 billion for "New Initiatives under CPEC 2.0", reflecting the government's stated aim to broaden the corridor beyond infrastructure projects. In the transport sector, Rs1.056 billion has been allocated for preliminary design, consultancy services and technical prepa-

rations for the Main Line-1 railway upgradation project and a dry port near Havelian. ML-1, one of CPEC's largest proposed connectivity projects, has faced repeated delays. The government also allocated Rs50 million to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Support Project at the Ministry of Railways to support planning and implementation of CPEC-related rail projects. For industrial cooperation, Rs30 million has been earmarked for the Project Management Unit of the CPEC Industrial Cooperation Development Project, which is aimed at promoting investment and industrial collaboration between Pakistan and China. The Centre of Excellence for CPEC, set up in collaboration with China's National Development and Reform Commission, will receive Rs200 million, while the CPEC Secretariat has been allocated Rs300 million.—DNA

QAU VC Jaspal calls for bold modernization of edu system

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor of Quaid-i-Azam University, Prof Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, on Sunday called for an education revolution centered on skills, innovation, responsible AI use and strong government-academia-industry linkages, saying only a modern, disciplined and market-oriented learning environment can equip students to meet global standards and future challenges. In an exclusive conversation with PTV News, Dr. Zafar Jaspal stressed the urgent need for modernization of the education system, with a strong focus on practical writing, communication

skills and curriculum reform aligned with global standards. He said Pakistan's higher education must move beyond traditional approaches and equip students with real-world competencies to compete internationally. He highlighted that Quaid-i-Azam University already ranks among the leading institutions, but emphasized that greater financial support is essential to sustain and enhance its academic excellence. Prof Jaspal noted that strengthening skills in communication, writing and critical thinking is central to producing graduates who can meet emerging global challenges and opportunities. The Vice Chancellor also un-



derlined the importance of stronger linkages between government, industry and academia, saying such collaboration is vital for innovation, employability and research impact. He added that AI and emerging technologies must be adopted constructively as supporting tools for students, enabling better learning out-

comes rather than creating dependency. Prof Jaspal further said that while the university actively hosts conferences, dialogues and workshops and benefits from highly qualified faculty, there is still a pressing need for investment in modern labs and infrastructure. He reiterated that only through sustained modernization, adequate funding and technological advancement can institutions truly prepare students to communicate effectively, think critically and compete at global standards. Responding to a question, Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal praised the university's role in shaping students' character alongside academic excellence,

adding, the institution has consistently supported deserving students through scholarships and fellowships, ensuring wider access to quality education. He noted that Quaid-i-Azam University encourages strong participation in both domestic and international competitions, helping students gain exposure, confidence and leadership skills. Such opportunities, he added, play a vital role in building well-rounded graduates prepared for global challenges. To another query, the Vice Chancellor of Quaid-i-Azam University Prof Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal said he maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy on discipline violations and smoking on campus.

GDA launches internship training course for Gwadar varsity

DNA

GWADAR: The Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) has launched a comprehensive six-week internship and professional training program for students of the University of Gwadar, aimed at equipping young graduates with practical skills and workplace experience in key development sectors. The program, organized by GDA's Human Resource Management Department, is being attended by 16 male and female students from the University of Gwadar. The initiative is being conducted under the directives of GDA Director General Moin-ur-Rehman Khan as part of efforts to strengthen youth engagement and capacity-building in the coastal city, Gwadar Pro reported. According to Deputy Director Human Resource Management Nazir Muhammad, the internship offers hands-on exposure to a range of departments, including Information Technology, Finance, Administration and Environment, enabling participants to gain practical knowledge of public sector operations. As part of the training activities, students attended a specialized session on climate change, environmental sustainability and adaptation strategies in Balochistan's coastal areas. The session was delivered by Deputy Director Environment Abdul Rahim and Horticulture Expert Humal Dashti at the GDA Conference Hall. Photos from the training show students participating in an interactive presentation on climate change impacts in Pakistan and Balochistan, climate risk indicators, marine ecosystems, fisheries resources and environmental challenges affecting coastal communities. The presentation also highlighted adaptation measures and recommendations for sustainable development along the Makran coast. In addition to classroom-based learning, the internship includes field visits to mangrove plantation sites, fish harbor and fish processing facilities, sewage treatment plants, parks and sports infrastructure projects. The visits are designed to familiarize students with real-world working environments and development initiatives underway in Gwadar.

ICCI secures major relief for industrial units

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA)/Municipal Corporation Islamabad (MCI) has assured the business community that property tax notices issued to industrial units in Industrial Area I-9 and Industrial Triangle Kahuta Road will be reviewed on a case-to-case basis to ensure fairness, transparency, and relief for genuine taxpayers. This assurance was given by Kashif Niaz, Director Revenue, CDA/MCI, during a meeting with the business community at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). He was accompanied by Deputy Director Adnan Khan, Assistant Director Azhar Latif, and Inspector Zahid Akhtar. The meeting was chaired by ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood and attended by ICCI Vice President Irfan Chaudhry, Chairman ICCI Founder Group Sheikh Tariq Sadiq, President Islamabad Industrial Association Mr. Omais Khattak, Executive Members Sanaullah Durrani, Zulqurnain Abbasi, Waseem Chaudhry, and a large number of industrialists and traders. Speaking on the occasion, ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood welcomed the CDA delegation and highlighted the difficulties being faced by businesses in the prevailing economic environment. Referring to the recent property tax notices carrying substantial arrears for previous years, he said the issue had created serious concerns among industrialists and business owners. He stressed the need for a consultative and facilitative approach to resolve the matter while protecting the interests of compliant taxpayers. Chairman ICCI Founder Group Sheikh Tariq Sadiq, President Islamabad Industrial Association Omais Khattak, and other participants expressed reservations over the issuance of notices containing heavy arrears and late payment surcharges despite regular tax payments by many businesses. They urged the Revenue Department to review the cases and provide relief to law-abiding taxpayers. Responding to the concerns, Director Revenue Kashif Niaz acknowledged the vital role of the business community in economic growth, employment generation, and national development.—DNA

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America and Israel Destroy, China Builds

QAMAR BASHIR

THE world is witnessing two sharply different models of power. One is built on guns, wars, sanctions, blockades, occupations, assassinations, regime-change operations and destruction. The other is built on ports, roads, railways, power plants, industrial zones, trade corridors, reconstruction and development. The first model is represented most visibly by the United States and Israel. The second is increasingly associated with China.

History is full of evidence that the American model of global power has often revolved around war. Some wars may have been unavoidable, especially when great powers were pulled into global conflicts such as World War I and World War II. But many others were wars of choice, launched or prolonged to impose American will, reshape regions, control resources, punish governments, or demonstrate military supremacy. Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Iran and now the wider Middle East are all examples where American power has produced extraordinary destruction, displacement and instability.

The financial and human cost of this approach is staggering. World War II cost the United States more than \$4 trillion in today's dollars and caused over 405,000 American military deaths, while the global death toll exceeded 70 million. The American Civil War killed between 620,000 and 750,000 Americans. The Vietnam War cost around \$1 trillion and killed more than 58,000 U.S. soldiers, besides millions of Vietnamese. The Korean War cost nearly \$389 billion and killed over 36,000 American troops. The post-9/11 wars alone have cost around \$8 trillion, according to Brown University's Costs of War project, while direct violence killed more than 940,000 people and indirect consequences may have caused several million more deaths. These wars did not merely kill soldiers. They destroyed homes, schools, universities, hospitals, bridges, factories, roads, water systems and entire economies. They triggered mass migrations that reshaped Europe, America and many other host countries, creating new social, cultural, religious and political tensions. The victims were not statistics. They were sons, fathers, mothers, daughters, workers, teachers, doctors, soldiers and civilians whose lives were crushed under the machinery of geopolitics.

