



Islamabad POST

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At the UN Pakistan praises Syria's post-Assad progress

Detailed News On Page-08

Pak praises Syrian fiscal performance

Detailed News On Page-08



Mbappe leads France to knock out rounds

Detailed News On Page-06



Successful mediation

Next round of US-Iran talks may take place in Pakistan

Analysts argue that Islamabad must now capitalize on this diplomatic success by urging the United States and other countries to enhance investments in Pakistan, rather than relying solely on loans and grants

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Well-placed diplomatic sources have revealed to this correspondent that the next round of United States-Iran talks may be convened in Pakistan, following the successful negotiations recently held in Switzerland. According to insiders, the proposal was seriously considered during the Iranian President's visit to Pakistan, where both Washington and Tehran reportedly agreed to the idea of Islamabad hosting the next phase of dialogue. Pakistan's role in brokering the initial understanding between the two sides has been described as central and praiseworthy, with particular acknowledgment of the efforts of Field Marshal Asim Munir. His behind-the-scenes diplomacy is said to have created the environment necessary for constructive engagement. Observers now await to see whether the process and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) reached earlier can prove sustainable in the long run. Diplomatic circles also point to the significant contribution of Qatar, which played a parallel role in facilitating communication between Washington and Tehran. However, Pakistan's involvement has opened a unique window of opportunity. Analysts argue that Islamabad must now capitalize on this diplomatic success by urging the United States and other countries to enhance

investments in Pakistan, rather than relying solely on loans and grants. Another key suggestion emerging from policy experts is for Pakistan to negotiate the purchase of cheap oil from Iran, passing on the benefits directly to the people. Such a move would not only ease economic pressures but also ensure that ordinary citizens feel included in the broader diplomatic developments. Yet, while Pakistan's diplomatic achievements are being praised internationally, domestic political challenges threaten to undermine these gains. The treatment of the opposition has raised concerns, with critics pointing out that in the National Assembly, speeches by the Prime Minister and cabinet ministers are broadcast live, but when opposition leaders take the floor, there is a complete blackout on national hookup. This practice, they warn, sets a troubling precedent and risks alienating a sizeable portion of the population whose voices deserve representation. For Pakistan to fully benefit from its emerging role as a mediator in global diplomacy, it must also focus on healing internal political wounds. Ensuring inclusivity and transparency at home will strengthen the credibility of its foreign policy abroad. The coming weeks will reveal whether Pakistan can successfully host the next round of US-Iran talks. If managed wisely, this development could mark a turning point, positioning Islamabad as a trusted facilitator in international diplomacy while simultaneously delivering tangible benefits to its people.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of Iran Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian meet in Islamabad on 23 June 2026. - DNA

Friendship solidified

Sharif defends Iran's right to ballistic missiles

The Iranian President, during his official visit to Islamabad, expressed gratitude to Pakistan's leadership and people for their wholehearted support during recent regional tensions

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that Iran has every right to possess ballistic missiles, stressing that there should be no double standards in the global community. Speaking during the visit of Iranian President, Sharif noted that if other states can maintain missile programs, Iran should not be singled out. He emphasized that at no stage had Iran's nuclear program come up for discussions with Pakistan, underscoring that the matter was not on the agenda. Sharif described Iran as a "great nation" that fought bravely during its war years and highlighted Pakistan's deep respect for its resilience. He reaffirmed that Pakistan values its relations with Iran and considers them vital for regional stability. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has reaffirmed Pakistan's strong support for Iran's sovereign right to develop its defense capabilities, including ballistic missiles. Speaking at a joint press appearance with the visiting Iranian President, Sharif emphasized that there should be no double standards in the global community. "If other states can possess missiles, then why not Iran? Iran has every right to strengthen its defense," he stated. He further clarified that Iran's nuclear program was never raised for discussion at any stage, underscoring Pakistan's consistent stance on the matter.

Trump claims Tehran agreed to 'infinity' nuclear inspections

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has insisted that Iran has agreed to allow nuclear inspections "for infinity," describing the arrangement as a major achievement in ensuring transparency. Speaking to reporters, Trump said that Tehran had committed to unlimited oversight of its nuclear facilities, a move he portrayed as a safeguard against any clandestine weapons development. According to Trump, the agreement means international inspectors will have unrestricted access to Iran's nuclear sites indefinitely. "They've agreed to inspections for infinity," he declared, adding that such a commitment was unprecedented and would guarantee long-term monitoring. He argued that this level of openness would prevent Iran from pursuing nuclear weapons while allowing it to maintain a peaceful nuclear program.

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Briefs

National Assembly approves budget

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Tuesday passed the Finance Bill 2026 after a clause-by-clause consideration by rejecting all the amendments presented by the opposition. Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb moved the motion for consideration of the Finance Bill, 2026 to give effect to the financial proposals of the federal government for the year, commencing on July 1, 2026. The motion was passed with majority vote which led to the passage of Finance Bill-2026 after clause-by-clause reading. The total outlay of the federal budget for the fiscal year 2026-27 is Rs 18.77 trillion.