Israel has acted as a miniature version of this same model in the Middle East. It has lived in permanent conflict with its neighbors and has repeatedly used overwhelming military force in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iran and beyond. Its doctrine of retaliation is often grossly disproportionate: one rocket, one soldier, or one security incident is used to justify the destruction of entire apartment blocks, neighborhoods and civilian infrastructure. Gaza has been reduced to rubble. Lebanon has been repeatedly bombed. Iran has been targeted through airstrikes, sabotage and assassinations. The West Bank is being swallowed through occupation, settlements and military domination.



Even more dangerous is the growing use of civilian technology for military and assassination purposes. Phones, cameras, digital platforms, satellites, navigation systems and commercial data can be turned into tools of tracking, targeting and killing. When such technologies are used to assassinate officials, scientists, commanders or political figures across borders, it violates not only sovereignty but also the basic principles of international law and humanitarian conduct.

The recent war involving Iran, Israel and the United States has again exposed this destructive logic. According to the timeline reported by the Center for Preventive Action and several media outlets cited in that record, the conflict included U.S. strikes, Iranian retaliation, Israeli attacks in Lebanon and Iran, disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, damage to infrastructure, and serious questions over implementation of a U.S.-Iran framework agreement. By mid-June 2026, reports suggested a preliminary agreement that included a sixty-day cessation of hostilities, reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, phased sanctions relief, possible release of frozen Iranian assets, and a reported \$300 billion private investment fund for Iran, with more than half already committed.

This is where the contrast becomes most striking. The countries that bombed, sanctioned, blockaded, occupied and destroyed are reluctant to pay for reconstruction. According to reported statements, the United States does not want to spend its own dollars rebuilding Iran, even though its military role contributed directly to the destruction. Instead, Washington wants other countries and private capital to finance recovery. This is the old imperial pattern: destroy with public military power, then outsource reconstruction to others.

China, by contrast, has stepped forward with a different language. Beijing has expressed sadness over the destruction in Iran and Lebanon and indicated willingness to participate in recovery and reconstruction. Even if the exact financial amount is not yet fully defined, the symbolism is powerful. While others dropped bombs, China offered to rebuild. While others destroyed roads, bridges, power stations and cities, China speaks of reconstruction, livelihood restoration and development. This is not an isolated gesture. It fits China's broader global strategy. The Belt and Road Initiative has become one of the largest development and connectivity programs in modern history. Its cumulative global financial engagement has reportedly reached around \$1.399 trillion, including roughly \$837 billion in construction contracts and \$561 billion in non-financial corporate investments. Around 150 countries have joined the BRI through agreements with Beijing. In 2025 alone, BRI engagement reportedly reached \$213.5 billion across hundreds of deals.

Pakistan is one of the clearest examples. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, officially launched in 2015, became the flagship project of the BRI. Its first phase was initially valued at \$46 billion and later expanded to about \$62 billion. Around \$33 billion was directed toward energy projects, including coal, solar and transmission infrastructure. About \$11 billion went into transport infrastructure, including road modernization and strategic connectivity. Other funds supported Gwadar, urban transport, industrial development and communications.

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

John Mearsheimer and Contemporary Global Politics

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Russia's role in this triangular rivalry further illustrates Mearsheimer's arguments. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, many Western observers anticipated a more cooperative relationship between Russia and the West. However, disputes over NATO expansion, regional security arrangements and spheres of influence gradually deepened mistrust.

Moscow increasingly viewed Western policies as a threat to its security interests, while Western governments interpreted Russian actions as evidence of revisionist ambitions. The war in Ukraine has become one of the most visible manifestations...

THE return of great-power competition has become one of the defining features of contemporary international politics. From the battlefields of Ukraine to the contested waters of the South China Sea and the strategic tensions surrounding Taiwan, the world is witnessing a renewed struggle among major powers. For many scholars and policymakers seeking to understand these developments, the work of John J. Mearsheimer offers a compelling framework. His influential theory of offensive realism, most notably articulated in his book *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, provides a sobering explanation of why rivalries among powerful states persist despite economic interdependence, diplomatic engagement and the lessons of history.

Mearsheimer argues that the international system is inherently anarchic. In other words, there is no central authority above states capable of guaranteeing their security. As a result, every major power must rely primarily on its own capabilities for survival. In such an environment, uncertainty about the intentions of other states becomes a permanent feature of international politics. Even states with peaceful intentions today may develop hostile ambitions tomorrow. Consequently, great powers are compelled to seek greater military, economic and strategic strength in order to ensure their security.

This pursuit of security, however, often generates insecurity for others. When one state increases its military capabilities or expands its influence, rival states perceive a potential threat and respond in kind. The outcome is a cycle of competition that can be difficult to escape. According to Mearsheimer, this dynamic constitutes the central tragedy of great-power politics. States do not necessarily seek conflict because they are aggressive or irrational; rather, the structure of the international system pushes them toward competition.

The contemporary rivalry among the United States, Russia and China reflects many of these assumptions. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has remained the world's most powerful state. Yet the emergence of China as a major economic and military power has trans-

formed the strategic landscape. Beijing's rapid economic growth, technological advancement and expanding military capabilities have led many American policymakers to view China as the principal challenger to US primacy.

From a Mearsheimerian perspective, this outcome was predictable. He has long argued that a rising China would seek to dominate Asia in much the same way the United States achieved regional dominance in the Western Hemisphere. As China's influence grows, neighbouring states and the United States are likely to balance against it. The intensifying competition in the Indo-Pacific region, the strengthening of security partnerships and the growing strategic importance of Taiwan all reflect this broader logic of power politics. Russia's role in this triangular rivalry further illustrates Mearsheimer's arguments. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, many Western observers anticipated a more cooperative relationship between Russia and the West. However, disputes over NATO expansion, regional security arrangements and spheres of influence gradually deepened mistrust. Moscow increasingly viewed Western policies as a threat to its security interests, while Western governments interpreted Russian actions as evidence of revisionist ambitions.

The war in Ukraine has become one of the most visible manifestations of these tensions. While interpretations of the conflict differ sharply, Mearsheimer has consistently argued that security concerns and geopolitical competition played a central role in shaping Russian behaviour. His position has generated significant debate, yet it reflects his broader conviction that great powers react forcefully when they perceive strategic encroachments near their borders.

The evolving relationship between Russia and China also deserves attention. Although historical mistrust and differing national interests remain, both countries share concerns regarding American global influence. Their growing cooperation in areas such as energy, diplomacy and defence reflects a common desire to counterbalance US power. Yet offensive realism suggests that such partnerships should not be viewed as permanent alliances based on shared values.

Rather, they are strategic arrangements shaped by shifting calculations of interest and power.

One of the most striking aspects of Mearsheimer's theory is its pessimism regarding the prospects for lasting harmony among great powers. Liberal thinkers often emphasise the role of international institutions, economic interdependence and democratic governance in reducing conflict. Mearsheimer does not deny their importance, but he argues that they cannot fundamentally eliminate the pressures created by an anarchic international system. When vital security interests are perceived to be at stake, states tend to prioritise power and survival over broader ideals.

The relevance of this argument is increasingly apparent in today's world. Economic ties between the United States and China remain extensive, yet strategic rivalry continues to deepen. Diplomatic engagement between Russia and Western countries has persisted at various moments, but profound security disagreements remain unresolved. The expectation that globalisation alone would usher in an era of permanent peace now appears far less convincing than it did during the optimistic years following the Cold War.

For middle and smaller powers, the renewed era of great-power competition presents significant challenges. Countries across Asia, Europe, Africa and the Middle East are navigating a complex environment in which strategic alignments are becoming more fluid and contested. The ability to maintain diplomatic flexibility while safeguarding national interests has become increasingly important.

The *Tragedy of Great Power Politics* remains influential because it offers a stark reminder about the enduring realities of international affairs. Mearsheimer's central insight is that competition among powerful states is not merely the product of individual leaders or temporary disputes. It is rooted in the structure of the international system itself. Whether one fully accepts his conclusions or not, the ongoing rivalry among the United States, Russia and China suggests that the struggle for power, influence and security remains as central to global politics today as it has been throughout modern history.

Sharif and Munir: Architects of Middle East Reconciliation

by Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Those mid-April talks at the Serena Hotel, though intense and at times protracted, marked a watershed. Over more than twenty hours of negotiations, progress was achieved even if a comprehensive agreement remained elusive at first. With characteristic perseverance, Pakistan continued its efforts

PAKISTAN has long stood as a beacon of peace in a troubled world. Since its birth, the nation has pursued no aggressive designs against any neighbour or distant power, choosing instead the path of restraint and constructive engagement. Yet when provoked or threatened, it has risen with unyielding resolve, presenting an impenetrable defence that has time and again turned back adversity. The measured and decisive response to Indian aggression in May of last year remains fresh in the memory of the international community, a testament to this enduring spirit. In the realm of peace-making, however, Pakistan's recent contribution to the Middle East stands unparalleled in its scope and success.

When tensions between the United States and Iran threatened to engulf the region in open conflict earlier this year, Pakistan stepped forward not as a distant observer but as an active mediator, driven by the conviction that dialogue must prevail over destruction. Under the wise and steady leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the country embarked upon a mission of shuttle diplomacy and backchannel engagement that would ultimately bear historic fruit. Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, whose stature as a military leader is matched by his diplomatic insight, worked in close concert with the Prime Minister, alongside Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, and other senior figures. Their collective efforts reflected the finest traditions of Pakistani statecraft.

The process began in earnest in mid-March. Messages were conveyed between Washington and Tehran, building bridges where none had existed for decades. On the twenty-third of March, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held direct conversations with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, while Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir engaged with President Donald Trump. Over the following

days, Pakistan intensified its quiet diplomacy, facilitating indirect communications that kept both sides talking even as the spectre of escalation loomed. By the end of the month, in partnership with China, Islamabad put forward a five-point initiative aimed at securing a ceasefire and opening the door to substantive negotiations.

In early April, Pakistan advanced a carefully structured forty-five-day, two-phased truce proposal. The tireless work of its leadership bore immediate result when, on the seventh and eighth of April, a two-week ceasefire was secured. President Trump himself acknowledged Pakistan's central role in the announcement, while Iranian officials confirmed their approval. The personal involvement of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir in those final, delicate hours proved decisive. Encouraged by this breakthrough, both Washington and Tehran agreed to send high-level delegations to Islamabad for face-to-face discussions—the first direct engagement of their kind since 1979.

Those mid-April talks at the Serena Hotel, though intense and at times protracted, marked a watershed. Over more than twenty hours of negotiations, progress was achieved even if a comprehensive agreement remained elusive at first. With characteristic perseverance, Pakistan continued its efforts. Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir travelled to Tehran, while Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif engaged regional partners in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey. At Pakistan's urging, the initial ceasefire was extended indefinitely, providing precious time for cooler heads to prevail. Throughout April and May, proposals flowed through Pakistani channels. Multiple visits by the Field Marshal to Tehran and Beijing, and by the Prime Minister to key capitals, kept the momentum alive.

The culmination came in mid-June. On the fourteenth, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced the finalisation of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding.

Three days later, the agreement was formally concluded between President Trump and President Pezeshkian, with Pakistan serving as the trusted mediator. The MoU encompasses a sustained ceasefire, the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz to peaceful navigation, measured sanctions relief, and a sixty-day framework for addressing nuclear concerns. It stands today as a landmark achievement, preventing what might have become a devastating regional war and offering a path toward lasting stability. Throughout this endeavour, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has conducted himself as a statesman of vision and humility. He has consistently placed the national interest above personal acclaim, generously crediting the pivotal contributions of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and the armed forces' leadership. In an era when leaders often seek the spotlight, such grace is rare. Field Marshal Munir's role has been extraordinary: a serving head of the armed forces who has devoted his energies not merely to the defence of his homeland but to the broader cause of global peace.

History records few parallels. George Marshall, the only professional soldier previously honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize, received it years after leaving active military command, in recognition of his post-war diplomatic work. Field Marshal Munir, by contrast, has rendered this service while still at the helm of Pakistan's defence establishment.

Should the Nobel Committee see fit to bestow its Peace Prize upon him, it would be a fitting tribute both to the man and to the peace-loving ethos of the Pakistani state. More importantly, it would affirm that patient diplomacy, rooted in sincerity and resolve, can still steer the world away from the brink. Pakistan has once again demonstrated that it stands ready to defend its sovereignty with courage and to promote international harmony with equal dedication. In a fractured age, such a voice deserves to be heard and heeded.

Briefs

Talks move ahead with cautious optimism

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Washington's desire for Iran to play a constructive role in regional peace efforts. The US vice president also voiced concern over Lebanon, noting that President Donald Trump is working to reduce tensions as Israel continues strikes against Hezbollah positions. "These kinds of ceasefires are always a little bit messy," Vance said, but stressed that Trump remains committed to a "full regional ceasefire." Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif credited President Trump's leadership for making the talks possible, calling the moment "an important opportunity for global peace." He highlighted Field Marshal Munir's role in advancing negotiations, while Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani also paid tribute to Pakistan's leadership.

FMs of Pak, KSA, Egypt, Turkey support...

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the four-country consultation mechanism. According to the Saudi Foreign Ministry, the ministers reviewed the latest regional developments and efforts to reduce tensions, including Pakistan's mediation role following the memorandum of understanding signed between Washington and Tehran. The ministers also discussed Israel's military escalation in Lebanon and stressed the importance of intensifying coordination and consultation to support diplomatic efforts aimed at containing the crisis and preventing further instability. In a joint statement issued after the meeting, the four countries expressed their full support for the ongoing US-Iran negotiations and underscored the importance of ensuring the success of the talks. The ministers said progress in the negotiations would contribute to strengthening regional security and stability, while helping to reduce tensions across the Middle East. They also emphasized the need to continue pursuing diplomatic solutions to regional conflicts and to work collectively to mitigate the repercussions of ongoing crises.

LG polls defeat: PM Starmer to call it a day

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the improvement to their standards of living that he promised. If he were to quit or be ousted, it would mean the country installing its seventh prime minister in just over a decade – the highest turnover in nearly two centuries, reflective of anger at successive governments' failures to improve public services and tackle issues like illegal immigration. More than 100 elected lawmakers in Starmer's party – roughly a quarter of all Labour representatives in the House of Commons – have publicly said they want him to quit or set out a timetable for his exit, according to a Reuters tally. The Observer report, which did not name its sources, said Starmer had reached the conclusion that his position was no longer tenable after speaking to cabinet ministers, advisers, donors and trade union leaders. Burnham waiting in the wings Burnham, a 56-year-old career politician, is seen by many in Labour as the most likely successor to Starmer – whether through a negotiated transfer of power or a formal leadership contest. Having built a power base within Labour as mayor of Greater Manchester in northern England, he comfortably saw off the threat from Nigel Farage's right-wing populist party to win an election for a vacant parliamentary seat on Friday. Burnham did not immediately make a formal challenge to Starmer but used his victory address to promise a new path for the country. His allies have urged Starmer to agree to step down and hand over power voluntarily.

IOA Celebrates World Olympic Day in Style

The event featured an Olympic Day Walk, martial arts demonstrations, a fun race, fitness activities, and a special tree plantation campaign, highlighting both the sporting and environmental dimensions of the Olympic Movement

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Olympic Association (IOA) celebrated Olympic Day 2026 with great enthusiasm at Rawal Lake, bringing together athletes, sports officials, and sports enthusiasts to promote the Olympic values of excellence, friendship, respect, and healthy living. The event featured an Olympic Day Walk, martial arts demonstrations, a fun race, fitness activities, and a special tree plantation campaign, highlighting both the sporting and environmental dimensions of the Olympic Movement. More than 100 participants representing various affiliated sports associations of the Islamabad Olympic Association took part in the celebrations. The event commenced with the playing of the Olympic Anthem, reaffirming participants' commitment to the ideals and values of Olympism. Prominent personalities attending the event included Olympian



Sadaf Siddiqui, Asian Rowing Gold Medalist Chaudhry Maqbool, IOA Secretary General Rizwan-ul-Haq Razi, Treasurer Ijaz-ul-Haq, Vice President Ouj E

Zahoor, members of the IOA Executive Committee, office-bearers of affiliated associations, athletes, and sports officials. Addressing the gathering, the

respect, solidarity, and excellence. They encouraged young athletes to pursue their sporting ambitions with dedication, discipline, and perseverance, stressing that sports play a vital role in building a healthy and progressive society. To mark the occasion and reinforce the Olympic Movement's commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility, participants planted saplings at the venue as a symbol of their collective commitment to a greener and healthier future. Speaking on the occasion, IOA Vice President Ouj E Zahoor thanked all participants, affiliated associations, athletes, and officials for their valuable contribution to making the celebrations a success. He reaffirmed the Association's commitment to promoting Olympic values, increasing public participation in sports, supporting youth development, and advancing initiatives that contribute to social well-being and environmental conservation.