US will not be allowed to inspect key site: Iran

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran said Tuesday that the United Nations nuclear watchdog's inspectors would not be given access to the country's key nuclear sites that were bombed during the war with Israel and the United States last year. "We have not had a meeting with the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, nor do we have any plans for the agency to inspect Iran's nuclear facilities damaged by the US and Zionist military aggression," said foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei. On Monday US Vice President JD Vance had said Iran would allow UN nuclear inspectors to return, calling it "a major milestone."

Rubio arrives in UAE, says US won't accept tolls in Strait of Hormuz

"It's an international waterway. No country is allowed to charge tolls or fees on an international waterway. That's existing international law," he said as he arrived in the United Arab Emirates

CENTRELINE REPORT - ABU DHABI

ABU DHABI: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Tuesday firmly rejected Iran's reported attempts to impose tolls or fees on vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz, declaring such measures illegal under international law. Speaking to journalists upon his arrival in the United Arab Emirates, Rubio underscored that the strategic waterway must remain free for global commerce. "It's an international waterway. No country is allowed to charge tolls or fees on an international waterway. That's existing international law," Rubio stated. He added that the United States does not believe regional partners need convincing on this matter, noting, "I think all the countries in this region would agree with us."

The Strait of Hormuz, a narrow passage

connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, is one of the most critical maritime chokepoints in the world. Roughly one-fifth of global oil trade passes through the strait, making its security and accessibility vital for international energy markets. Any disruption or unilateral restrictions could have far-reaching consequences for global supply chains and economic stability. Rubio's remarks come amid heightened tensions between Washington and Tehran, with Iran signaling its intent to seek revenue from vessels using the strait. Analysts warn that such a move could escalate regional friction and invite strong responses from Gulf states and international stakeholders. The U.S. position, as reiterated by Rubio, is that freedom of navigation must be preserved without exception.

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Tougher phase of US-Iran talks lies ahead: DPM Dar


DPM says Tehran to curb uranium enrichment, technical groups to tackle key issues

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has said the next phase of negotiations between the United States and Iran could prove more difficult, but expressed confidence that a final agreement remains within reach. Speaking to an Arab news outlet, Dar said Iran would lower the level of its uranium enrichment rather than transfer its enriched uranium stockpiles abroad, noting that Washington had initially sought the removal of those reserves from the country. He said three technical working groups would be established to address the nuclear file, frozen assets and issues relating to Lebanon as part of the broader negotiations. Dar also revealed that vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz would be allowed to transit for 60

days without any additional tariffs under the understanding reached, paying only standard navigation or service charges. According to the deputy prime minister, US President Donald Trump personally oversaw the negotiations between Washington and Tehran, while Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates supported the mediation efforts. Describing the arrangement as positive, Dar said the agreement contained "no negative points" and voiced optimism that the ongoing diplomatic process would ultimately lead to a comprehensive settlement despite the challenges that may arise in the next stage. According to Dar, US President Donald Trump personally guided the negotiations between Washington and Tehran, while Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates supported the mediation efforts. Rejecting speculation about any secret



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KP, UNICEF to advance child protection initiatives

Key areas included expanding community-based child protection mechanisms, enhancing preventive and responsive social support services, strengthening family-based care initiatives, and developing integrated interventions for vulnerable and at-risk children and families

DNA

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) have agreed to strengthen their strategic partnership to advance child protection initiatives and improve welfare services for vulnerable children and communities across the province. A high-level meeting was held at the Civil Secretariat between Adviser to the Chief Minister for Social Welfare, Special Education and Women Empowerment Malik Liaqat Ali Khan and a UNICEF delegation led by Resolwe Redeh, Chief of Field Office, UNICEF Peshawar. The meeting was attended by Secretary Social Welfare, Special Education and Women Empowerment Sharif Hussain, along with representatives of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Commission (KPCWC), including Chief Ijaz Muhammad Khan, Assistant Chief Zafar Ali, and Program Manager Salma Sohail. During the meeting, KPCWC Chief Ijaz Muhammad Khan briefed participants on progress made under the longstand-

ing partnership between KPCWC and UNICEF. He acknowledged UNICEF's continued technical support in strengthening the child protection system in the province, particularly assistance in drafting the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection Policy and the Regulatory Framework for Child Care Institutions. He expressed confidence that both policy instruments would receive provincial cabinet approval and notification under the leadership of the Adviser to the Chief Minister and requested continued technical support for implementation after approval. Discussions focused on identifying future areas of collaboration to strengthen the provincial child protection and welfare system. Key areas included expanding community-based child protection mechanisms, enhancing preventive and responsive social support services, strengthening family-based care initiatives, and developing integrated interventions for vulnerable and at-risk children and families. Speaking on the occasion, Malik Liaqat Ali Khan appreciated UNICEF's longstanding partnership and continued technical and financial support to the provincial government. He noted that while considerable progress had been achieved,

additional efforts were required to meet the growing protection and social welfare needs of vulnerable children. The adviser reaffirmed the government's commitment to expanding access to quality child protection services and stressed the importance of sustained collaboration to strengthen institutional capacity, community-based prevention mechanisms, and long-term social support systems. The UNICEF delegation reiterated its commitment to supporting an integrated child protection and social welfare system centered on families and communities to enhance prevention, care, and protection services. Both sides agreed on priority areas for future cooperation, including piloting strengthened family and community support initiatives, expanding community-based child protection structures, establishing additional District Child Protection Units across the province, strengthening the social service workforce, and improving integrated service delivery for vulnerable children. Participants also discussed the possibility of organizing a donor conference in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to mobilize additional financial and technical resources for child protection, social welfare, and other social development priorities.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif confers the honorary fellowship of College of Physicians and Surgeons of Pakistan regarding Cardiac Surgery to President of Iran Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian in Islamabad, 23 June 2026. — DNA