Iran World Cup travel restrictions to be eased, says coach

Ghalenoey says he was told that Iran will get more flexibility for final group-stage game against Egypt

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran coach Amir Ghalenoey said he has been told US travel restrictions on his World Cup team will finally be eased for their third group game, but blasted the treatment they have received so far for damaging their on-field performance. The Iranian squad arrived at the World Cup with their country still at war with co-hosts the United States, and have been based in Mexico while playing all their games in the US. That has required frequent cross-border travel, and US authorities have only permitted the team to remain in the country for a few hours after each game, with restrictions frequently shifting last-minute.

After playing Belgium in Los Angeles on Sunday, Iran's final group game will take place in Seattle next Friday against Egypt. Ghalenoey on Saturday said he had been told his team will have more flexibility for their final match, before quickly adding that it would have been "justice" for his team to have the same treatment for its first two games. "They said in Seattle, you can do what you want, you can act the way you want to, and you can come earlier," he told a press conference, without specifying who exactly the information had come from. "But what I want, my problem is, why didn't they let us come earlier for the first two games as well? "I just know for the last game, yes, they've allowed us to decide, to make our

own decisions with regards to planning the travel. "But unfortunately, for the first two games, others made these travel arrangements for us, and the timing for us." Last week Iran drew 2-2 with New Zealand, the tournament's lowest-ranked team, with sloppy defending twice allowing the All Whites to go ahead before Team Melli equalised. "There were errors, individual ones, and also with regards to this defense we had, and I think we were playing... we were doing too many passes," said Ghalenoey. "And I think, because we have been flying too much, commuting, as a result of this long commute, we've been tired." The manager said restrictions on his team had been even more onerous for

Sunday's upcoming game against Belgium, Group G's highest-ranked team. Ghalenoey said his team had arrived in the US on Saturday less than 24 hours before kickoff, despite being briefly told by FIFA on Friday early afternoon that they may be able to travel that day. "We waited till 7pm, nothing happened, and they said, 'Sorry, we weren't able to do that,'" said the coach. "That's going to affect us mentally, especially me as a head coach, because I want to focus on technical stuff," he said. Iran had only been able to do half its usual pre-game training session, complained Ghalenoey. All four teams in Group G currently have one point, with only the top two guaranteed to reach the knockout stages.

Netherlands thump Sweden in Houston to get World Cup liftoff

Netherlands crush Sweden 5-1 with Gakpo and Brobbey both scoring two goals each

HOUSTEN: Cody Gakpo and Brian Brobbey both scored twice as the rampant Netherlands thrashed Sweden 5-1 in a World Cup warning on Saturday in Houston. The big win in front of nearly 69,000 put the delighted Dutch on the cusp of the knockout rounds and gave them liftoff after being held by Japan. Ronald Koeman's side top Group F with four points from two games, ahead of Sweden on three, Japan (one) and Tunisia (none). Despite the sobering loss, the Swedes had plenty of chances but were denied by good goalkeeping and wasteful finishing. They are still in with a good chance of progressing into the last 32 but face a test in the form of Japan in their final group game. "We attacked, had some opportunities but obviously defensively you can't concede that many and hope to win, but we'll learn a lot from the game," Sweden coach Graham Potter told BBC TV. "Sometimes you have to have these experiences, I didn't think it was that type of game, but again that's the scoreline, we have to accept it and learn from it." Sunderland striker Brobbey got his first start of the tournament and repaid Koeman with predatory goals after five and 17 minutes. Before that the 24-year-old had scored only once for his country. In a game full of Premier League talent, Liverpool's Gakpo – who set Brobbey up for the opener – scored twice early in the second half. Substitute Anthony Elanga pulled one back for Sweden just before the hour with a classy finish. – APP

New Zealand match offers historic chance for Egyptian football

CAIRO: Egypt's upcoming World Cup 2026 match against New Zealand presents a golden opportunity to make history, according to former team captains. The two sides are scheduled to meet on Monday in Vancouver, Canada in Group G with Egypt on one point after their draw against Uruguay, and New Zealand also on a single point after their 2-2 draw with Iran. A victory for Egypt would bring several historical landmarks: first, it would be their first World Cup win in 92 years, and second, it would secure their place in the knockout stages for the first time in their history. Several former Egyptian national team captains and experts revealed to Arab News their confidence in the Egyptian team's ability to win, provided they continue to maintain the level of performance they displayed in their first match against Belgium. "I wasn't surprised by the strong performance of the Egyptian national team in the match against Belgium. Our coach, Hossam Hassan, has a great ability to utilize the players, so we were better than Belgium and we deserved to win," Taher Abu Zeid, former minister of sports and one of Egypt's previous captains, said to Arab News. He confirmed that all the players displayed their best technical performance, and if they maintain this level of performance at the next match, they will advance to the knockout stages. Ismail Youssef, who captained the Egyptian national team at the 1990 World Cup in Italy – and is nicknamed "Tigana," – advised the national team players to focus on the New Zealand match and the threat the opponents bring. – APP

Room heroics earn Curacao World Cup point against Ecuador

Curacao goalkeeper delivers historic performance with record 15 saves against Ecuador

NEW YORK: Curacao goalkeeper Eloy Room was the hero against Ecuador keeping out a barrage of shots to help the tiny Caribbean nation claim their first-ever World Cup point in a goalless draw that keeps alive their hopes of reaching the knockout phase. Ecuador, who finished second in South American qualifying, had 28 shots, including 15 on target, but Room stood firm in an astonishing display in Kansas City. His 15 saves are the most on record, since 1966, by any goalkeeper a World Cup match that did not feature extra-time. World Cup debutants Curacao, the smallest nation by population ever to qualify for the tournaments, slumped to a 7-1 defeat against Germany in their opening match but restored pride in the American Midwest. Ecuador fans turned the Arrowhead Stadium, the home of NFL team Kansas City Chiefs, yellow, hugely outnumbering supporters of Curacao. But Curacao had royalty on their side in the form of Dutch King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima. The island is an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Out of their 26-strong squad, managed by vastly experienced Dutch coach Dick Advocaat, 25 were born in

the Netherlands, and most play their football there. The match started at a fizzing pace. Ecuador seemed certain to open the scoring in the third minute when former West Ham forward Enner Valencia burst through the middle but Room tipped the ball around the post. Sherel Floranus fired over at the other end as Curacao showed their pace on the break. Valencia failed to beat Room from close range before Jordy Alcivar had an effort as Ecuador continued to dominate possession. The South American team ended the first half with 65% of possession but nothing to show for their dominance. They went close to breaking the deadlock just before the hour mark but Room kept out a Gonzala Plata header, before a flurry of Curacao chances. Ecuador, more than 50 places higher than Curacao in the Fifa rankings, looked increasingly frazzled as they pressed for a goal. As the match neared its end, chances continued to come thick and fast but Room stood firm. Ecuador substitute Angelo Preciado mishit a cross that bounced off the top of the crossbar and went behind. The Curacao players swarmed around Room at the end of the match, celebrating an extraordinary point. Earlier, four-time champions Germany came from behind to beat Ivory Coast 2-1 in Toronto, ensuring their qualification for the round of 32. Curacao's draw ensures Germany will top the group. Ecuador will play Germany on Thursday while Curacao take on Ivory Coast. – APP

PPP, PML-N agree power-sharing formula...

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Communications Minister and IPP President Abdul Aleem Khan on June 16. Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen secured one seat, while an independent candidate also won one seat, according to the notified results. The ECGB said the results for GBA-9 Skardu-3, GBA-15 Diamer-1 and GBA-17 Diamer-3 will be announced later.

Trump warns of hitting...

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countries – remains closed as per the Iranian military due to ceasefire violations by Israel. Trump, in his post, added: "If they don't, we'll hit Iran very hard again, just like we did last week, only harder!!!" Iran's Tasnim news agency, citing a source close to the negotiating team, reported on Sunday that the Strait of Hormuz would not be reopened as long as a ceasefire in Lebanon was not respected. The source said the waterway would also remain closed until waivers allowing the sale of Iranian oil were issued. Meanwhile, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said in a statement that there was and is no restriction on Israeli soldiers to act to eliminate threats in Lebanon, with troops remaining in positions in the security zone. Israeli strikes killed at least 20 people in Lebanon on Saturday, Lebanon's state news agency NNA reported, a day after a ceasefire with Hezbollah took effect after months of escalating violence. Israel said the strikes were a response to projectiles fired by the Iran-backed group at its troops in southern Lebanon, prompting attacks on what an Israeli official described as "Hezbollah targets".

Pak targets 400,000 workers...

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overseas employment. During July-March FY2025-26, a total of 215,719 workers received soft-skills training aimed at improving adaptability, productivity and global employability. The documents indicate that overseas employment remains a key pillar of Pakistan's labour market strategy. During 2025, the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment registered 762,499 workers for overseas employment, while more than 15 million Pakistanis have proceeded abroad for employment in over 50 countries through official channels since 1972. More than 96 per cent of Pakistani workers proceeding abroad through official channels are employed in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, particularly Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Iran says Hormuz closed again

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salvage efforts to end the Middle East war. Follow-up talks had been planned in Switzerland on Friday, but were postponed at the last minute after Israel launched deadly strikes in Lebanon following the deaths of four of its soldiers in combat. Washington announced a renewed ceasefire there later Friday – a condition of its agreement with Iran – but Israeli troops clashed again with Hezbollah fighters on Saturday, with each side accusing the other of breaking the truce. Citing a US "breach of contract" and "the Zionist regime's continuous and relentless violation of the ceasefire in southern Lebanon", Iran's central military command said "the Strait of Hormuz will be closed to vessel traffic." The Revolutionary Guards' naval force warned vessels not to approach the waterway, saying "their security will be jeopardised". Hormuz, a key conduit for oil and gas shipments, was blockaded by Iran for much of the war, sending shockwaves through global energy markets. Tehran had agreed to reopen it under the preliminary accord signed this week by President Donald Trump and his Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian, and shipping traffic had begun to recover.



Nooh Targets Olympic Medal After Uzbekistan Triumph

Nooh also paid special tribute to his mentor, Rizwan Aftab Ahmad, CEO of ACTIVIT and Director of National Hospital, for his continuous support and guidance

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's premier weightlifter and strongman, Nooh Dastgir But, has dedicated his latest international success to his parents and reaffirmed his determination to win an Olympic medal for Pakistan at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics after securing two gold medals at the International World Strongman Competitions in Uzbekistan. Speaking after his vic-

tories, Nooh said that his parents remain his greatest source of strength, inspiration, and support. He credited their unwavering encouragement and sacrifices for helping him overcome challenges throughout his sporting career. Nooh also paid special tribute to his mentor, Rizwan Aftab Ahmad, CEO of ACTIVIT and Director of National Hospital, for his continuous support and guidance. He said that

Rizwan Aftab Ahmad's commitment to athlete development has played a vital role in his growth as a professional sportsman. "I am highly grateful to Rizwan Aftab Ahmad for his trust, support, and mentorship. His assistance has enabled me to pursue my goals with greater confidence and determination and has helped me become a better athlete and a more focused professional," Nooh said. The star athlete said his latest achievements have strengthened his resolve

to continue bringing international honours to Pakistan. Drawing inspiration from Olympian champion Arshad Nadeem, Nooh said he is working tirelessly to raise Pakistan's flag on the world stage and fulfil his dream of winning an Olympic medal for the country. His latest double-gold triumph in Uzbekistan marks another significant milestone in a career dedicated to bringing pride and recognition to Pakistan.

Briefs

UAE highlights cultural partnership

BEIJING: The 32nd Beijing International Book Fair 2026 opened in Beijing on Sunday with the United Arab Emirates participating as a guest country, underscoring growing cultural and intellectual ties with China. The opening ceremony was attended by senior dignitaries, including UAE Minister of Culture Sheikh Salim bin Khaled Al-Kassim, UAE Ambassador to China Hussain bin Ibrahim Al Hammadi and Deputy Minister of Culture Mubarak Al Nahyan, along with other officials and cultural figures. A key highlight of the event was the presentation of the 19th Special Contribution Award for Chinese Books to Professor Mohamed Mousa Mohamed Ben Huweden, dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of the United Arab Emirates. The award was conferred by Li Shulei, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Minister of the Publicity Department, in recognition of his contributions to promoting cultural and academic exchanges. The UAE showcased its cultural presence through the "UAE House" pavilion, jointly organized by the UAE Embassy in China and the Ministry of Culture. The pavilion featured exhibitions and activities spanning literature, translation, publishing, and creative industries, reflecting the depth of UAE-China cultural cooperation.—APP

Pakistan envoy highlights cultural diplomacy

BEIJING: Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi, underscored the importance of cultural diplomacy and Pakistan-China friendship while addressing the "Elegant Dragon Boat Festival, Romantic China" themed event for diplomats held in Beijing on Saturday. In his remarks, the Ambassador described the Dragon Boat Festival as one of China's most valued intangible cultural heritage traditions, reflecting themes of unity, remembrance, and the pursuit of a better life. He noted that the festival honors historical figures associated with integrity and patriotism and continues to be celebrated through vibrant customs including dragon boat racing, the preparation of zongzi, and the hanging of fragrant wormwood.

Ambassador Hashmi highlighted that culture remains one of the strongest bridges between nations, stressing that the Pakistan-China relationship serves as a model of enduring friendship. He reiterated that both countries, as all-weather strategic cooperative partners, continue to expand cooperation and deepen bilateral ties across multiple areas.—APP

Syria receive more than 10,000 citizenship applications from Kurds

LONDON: Syrian authorities have since May received applications from 10,516 Kurdish individuals seeking citizenship under a presidential decree addressing the rights of the Kurdish community. The ministry of interior released the first batch of names of hundreds of Syrian Kurds who applied for citizenship interviews in the Hasakah and Raqqa governorates, the Syrian Arab News Agency reported on Sunday. There were 2,892 family applications, representing 10,516 individuals, submitted for citizenship at centers in the cities of Damascus, Aleppo, Hasakah, Raqqa, and Deir Ezzor since May. In January, Syrian President Ahmad Al-Sharaa issued a decree restoring the citizenship of Kurds and formally recognizing their language and national holiday, Nowruz. The move was part of broader efforts to improve relations with the Syrian Democratic Forces, which had signed an agreement with the Syrian government to integrate under Damascus. Amnesty International estimated in 2005 that between 200,000 and 360,000 Kurds were stateless.—APP



CAIRO :Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Hakan Fidan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, and Dr. Badr Abdelatty, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt with Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt. (Story on front page).

Saudi-run terminal at BD to go full capacity next month

All of these workers are Bangladeshi nationals, and we trained them locally and internationally. Some of our employees have been sent to Saudi Arabia to receive training in port operations ... in our port industry, there aren't enough human resources who can deliver services at the global level.