Balochistan launches Rs1.58b school meal programme

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Balochistan is implementing a Rs1.58 billion school meal programme for primary school students in Quetta as part of its efforts to address nutrition challenges and improve child health outcomes. According to the official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, Balochistan has focused its development investments on maternal and child health, school nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure, and deworming as priority intervention areas. The School Meal Programme for Students of Primary Schools in Quetta is being implemented on a pilot basis with a total project cost of Rs1.579 billion and an allocation of Rs315.9 million during the year. The programme is one of several nutrition-focused initiatives currently under implementation in the province. Balochistan is also implementing the Comprehensive Maternal and Child Health Programme with a total cost of Rs2 billion and an allocation of Rs228.8 million. A separate project to provide WASH facilities in schools is under implementation, with a total cost of Rs2 billion and an allocation of Rs200 million. According to the report, a Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) facility has been established at Eastern Bypass Quetta with a total project cost of Rs400 million and an allocation of Rs200 million.—APP

Pak-Romania for boosting tourism, investment ties

Special emphasis was placed on promoting Romania as an attractive destination for international investors under the theme "Explore & Invest in Romania"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A meeting was held at the Embassy of Romania in Islamabad between Mr. Rauf Raja, CEO Brain Designer Pakistan, and Mr. Eduard Preda, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Romania. During the meeting, both sides discussed opportunities to further strengthen bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Romania in the fields of public private partnership trade, tourism, hospitality, and investment.

It was agreed in principle to organize the Pakistan-Romania Business Expo in Bucharest, aiming to create a dynamic platform for business communities of both countries to explore partnerships, investment opportunities, and commercial collaboration. Special emphasis was placed on promoting Romania as an attractive destination for international investors under the theme "Explore & Invest in Romania." The initiative is expected to showcase Romania's investment potential across multiple

sectors while encouraging greater engagement from Pakistani businesses and entrepreneurs. The discussion also highlighted the importance of people-to-people connections, tourism promotion, and institutional collaboration to deepen economic and cultural relations between Pakistan and Romania. The meeting concluded with a mutual commitment to continue engagement and transform ideas into practical initiatives for shared growth and cooperation.

Fish exports rise 4.18pc to \$445.247 m in 11 months

ISLAMABAD: The exports of fish and fish preparations from the country witnessed an increase of 4.18 percent during the first eleven months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the PBS reported. — APP

Court Notice

In the Court of Syeda Hubabib Akhtar Civil Judge 1st Class Jhelum, suit for dissolution of marriage besis of khulah
Case title: Yasmin vs Shahid Ali Khan, son of Muhammad Gulab Khan, residence G-496, Crump Market, Machine Mohalla No. 3, Jhelum, currently residing in England) As there is not possible to call the defendants through Summons in the instant suit so through proclamation in Newspaper, you are directed to appear in the court on 04.07.2026 at 08:00 AM, otherwise ex-parte proceedings will be initiated.

SC orders correction of wrongly recorded testimonies

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has directed the trial court to correct errors in the recorded testimonies in the murder case of Sanam Umrani, sister of petitioner Nayab Umrani, within two weeks of receiving the court's order. A bench headed by Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail heard the matter on Tuesday and expressed serious concern over the inaccurate recording of witness statements during the trial proceedings. During the hearing, Justice Mandokhail questioned the manner in which evidence had been recorded, remarking, "Has the recording of testimony become a joke?" The observation came amid allegations that significant errors had been made in documenting witness statements and cross-examinations. Counsel for

the accused informed the court that the High Court had earlier directed the issuance of a memorandum regarding the matter and clarified that his clients had no objection to the High Court's order. In response, Justice Mandokhail observed that the accurate recording of testimony is a judicial responsibility and that any mistake brought to the court's notice can and should be rectified. The petitioner's counsel argued that even the date of the incident had been incorrectly recorded in the case file and that the record failed to accurately reflect the complete cross-examination of witnesses. Justice Mandokhail acknowledged the significance of dates in criminal proceedings but advised counsel to focus on identifying specific errors in the recorded testimony. The bench noted that

the matter could have been resolved at a lower level had the concerned court corrected the record on its own. Justice Mandokhail observed that the issue would not have reached the Supreme Court if the trial court had taken timely steps to rectify the mistakes. Referring to the constitutional powers of the apex court, Justice Mandokhail stated that the Supreme Court possesses complete authority under Article 187 of the Constitution to ensure that justice is done. The court also made strong observations regarding the alleged mishandling of the record. Justice Mandokhail remarked that only God knows the intentions of the presiding judge and cautioned against taking the matter to a point where allegations of dishonesty would have to be formally addressed. — APP

7th Muharram processions concludes peacefully

ABBOTTABAD: The traditional procession of the 7th of Muharram concluded peacefully in Abbottabad on Tuesday after passing through its designated routes and culminating at the Central Imambarah amid stringent security arrangements. DC Sarmad Saleem Akram and District Police Officer (DPO) Haroon Rashid Khan jointly inspected the procession routes to review law and order, security measures, and administrative arrangements. Senior officials, including SSP Traffic Ishtiaq Khan, SP Cantt Ali Hamza Butt, Assistant Commissioner

Abbottabad Afrasiab Zubair Hundal, and other civil and police officers, remained present on the ground to monitor the situation throughout the event. According to the district administration, comprehensive security arrangements were put in place along the procession route. Personnel of the police, traffic police, and other law enforcement agencies were deployed at key points to ensure the safety of mourners and maintain peace. Special traffic management measures were also implemented to ensure smooth vehicular movement and

facilitate participants in the procession. Officials of the district administration and police appreciated the cooperation of mourners, organizers, and the public, stating that the procession concluded in a peaceful environment due to mutual coordination, religious harmony, and responsible conduct by all stakeholders. The district administration reiterated its commitment to safeguarding the lives and property of citizens, promoting interfaith and sectarian harmony, and ensuring effective arrangements during Muharram-ul-Haram.—APP

"SAY NO TO CORRUPTION"
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
NATIONAL HIGHWAY AUTHORITY
(PUNJAB-NORTH REGION, CENTRAL ZONE)

INVITATION TO e-BIDS
49x ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORKS

S#.	DESCRIPTION	CONTRACT NO	ENGINEER'S ESTIMATE (RS)	PEC CATEGORY
1	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1140+000 ~ 1150+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-01	9,072,640/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
2	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1150+000 ~ 1160+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-02	9,072,640/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
3	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1160+000 ~ 1170+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-03	9,072,640/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
4	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1170+000 ~ 1180+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-04	9,392,640/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
5	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1180+000 ~ 1190+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-05	9,351,680/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
6	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1190+000 ~ 1200+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-06	9,040,320/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
7	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1200+000 ~ 1210+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-07	9,779,200/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
8	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1210+000 ~ 1220+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-08	9,072,640/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
9	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1220+000 ~ 1230+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-09	9,213,760/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
10	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1230+000 ~ 1246+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-10	9,371,200/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
11	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1265+000 ~ 1280+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-11	9,072,640/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
12	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1280+000 ~ 1293+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-12	9,072,640/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
13	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1293+000 ~ 1305+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-13	9,072,640/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
14	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1305+000 ~ 1320+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-14	9,072,640/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
15	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 0+000 ~ 8+000, LEBP	RM-PN-26-LEBP-15	9,892,450/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
16	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 8+000 ~ 16+000, LEBP	RM-PN-26-LEBP-16	9,872,850/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
17	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1320+000 ~ 1336+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-17	10,519,200/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
18	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1336+000 ~ 1354+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-18	10,221,600/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
19	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1354+000 ~ 1370+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-19	10,018,400/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
20	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1370+000 ~ 1385+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-20	10,720,000/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
21	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1385+000 ~ 1400+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-21	10,898,400/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
22	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1400+000 ~ 1415+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-22	10,951,200/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
23	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1415+000 ~ 1430+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-23	10,240,000/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
24	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1430+000 ~ 1445+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-24	10,498,400/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)

1. National Highway Authority (NHA), invites e-bids from the Constructors, registered with Income Tax Department and who are on Active Taxpayers List of the Federal Board of Revenue, and registered with Pakistan Engineering Council for the Year 2026. Bid Security amounting to Rupees 2% of Engineer's Estimate for each Location in shape of P.O./CDR in favor of "National Highway Authority (Road Maintenance Fund-Security Deposit)". Details are as under: -

25	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1445+000 ~ 1462+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-25	10,420,000/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
26	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1462+000 ~ 1482+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-26	10,842,250/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
27	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 0+000 ~ 18+400, N-60	RM-PN-26-60-27	8,930,400/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
28	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1482+000 ~ 1490+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-28	10,500,000/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
29	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1490+000 ~ 1500+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-29	9,600,000/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
30	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1500+000 ~ 1510+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-30	10,670,000/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
31	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1510+000 ~ 1520+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-31	10,700,000/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
32	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1520+000 ~ 1530+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-32	9,000,000/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
33	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1530+000 ~ 1544+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-33	8,819,800/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
34	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1544+000 ~ 1552+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-34	6,780,000/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
35	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1552+000 ~ 1560+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-35	6,777,500/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
36	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1560+000 ~ 1570+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-36	6,272,500/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
37	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1570+000 ~ 1580+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-37	6,697,000/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
38	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1580+000 ~ 1590+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-38	6,391,500/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
39	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1590+000 ~ 1600+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-39	6,542,000/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
40	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1600+000 ~ 1610+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-40	10,431,400/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
41	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1610+000 ~ 1620+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-41	10,510,000/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
42	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 1620+000 ~ 1630+000, N-5	RM-PN-26-05-42	10,800,000/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
43	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 0+000 ~ 15+000, N-80	RM-PN-26-80-43	10,200,000/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
44	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 15+000 ~ 30+000, N-80	RM-PN-26-80-44	10,100,000/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
45	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 30+000 ~ 45+000, N-80	RM-PN-26-80-45	10,478,600/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
46	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 45+000 ~ 60+000, N-80	RM-PN-26-80-46	10,890,600/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
47	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 60+000 ~ 75+000, N-80	RM-PN-26-80-47	10,837,100/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
48	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 75+000 ~ 90+000, N-80	RM-PN-26-80-48	12,053,100/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)
49	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE WORK at KM 90+000 ~ 100+000, N-80	RM-PN-26-80-49	10,265,830/-	C-5 & Above (CE-01 & CE-10)