DNA

RIYADH: Saudi developer Red Sea Gateway Terminal is set to start full-capacity operations at Bangladesh's largest port in Chittagong in July, as it has just completed the deployment of specialized machinery. Chittagong Port is the main gateway for Bangladesh's ocean cargo import and export. Last year, it handled about 3.41 million TEU, or 20-foot equivalent units, making it the busiest container port on the Bay of Bengal RSGT has been running the port's Patenga Container Terminal since June 2024, under a 22-year agreement signed with the Chittagong Port Authority. On Friday, the company brought to the site four gantry cranes — the last major pieces of equipment it needed to scale up

its presence. "We were given two years of preparation time — to equip the port facilities, complete all civil works, implement technology and develop human resources," Sayed Aref Sarwar, head of commercial and public affairs at RSGT Bangladesh, told Arab News. "The last two years were our soft operation period at the Patenga Container Terminal. Now, with the arrival of four gantry cranes on Friday evening, the final phase of equipment requirements has been completed." The custom-built cranes were manufactured by the Chinese company SANY and are expected to significantly enhance vessel-handling efficiency while generating no carbon emissions during operations. "These cranes are designed in such a way that they can handle two 20-foot containers at a time. This is the first of its kind in any port in Bangladesh and will be

operated through fully green operations, meaning there will be no use of fossil fuels to run these cranes as the entire facility will run on electrical energy," Sarwar said. "Hopefully, we will start operating the new gantry cranes by mid-July. From that moment, we will run the port at full capacity. If needed, we will undertake further expansion of the facilities. At the moment, however, the equipment we have in place will be more than sufficient to handle the expected volume of containers." The Saudi developer is the first foreign company operating at Bangladeshi ports and is steadily increasing the Patenga terminal's output and permanent workforce. It handles 155,000 TEU of containers, and with the arrival of the new equipment will increase that volume to 400,000 TEU this year — about 12 percent of total container operations in Chit-

tagong. Next year, according to Sarwar, the terminal will exceed 500,000 TEUs, or 17 percent of the port's traffic. It is also steadily increasing the number of employees. "So far, RSGT has invested \$170 million to modernize the port to a global standard. At the moment, we have around 500 workers serving as permanent employees. Besides that, there are around 800 people who deliver services on a contract basis," Sarwar said. "All of these workers are Bangladeshi nationals, and we trained them locally and internationally. Some of our employees have been sent to Saudi Arabia to receive training in port operations ... in our port industry, there aren't enough human resources who can deliver services at the global level. It's a challenge for Bangladesh. And RSGT is trying to fill this gap through investing in human development."

FPCCI body charts roadmap to boost trade growth

ISLAMABAD: The first meeting of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Central Standing Committee-2026 on Import, Export and Investment was held the other day to formulate a strategic roadmap aimed at strengthening Pakistan's trade and investment landscape. The meeting, chaired by Convener Dr. Hayam Qayyum at the FPCCI Capital Office Islamabad via Zoom, brought together FPCCI office-bearers and committee members to deliberate on the committee's vision, mission and operational framework. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Hayam Qayyum highlighted the importance of developing a coordinated strategy to address emerging challenges and opportunities in the areas of imports, exports and investment. The participants discussed the committee's standard operating procedures (SOPs), annual work plan, administrative priorities and implementation timelines to ensure effective engagement with issues relating to Pakistan's trade and investment sectors. The meeting also focused on identifying key milestones and formulating core strategies to facilitate policy advocacy, stakeholder coordination and business development initiatives aimed at enhancing the country's economic competitiveness. Among those who attended the meeting were FPCCI Vice Presidents Tariq Khan Jadoon and Muhammad Raziq, Chairman Co-ordination Capital Office Malik Soahil Hussain, Senior Vice President RCSTSI Dost Ali Jan, and committee members representing various business and industrial sectors. The participants reaffirmed their commitment to promoting a business-friendly environment, expanding trade opportunities and attracting investment to support sustainable economic growth in Pakistan.—DNA

Congo says confirmed Ebola cases rise to 956

KINSHASA: The Democratic Republic of Congo said on Saturday the number of confirmed Ebola cases in the country had risen to 956, including 247 deaths. On Friday, confirmed cases were at 933, and deaths were 245. At least 30 people have died since the start of May in one camp for displaced civilians in northeastern Congo, a death rate that camp officials said was unprecedented, with some confirmed to have died from Ebola in a sign the disease could be spreading fast there. It was not possible to confirm the causes of all the deaths because patients or their relatives in Kigonze camp in Bunia — the epicenter of the Ebola outbreak in Democratic Republic of Congo — had until Thursday refused testing, a camp spokesperson and aid organization Caritas said. However, all had symptoms including headaches, fever and vomiting, which are associated with Ebola, a camp spokesperson, a bereaved father, three aid sources and a civil society leader told Reuters. "People didn't just die like this before," camp spokesperson Desire Grodya Bapi told Reuters. The deaths in Kigonze, which has more than 15,000 residents, raise fears that Ebola may be circulating undetected among eastern Congo's over 5 million displaced people, with resistance to testing compounding the challenge posed by severely limited sanitation measures. Bodies covered in sheets Camp President Dz'djo Ndrutsi Etienne said 10 people were buried this week alone. Grodya said the camp typically recorded between one and three deaths per month. Justin Zanamuzi, director of Catholic aid organization Caritas, which helps Kigonze's residents, said his team on Wednesday saw several bodies covered in sheets, including a pregnant woman and children. Footage from Thursday shared by the civil society leader and verified by Reuters showed health teams in hazmat suits disinfecting more bodies and preparing tiny coffins next to a crucifix as mourners wailed. "Our team tried to persuade people to accept doctors to inspect the bodies. They completely refused," Zanamuzi said. The outbreak in the country was first declared by Congolese officials on May 15, but the officials said the deaths had begun earlier in the month. Grodya, the camp spokesperson, said health workers had taken samples from five victims, some of which had come back positive for Ebola. Three aid sources also confirmed on Saturday that the test samples on some of this week's victims had come back positive for Ebola, without specifying the number. Camp resident Kato Lonu, 47, lost two children, including a 6-month-old. "These are conditions that no human being should have to live in. If you look around, people are dying one after another," he said. Our aid workers said the spike in deaths highlighted how communities were now more exposed to diseases such as Ebola as donors, including key contributor the US under President Donald Trump, have cut funding for water, hygiene and sanitation, which is essential in fighting a disease that spreads through bodily fluids such as human waste. Data compiled by the UN showed that funding for toilets and handwashing stations in Congo more than halved between 2024 and 2025, to around \$38 million, and this year's \$80 million appeal is only 21 percent funded. Congo has hundreds of camps for civilians fleeing war, some home to 100,000 people. Ebola deaths have already been recorded in another camp in the same province of Ituri, which has over 90 percent of nearly 900 confirmed cases. In Kigonze, large families share the same plastic tents spaced less than a meter apart and children wander its dirt alleyways barefoot. There are toilets marked USAID — Washington's international aid agency dismantled by Trump — and an aid source said the agency helped fund their construction. However, Grodya and the aid source said there were not enough toilets and they often overflowed.—Agencies