2. Bidding Documents, containing Method of Procurement (Single Stage Two Envelopes), detailed terms and conditions etc will be available on the website mentioned below for downloading free of cost. Prospective Bidders are also advised to follow the said website for updates of schedule and addendum(s) if any.

3. The e-Bids prepared in accordance with the instructions provided in the Bidding Documents, must reach at the address mentioned below, on or before July 09, 2026 till 1100 Hours. Technical e-Bids will be opened on the same day at 1130 Hours in the presence of all bidders or their authorized representatives.

4. Bidders providing unsubstantiated and/or incorrect information shall be liable to disqualification and/or legal action. Any default firms will not be considered as eligible bidder.

5. Financial e-Bids of Qualified Bidders will be opened and any firm declared lowest evaluated bidder in Two (02) RM Contracts of F.Y 2026-27, his further bids will not be opened.

6. NHA Reserves the right to reject all the Bids as per PPRA Rules.

7. All Firms are advised to get EPADS (PPRA) registration at www.eprocure.gov.pk immediately, as Manual Bids (Hard Copy) will be eliminated in upcoming procurements.

8. This Advertisement is also available on PPRA website at www.ppra.org.pk

GENERAL MANAGER (MAINTENANCE) PUNJAB-NORTH
National Highway Authority
Shahpur Interchange, Thokar Niaz Baig, Multan Road, Lahore
Tel: 042-99232556, E-mail: dirmaint-pn@nha.gov.pk
Website: www.ebidding.nha.gov.pk

محفوظ شامروين محفوظ پاکستان PID(1)10317/25

National Days and Armed Forces Days

JUNE

- June 02/Italy National/Independence Day
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- June 12/Philippines Independence Day
- June 12/Russian Federation Day of Sovereignty of the Russian Federation(National Day)
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Park Road underpass work draws complaints over dust, delays

Residents further alleged that contractors were not consistently implementing mitigation measures such as regular water sprinkling to suppress dust, safe pedestrian access around construction zones and proper disposal of construction waste. Responding to the concerns, a Capital Development Authority (CDA) spokesperson told media that the underpass was a major infrastructure project aimed at improving traffic flow and reducing congestion in the area.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Residents, students and traders along Park Road have raised concerns over what they describe as inadequate environmental and safety measures at the site of the ongoing Park Road underpass project, alleging that dust pollution, unsafe traffic diversions and project delays are disrupting daily life and affecting public health. The project, launched by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) in January, was initially scheduled for completion within six months. However, residents said construction work appears far from completion, while temporary traffic arrangements have increased travel times and caused difficulties for commuters. Mukkaram Shah, a resident of the area, said the diversion road constructed to facilitate traffic during the project had itself become a major source of inconvenience. "The diversion road itself needs a diversion," he remarked, describing the route as heavily damaged and riddled with potholes that were causing damage to vehicles and increasing travel times. He said residents were not opposed to development projects but questioned the manner in which the work was being executed. "Acres of greenery have been removed, a recently completed road has been dug up again, and there seems to be little consideration for environmental protection or public convenience," he said. Another resident, Zenia Sohail, said dust generated by construction activity had become a major concern for families living near the site. "Construction debris and dust are everywhere. Vehicles are being damaged and people are forced to breathe polluted air while sitting in traffic jams for long periods," she said. Sohail added that the narrow and uneven diversion routes posed safety risks, particularly for motorcyclists and school-going children. Students commuting through Park Road said prolonged congestion and poorly managed diversions were affecting their academic routines. Aamir Aslam, a



student at Quaid-i-Azam University, said a journey that previously took around 15 minutes now often exceeded 40 minutes during peak hours. "Students relying on public transport face significant difficulties reaching classes and examinations on time," he said. Asma Zorait, a student of a private educational institution, said continuous exposure to dust and traffic congestion had made daily commuting exhausting. "Students already face academic pressures. Spending additional hours in traffic every week only adds to stress and affects productivity," she said. Local businesses have also reported losses due to reduced accessibility. Rehan Habib, who operates a grocery store on Park Road, said customer footfall had declined considerably since construction work began. "Many customers avoid the area because of congestion, damaged roads and uncertainty regarding access

routes. Our sales have been affected," he said. Roadside vendor Mujeeb Ullah said small businesses were bearing the economic burden of delays in the project. "We understand development projects are necessary, but work should be completed within the announced timeframe. Small traders cannot afford prolonged disruptions," he said. Residents further alleged that contractors were not consistently implementing mitigation measures such as regular water sprinkling to suppress dust, safe pedestrian access around construction zones and proper disposal of construction waste. Responding to the concerns, a Capital Development Authority (CDA) spokesperson told APP that the underpass was a major infrastructure project aimed at improving traffic flow and reducing congestion in the area. The spokesperson maintained that construction was progressing according

to the approved schedule and that temporary inconvenience was unavoidable during large-scale development work. According to the CDA, contractors have been directed to comply with environmental and safety requirements, including dust suppression measures, installation of safety signage and maintenance of diversion routes. "Water sprinklers are being used at the site to control dust, while traffic management arrangements are being reviewed regularly," the spokesperson said, adding that the authority was monitoring the project and taking public feedback into consideration. Residents, students and traders urged the civic agency to strengthen environmental compliance, improve traffic management and expedite completion of the project to minimise hardships for commuters, nearby communities and businesses.

Rs 1.58b school meal programme

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Balochistan is implementing a Rs1.58 billion school meal programme for primary school students in Quetta as part of its efforts to address nutrition challenges and improve child health outcomes. According to the official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, Balochistan has focused its development investments on maternal and child health, school nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure, and deworming as priority intervention areas. The School Meal Programme for Students of Primary Schools in Quetta is being implemented on a pilot basis with a total project cost of Rs1.579 billion and an allocation of Rs315.9 million during the year. The programme is one of several nutrition-focused initiatives currently under implementation in the province. Balochistan is also implementing the Comprehensive Maternal and Child Health Programme with a total cost of Rs2 billion and an allocation of Rs228.8 million. A separate project to provide WASH facilities in schools is under implementation, with a total cost of Rs2 billion and an allocation of Rs200 million.—APP

IRSA releases 271,500 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 271,500 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 206,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbella Dam stood at 1438.75 feet, which was 38.75 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 113,500 cusecs and 149,600 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1169.25 feet, which was 119.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 26,000 cusecs and 55,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 197,700, 166,400, 114,600, and 58,900 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 39,000 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 7,000 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Edu leaders explore AI-driven transformation

ISLAMABAD: Educators, policymakers, technology experts, researchers, and industry representatives gathered in Islamabad at the recently held AI EdTech Summit 2026 to explore how Artificial Intelligence can reshape Pakistan's education system and prepare students for the challenges of the future. The summit was organized by the Federal College of Education (FCE), Islamabad, in collaboration with Career Connect, and served as a platform for dialogue on the opportunities and challenges presented by emerging technologies in education. The event

was chaired by Dr. Samia Rehman Dogar, Director of the Federal College of Education, while Huzafa Sarfraz led the program proceedings. Participants engaged in discussions on the growing influence of AI on teaching methodologies, learning outcomes, research practices, and educational administration. Delivering the keynote address, Dr. Mohsin Raza said that artificial intelligence is rapidly changing the global educational landscape and that educational institutions must adapt to ensure students acquire the skills required in a technology-driven world. Addressing the

gathering, Dr. Shamsa Aziz emphasized the need to integrate AI-related competencies into teacher education and accreditation systems. She stressed that teachers must be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively utilize emerging technologies in classrooms. A series of panel discussions featured experts from academia, government organizations, development agencies, and the private sector. The discussions focused on curriculum reform, digital inclusion, workforce preparedness, educational planning, and policy development in the age of artificial intelligence.—DNA

PNCA Summer art camp fosters creativity

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) continues to engage children and young learners through its Summer Art Camp 2026, offering an inspiring platform to nurture creativity and develop artistic skills through hands-on training in drawing, painting, calligraphy and keyboard. The two-month camp, which commenced on June 10, is providing participants with an opportunity to explore their creative potential under the guidance of experienced instructors in a vibrant and interactive learning environment. According to PNCA, separate drawing and painting classes are being conducted for children aged 7-12 years and 13-20 years. Calligraphy classes are open to participants aged 7-14 years, while keyboard training is being offered to students between 8 and 16 years of age. Talking to APP, a parent whose two children are attending the junior painting classes said one of the biggest challenges for parents during the summer vacations was keeping children away from excessive use of mobile phones and other digital gadgets. "Activities like the PNCA Summer Art Camp provide children with a healthy and creative alternative. They foster positive and constructive thinking, help polish their hidden talents and enable them to spend their vacations in a productive and meaningful way," the parent said.—APP

Security steps inspected at duty points

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Muhammad Jawad Tariq on Tuesday visited various duty points across the federal capital and reviewed security arrangements to ensure effective policing and public safety. An official told APP the DIG Tariq met police officers and personnel deployed at different locations and assessed the overall security preparedness in view of Tariq conducted a detailed inspection of security measures and checked the performance and alertness of officers performing duties in the field. DIG Tariq issued necessary directions to the deployed personnel and emphasized the importance of vigilance, discipline and professionalism while performing their responsibilities. He directed officers to carry out their duties with dedication and remain fully prepared to respond effectively to any untoward situation. DIG Tariq also appreciated the commitment of police personnel and stressed the need for maintaining a high standard of security across the capital.—APP