US-Iran deal shifts the mood at France's G7

ANDREW HAMMOND

French President Emmanuel Macron this week hosted the G7 summit of leaders from North America, Europe, and Japan. Yet it was the Iran crisis that framed the big event. The new memorandum of understanding between Iran and the US has been widely criticized since its release — not only by politicians, but also by business leaders. For instance, some in the shipping industry are concerned that toll-free access to the Strait of Hormuz may be in jeopardy in the coming months. Problematic as the deal may prove to be, there were nonetheless sighs of relief from Macron, fellow European leaders, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, and Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi when US President Donald Trump announced the deal. This is because the vague 14-point framework, which has been called a memorandum of misunderstanding by some, helped shift the diplomatic mood music in Evian. Before the meeting, G7 leaders had feared that Trump's frustration might boil over with them at the summit. The US president still perceives a big lack of support from these allies for the US during the Iran war. In addition to the agreement breakthrough, Macron also skillfully handled Trump at the event. This included closely chaperoning him, including hosting a private, post-summit dinner at the Palace of Versailles to help ensure the US president did not leave the event early, as he had done at several G7 summits in the past, including last year in Canada. Macron also delayed the start of the forum to last Monday so that Trump could celebrate his 80th birthday weekend in Washington. This double development

set the stage for a more positive, productive event than had been widely expected only a few weeks ago. One example is the critical minerals agenda in which the G7 agreed to enhance cooperation to reduce their reliance on China. A new G7 Critical Minerals Resilience and Production Alliance will be created. This initiative builds on a similar one that was formed at the Canadian summit last year. There are growing fears about future navigation of the strait. This new G7 alliance will work more closely on stockpiling. It will also launch a new platform which will engage with the IEA Critical Mineral Security Programme and the OECD, to provide analytical and data-driven assessments of market developments and supply chain vulnerabilities, facilitate information-sharing, conduct emergency exercises and monitor progress in financing, diversification, and transparency commitments. The headline goal by 2030 is to reduce dependence on any one supplier for rare earths and permanent magnets to below 60 percent by 2030. In the longer term, an ultimate goal of 50 percent will be realized "as soon as possible."— There was also a positive discussion on the future of AI with 11 CEOs such as OpenAI's Sam Altman, Anthropic's Dario Amodei, and Meta's Alex Wang. Discussions here included potential creation of a "trusted partners" scheme granting access for G7 allies to advanced US AI models. Of course, despite all this, G7 relationships with Trump remain fragile. Tensions could easily re-emerge in a big way as soon as next month's NATO summit in Türkiye. This was shown on Thursday, the day after the G7 ended when US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced a six-month review of the presence of US forces in Europe. He severely criticized some US allies, suggesting they had been "free riding" on Washington for

years. Such tensions will be particularly likely to flare again if the agreement process breaks down in coming weeks as Washington and Tehran now try to agree a permanent deal over the next 60 days of extended ceasefire. It would be no big surprise if this happens. Huge challenges remain in implementing the agreement, including in the Strait of Hormuz, where returning tanker traffic to pre-war levels will not be easy. Even if attacks by the US and Iran now end, naval mines must be removed to make the waterway navigable again. This process is likely to take weeks, rather than days. There are also growing business fears about future navigation of the strait. The agreement asserts that Iran agrees to allow tanker traffic to pass unobstructed with no fee or toll, but only for the 60 days covered by the deal. In future, Iran could implement a new system, which would comply with international law, and charge fees for vessels passing through Hormuz. This would represent a worse position than that before the conflict began when there was more or less complete freedom of navigation without charge. It would surely also raise tensions again within the Western alliance over the wisdom of the war. And all of this is even before the two sides attempt to progress the thorny issue of Iran's nuclear program. This agenda appears most unlikely to be completely resolved within the next 60 days. So while the agreement helped improve immediate-term diplomatic atmospherics at the G7, it may have only kicked the can down the road in terms of resolving key outstanding issues between the US and Iran. A permanent deal in coming weeks is not impossible, but enormous political heavy lifting is now needed that took previous US administrations much longer than 60 days to try to resolve.

Charles to reveal tax details

LONDON: Britain's King Charles will tell the public for the first time on Thursday how much tax he pays as monarch, a royal spokesperson said on Sunday, as Buckingham Palace seeks to be more accountable and transparent. By law, Charles is not obliged to pay income tax, capital gains tax or inheritance tax on what he received from Queen Elizabeth, but Charles has voluntarily agreed to pay income tax and capital gains tax when he sells private assets. Details will come as part of annual royal accounts due for release on Thursday. Charles receives personal income from land, private estates and investments on top of the £132 million (\$175 million) he received from the government in the 2025/26 tax year to support royal duties. A Buckingham Palace spokesperson said the move aimed to "encourage wider understanding of our accountability." Charles provided information on his tax payments when he was Prince of Wales and intends to continue to do so in future years as king, the palace said. The British parliament's Public Accounts Committee launched an inquiry into residential property arrangements provided to members of the royal family last year.

—APP

France presses ahead with music festivals despite extreme heat

PARIS: France on Sunday prepared to host its annual street music festival in boiling heat, with a third of the country placed on red alert and alcohol consumption banned. Every year on June 21, musicians take over France, filling bars, street corners and rooftops as revellers celebrate midsummer late into the night. This year, however, the Fete de la Musique coincides with a ferocious heatwave, with a record 35 departments — roughly a third of the country — placed under the highest heat alert. Weather service Météo-France warned that temperatures could reach as high as 41C in some places. While some cities have canceled street events, celebrations in others — including Paris, Lyon and Strasbourg — will go ahead. To minimize health risks and prevent potential disturbances to public order, the government announced a ban on alcohol consumption during the festivities in departments under red alert. "Alcohol and high temperatures really do not mix well," Health Minister Stephanie Rist told French daily Le Parisien. Last year, around two million people attended the festival in Paris alone, many of them traveling from Britain. To ensure public safety, authorities will deploy 4,800 police officers and gendarmes, along with 2,500 firefighters, in and around the capital. Gatherings along the lower banks of the Seine will be prohibited to reduce the risk of people falling into the water. According to AFP estimates, around 53 million people in France will be affected by the heat on Sunday, with a further 45 departments under orange alert.—APP

Erdogan orders talks to reopen Orthodox Christian seminary

ANKARA: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan ordered officials on Sunday to resume talks on reopening an Orthodox Christian seminary near Istanbul, an issue raised by US President Donald Trump, who is expected to visit Ankara next month for a NATO summit. The Halki seminary, founded in 1844 and shut by the Turkish state in 1971, played a central role in the Eastern Orthodox Church as the Ecumenical Patriarchate's main theological school. It trained generations of Orthodox clergy, including the current patriarch Bartholomew, who is based in Istanbul. Trump raised the issue in talks with Erdogan in Washington last year. Muslim and secular Türkiye has long faced pressure from Greece, the United States and European Union to reopen the theological school on Heybeliada island near Istanbul. Metropolitan Emmanuel of Chalcedon, whose diocese covers Istanbul.—APP

Briefs

Amjad Hussain to be the GB chief minister

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Sunday announced Advocate Amjad Hussain as the party's candidate for the post of Gilgit-Baltistan chief minister. The announcement came a day after the PPP — which emerged as the leading party during the recent general elections — announced it would form a government in GB with the support of the PML-N. Local PPP and PML-N leaders have agreed on a proposed power-sharing formula under which the region's chief minister would be from the PPP, while the governor of GB, as well as the leader of the opposition, will be from the PML-N. According to an official statement shared on X, "Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has decided to appoint PPP's provincial president, Advocate Amjad Hussain, as the chief minister of Gilgit-Baltistan." It added that the PPP chairman also had a telephonic conversation with Hussain. "The PPP chairman issued instructions to Advocate Amjad Hussain regarding government formation and the implementation of the constitutional and economic rights of the people," the statement said.

NDMA issues nationwide weather alert

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued a nationwide weather alert, warning that thunderstorms, strong winds, heavy rainfall, urban flooding and glacier-related flood risks could affect several parts of Pakistan over the next 12 to 24 hours. According to the NDMA's National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC), the forecast weather pattern is consistent with the seasonal outlook issued three to four months ago. The NDMA said it has been continuously providing advance warnings and risk assessments to relevant federal, provincial and district authorities to ensure timely preparedness and effective response measures ahead of potential emergencies. The alert forecasts rain accompanied by thunderstorms, windstorms and dust storms in most parts of the country. Punjab and Islamabad Rainfall is expected in Rawalpindi, Murree, Attock, Chakwal, Talagang, Mandi Bahauddin, Sargodha, Gujrat Khan, Gujrat, Jhelum, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Lahore, Faisalabad, Khushab, Jhang, Mianwali, Dera Ghazi Khan, Kasur, Okara, Sahiwal, Multan, Bahawalpur and Rahim Yar Khan.