Digital Youth Hub crosses 800,000 users milestone

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's Digital Youth Hub (DYH), Pakistan's first national digital platform dedicated to youth empowerment, has surpassed 800,000 registered users, marking a significant milestone in the government's efforts to connect young people with education, employment, engagement and environmental opportunities across the country. Developed under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), the Digital Youth Hub has reached more than 800,240 registered users as of June 2026, offering a centralized digital gateway that links youth with scholarships, jobs, internships, skills development initiatives, volunteer programmes and climate action projects. The platform uses artificial intelligence powered tools to provide personalized recommendations, enabling young people to access opportunities tailored to their interests, qualifications and career aspirations. According to official figures, the platform has partnered with 3,163 organizations and currently hosts over 114,783 opportunities nationwide. These include 114,374 employment op-

portunities, 292 education opportunities, 38 engagement opportunities and 79 environment related opportunities, making it one of the largest youth opportunity databases in Pakistan. The Digital Youth Hub also serves as an integrated platform for several flagship initiatives under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, including the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loans, Prime Minister's Youth Skill Development Programme, Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme, Pakistan Education Endowment Fund (PEEF), Green Youth Movement, and the Prime Minister's Youth Talent Hunt and Sports League for both traditional sports and e-sports. Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan welcomed the achievement and praised Pakistani youth for their confidence in the platform. He said the Digital Youth Hub had evolved into more than a technological innovation, describing it as a national movement aimed at ensuring equitable access to opportunities, improving employability and enabling youth to play a stronger role in Pakistan's socio-economic development.—DNA

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SCAN TO VISIT WEBSITE

Briefs

ITP suspends driving tests

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) announced that all Khidmat Markaz centres, except those located in F-6 and Cascade, will remain closed on Tuesday, along with traffic headquarters driving test facilities. An ITP official told APP that all professional driving tests, including LTV, HTV and PSV tests being conducted at the F-8 testing centre, will also remain suspended for the day. The official said citizens seeking licensing and other traffic-related services may visit the F-6 and Cascade Khidmat Markaz centres, which will continue to provide services as usual. According to the official, the temporary closure will affect all other facilitation centres operating under Islamabad Traffic Police across the federal capital. The official advised citizens to plan their visits accordingly and utilize the available service centres to avoid inconvenience. For further information and updates, citizens may contact Islamabad Traffic Police through its official communication channels, the official added.

PM congratulates newly elected GB CM

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday extended his warmest congratulations to Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Amjad Hussain on his election as the Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan. The prime minister, in a statement, also felicitated Imran Nadeem Shigri on his election as speaker and Malik Kifayat ur Rehman as deputy speaker of the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly. Paying tribute to the entire political leadership, he commended them for ensuring that the Gilgit-Baltistan elections were held in a positive political environment. He said that the peaceful conduct of the polls reflected the public's trust and marked a significant victory for democratic and parliamentary values in the region. Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed the hope that the newly elected chief minister and his cabinet would work dedicatedly for the progress, development, and prosperity of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan.—APP

Pak creative economy must not be undermined

In this regard thousands of artists and their respective associations demanded that the Honourable Prime Minister, the Finance Minister, the Information Minister, and all Members of Parliament consider these concerns before implementation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: United Producers Association (UPA), Actors Collective Pakistan (ACT), and Directors Guild Pakistan (DGP) have jointly demanded that Pakistan's Creative Economy must not be undermined without stakeholder consultation. Zeeshan M Khan Gen Secretary UPA, Samina Ahmad Chairperson ACT and Shahzad Nawaz General Secretary of DGP along with their officials and thousands of members across the country express

serious concern over the proposed withdrawal of advance tax on imported foreign television plays and advertisements under the Finance Bill 2026-27. Spokespersons from these national associations of artists of Pakistan said that we, as Pakistan's citizens, do support tax reforms but believe any policy affecting Pakistan's Creative Economy must be preceded by meaningful stakeholder consultation. It is pertinent to note that the advance tax on imported foreign television plays and advertisements was introduced through the Finance Bill 2013-14 presented by the then Federal Finance Minister Sen-

ator Muhammad Ishaq Dar as part of a policy framework to strengthen indigenous media production and encourage local content. Reversing a policy that has remained in place for more than a decade should only occur after a comprehensive economic review and consultation. Pakistan's Creative Economy supports thousands of professionals and their families across television, film, digital media, advertising, music, animation, post-production, and related sectors. Federal and provincial governments have also announced initiatives, in-

cluding the Punjab Film City Project, to strengthen local production. In this regard thousands of artists and their respective associations demanded that the Honourable Prime Minister, the Finance Minister, the Information Minister, and all Members of Parliament consider these concerns before implementation, which are: firstly, to suspend implementation pending stakeholder consultation; secondly, to convene an urgent meeting with all relevant stakeholders; thirdly, to publish an Economic Impact Assessment; and lastly, to demand the development of a National Creative Economy Policy.