Job seekers flock to ME despite war

DNA

KARACHI: Despite the war in the Gulf region, Pakistani workers continued to leave for jobs in countries directly affected by the conflict, particularly during March. Official data showed that during January-May, over 300,000 Pakistanis found employment in Middle Eastern states led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE. The largest number of Pakistani workers left for Saudi Arabia, while around 50,000 emigrated to the UAE, one of the countries most affected by the war. According to data released by the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, 143,586 Pakistanis left for Saudi Arabia during the five-month period, the highest number for any single destination country. Saudi Arabia was also drawn into the conflict and reportedly faced multiple attacks by Iran targeting American facilities in the kingdom. Although the war, which began on Feb 28, ended after about a month following a ceasefire, intermittent strikes by the US and Israel, as well as retaliatory attacks by Iran.

Chairman Monal Group hosts farewell dinner for Italian Envoy

Chairman Senate praised the outgoing ambassador's efforts in promoting bilateral cooperation and friendship between the two countries



ISLAMABAD: CEO Monal Group Luqman Ali Afzal hosted farewell dinner of the Ambassador of Italy. Seen in the picture are, Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi, Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Federal Minister for Defence Production Raza Hayat Hiraj, Minister of State for Law and Justice Barrister Aqeel Malik, Ahad Cheema, Prime Minister's Adviser Tauqeer Shah, Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Federal Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain also attended the event. — DNA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Monal Group, Luqman Ali Afzal, hosted a grand farewell dinner in honor of the outgoing Italian Ambassador, bringing together senior government officials, diplomats, and distinguished guests to celebrate the envoy's successful tenure in Pakistan. The event was attended by Chairman Senate as the chief guest, while Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi, Federal Minister for Defence Production Raza Hayat Hiraj, Minister of State for Law and Justice Barrister Aqeel Malik, and Prime Minister's Adviser Tauqeer Shah were among the prominent participants. A large number of ambassadors, high commissioners, and members of the diplomatic community also attended the gathering to bid farewell to their departing colleague and acknowledge her contributions to strengthening Pakistan-Italy relations. Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman Senate praised the outgoing ambassador's efforts in promoting bilateral cooperation and friendship between the two countries. He extended his best wishes for her future assignments and expressed confidence that the ties between Pakistan and Italy would continue to grow from strength to strength. In a conversation with Daily Islamabad POST/CENTRELINE, the Italian Ambassador said she had thoroughly enjoyed her stay in Pakistan and would always cherish the warmth and hospitality extended to her by the Pakistani people. She expressed optimism about the future of Pakistan-Italy relations and hoped that cooperation in trade, culture, education, and

people-to-people exchanges would further expand in the years ahead. The ambassador also thanked Luqman Ali Afzal and the Monal Group for arranging a memorable farewell reception and for their continued support in fostering engagement between the diplomatic community and Pakistani society. The evening concluded in a warm and cordial atmosphere, with guests enjoying an array of signature Monal dishes that blended traditional Pakistani flavors with continental cuisine, making the farewell dinner a memorable occasion for all attendees. — Detailed coverage in the July issue of Centreline magazine.

India's Cockroach Party supporters bang plates

DNA

NEW DELHI: Supporters of India's viral Cockroach Janta Party banged steel plates with spoons in a protest Saturday to demand the resignation of the education minister over allegations of examination irregularities and repeated paper leaks. The protest near Parliament in New Delhi by hundreds of students and young supporters of the nascent movement added to the pressure on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government while also seeking wider support among Indians. Authorities deployed heavy security and police used cameras and drones to monitor the protest. Some carried placards and others banged plates, their noise cutting through the crowd protesting and demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. The banging of plates appeared to satirize Modi's call for Indians to step onto balconies and rooftops and bang utensils in solidarity with front-line health workers during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke, a political communications strategist and Boston University student, urged supporters on social media to bring plates and spoons on Saturday. "There is a virus called Dharmendra Pradhan that has to be removed," he told the crowd, adding that the CJP was open to talks with the government if Pradhan stepped down. "This is just the beginning. If Dharmendra Pradhan doesn't resign or if no action is taken regarding this issue, this protest will not end here," said a CJP supporter, Deepak Kumar. The exam paper for a nationwide medical program was leaked last month through social media app Telegram. Authorities subsequently postponed the exam and also temporarily banned Telegram in India. The exam is scheduled to be held on Sunday. The government says the leak is under investigation. We study in poverty, live in poverty for 24 hours everyday, for years at length, and after that our (exam) papers get leaked.

Man charged over anti-Muslim attacks

"A 36-year-old man has been charged in connection with a number of incidents which took place in Edinburgh on Friday, 19 June, 2026," police said late Saturday

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Scottish authorities said on Saturday they charged a man in connection with attacks in Edinburgh that wounded five people with UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer saying the suspect "appears to be motivated by anti-Muslim hatred." Police Scotland said officers had arrested a 36-year-old white Scottish man and there was "no further threat to the public." "A 36-year-old man has been charged in connection with a number of incidents which took place in Edinburgh on Friday, 19 June, 2026," police said late Saturday. "A report has been submitted to the Procurator Fiscal, and the individual will appear at court in due course." Footage posted online showed a bare-chested man, believed to be the suspect, roaming streets of the Scottish capital with a large weapon. A police statement said they received multiple emergency calls late Friday from people reporting "violent attacks including threats, robbery and vandalism across Edinburgh, with five men injured." The victims, two aged 22, and others aged 24, 27, and 39, sustained various injuries, police said. Three were taken to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries, the statement said, adding the incident is being investigated by the counter-terrorism unit and other police officers. Politicians in London and Scotland condemned the incidents. "Absolutely appalling," Starmer said on X. "The suspect appears to be motivated by anti-Muslim hatred. I will not tolerate this — he will face the full force of the law." Scotland's First Minister John Swinney said he was "deeply concerned," in a post on X. "There is no place for violence, racism or intolerance in our country," he added.

Bhandara lauds Pak mediatory role

ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly (MNA) Ishphanyar Bhandara has lauded Pakistan's role in facilitating the recent US-Iran peace agreement, saying the country has once again demonstrated its ability to serve as a credible bridge for peace in the region. Pakistan's efforts reflected its commitment to regional stability and constructive engagement, he said in a statement issued here on Sunday. He further highlighted that the successful facilitation of the recent US-Iran agreement reflected the diplomatic maturity, neutrality and commitment to stability that Pakistan



had consistently demonstrated on the world stage. Our leadership, military command and foreign policy teams worked behind the scenes to de-escalate tensions and create space for dialogue when the world feared another war, he said. — DNA

Spain defeat Pakistan 4-2 in Pro League clash

Analysts suggest that Pakistan's struggles in the Pro League may continue, with the team unlikely to secure victories against stronger opponents

SPORTS DESK

BRUSSELS: Spain outclassed Pakistan with a convincing 4-2 victory in the latest Pro League hockey encounter, as reported by the Daily Islamabad Post. Despite Pakistan taking an early lead, their defense faltered under relentless Spanish pressure, allowing the European side to dominate the match. Pakistan opened the scoring with a swift counterattack, briefly raising hopes of an upset. However, Spain quickly regrouped, showcasing sharp passing, disciplined midfield control, and clinical finishing. The Spanish forwards repeatedly pierced Pakistan's defensive line, exposing weaknesses that have plagued the team in recent international fixtures. By halftime, Spain had overturned the deficit, and in the second half, they extended their lead with two more goals. Pakistan managed to add another to their tally, but it was not enough to shift momentum. The final whistle con-

firmed Spain's 4-2 triumph, leaving Pakistan still searching for their first win in the tournament. Analysts suggest that Pakistan's struggles in the Pro League may continue, with the team unlikely to secure victories against stronger opponents. However, participation in the league is seen as valuable preparation ahead of the upcoming World Cup, offering players exposure to high-intensity competition and an opportunity to refine strategies. Adding to Pakistan's challenges, captain Anmad Butt has not been issued a UK visa, ruling him out of the Pro League's UK edition. His absence is a significant blow, as Butt's leadership and experience are crucial for stabilizing the squad during tough matches. While the defeat underscores Pakistan's defensive frailties, it also highlights areas for growth. The Pro League, though unforgiving, provides a platform for Pakistan to rebuild confidence, test younger talent, and prepare for the global stage. Fans remain hopeful that these tough lessons will translate into stronger performances when the World Cup arrives.

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