ISLAMABAD: Khurshid Barlas presenting copy of report to the Sindh Governor Nehal Hashmi. DNA

Chinese-language, cultural exchanges center opened

With the addition of the Islamabad center, Shaanxi Normal University General Publishing House now operates three "Overseas Editorial Departments for China-Themed Books" and two "National Reading Stations" globally

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A dedicated physical hub for Chinese-language reading and cultural exchanges has officially opened here, marking a milestone in educational and people-to-people cooperation between the two nations. According to a Gwadar Pro's report, Shouyang Book House, the National Reading Station" was inaugurated during the 32nd Beijing International Book Fair (BIBF), signaling the operational launch of the facility. The ceremony, held on the sidelines of the fair, also witnessed the signing of an "Overseas Editorial Department for China-Themed Books" agreement with the United Arab Emirates. The Islamabad reading station is the result of a

collaboration between Shaanxi Normal University General Publishing House and the China-Pakistan Educational and Cultural Institute (CPECI) in the capital. Designed as an inclusive cultural space, the station aims to serve a diverse audience including Pakistani citizens, overseas Chinese residents, Chinese language educators, students and local Mandarin learners. The establishment of the station addresses a long-standing need for a professional offline reading and resource platform, complementing the growing landscape of Chinese language education across Pakistan. Beyond its role as a library, the Shouyang Book House plans to roll out a schedule of community-driven events. In partnership with local schools and educational institutions, the center will organize

cross-border reading sessions, cultural study tours, regular book fairs and interactive sharing events. The initiatives aim to foster mutual understanding, promote literary exchange and bring the Chinese and Pakistani people closer together through shared knowledge and storytelling. The Islamabad launch follows the establishment of a sister "Shouyang Book House" in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, which has already become a cultural hub hosting calligraphy competitions, essay contests, and traditional performances. With the addition of the Islamabad center, Shaanxi Normal University General Publishing House now operates three "Overseas Editorial Departments for China-Themed Books" and two "National Reading Stations" globally.

Joint efforts on ocean sustainability urged

The meeting agreed on the need to strengthen institutional coordination to improve waste management, safeguard marine resources and promote sustainable maritime development

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry and Sindh Governor Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi discussed enhanced cooperation to address marine pollution and strengthen protection of coastal ecosystems. The discussion took place during a meeting at the minister's chamber in the National Assembly, where both sides emphasised closer coordination between federal and provincial institutions on environmental management and maritime sustainability. The minister said he would convene a meeting of the Marine Pollution Control Board during his upcoming visit to Karachi to review ongoing efforts and brief him on institutional responses to marine litter and coastal degradation. Governor Hashmi stressed improved coordination between federal and provincial authorities, highlighting waste management, conservation of marine resources and sustainable economic activity as key to the environmental and economic well-being of coastal communities in Sindh. Junaid Chaudhry said healthy oceans play a critical role in regulating the climate, supporting biodiversity and sustaining coastal livelihoods, including mangrove ecosystems and fisheries. He said Karachi Port Trust (KPT) was carrying out routine clean-up operations in port waters and adjoining areas as part of ongoing maintenance and environmental management activities Referring the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) assessments, Junaid Chaudhry said an estimated 19-23 million tonnes of plastic waste enter aquatic ecosystems annually worldwide, underscoring the scale of marine pollution challenges faced by coastal states. Global studies, including those supported by the World Bank, indicate that plastic typically accounts for a significant share of marine litter, often exceeding 50% by item count, although proportions vary widely by location and methodology, he added. Junaid Chaudhry said marine litter poses a serious threat to ecosystems, fisheries and coastal communities, and called for coordinated action between federal and provincial authorities to improve waste management systems and reduce pollution at source. He also noted the broader economic potential of transitioning toward a circular economy, including improved recycling systems and resource recovery, which international studies suggest could create employment opportunities while reducing environmental pressures. The meeting agreed on the need to strengthen institutional coordination to improve waste management, safeguard marine resources and promote sustainable maritime development.—DNA

HEC launches leadership engagement series

DNA

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE: The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan, has launched National Leadership Engagement Series called 'The Quality Compact' on the Pakistan Precepts, Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (PSG-2023). The inaugural Punjab regional session of the series was held at Forman Christian College (A Chartered University), Lahore. The Punjab regional session brought together around 100 senior university leaders, including Deans and Registrars, representing 29 higher education institutions (HEIs) from the Punjab region. This marks a significant milestone in HEC's efforts to strengthen institutional quality assurance across the country. During the opening ceremony, Rector FCCU Dr. Jonathan Adleton delivered welcome remarks, followed by the formal inauguration of the engagement series by Director General QAA HEC Mr. Nasir Shah. Speaking on this occasion, Mr. Shah underscored the importance of moving institutions from compliance to ownership and effectiveness in their quality assurance practices, as envisioned under the revamped PSG-2023 framework. The session participants engaged with HEC's Three Expository Facets framework – Contextual Understanding, Ownership, and Maturity – alongside an introduction to the PERLI Golden Thread and the newly launched Q-CIRCLE digital platform, designed to support real-time institutional quality monitoring.—APP

Justice Hassan takes oath as acting CJ, FCCP

ISLAMABAD: In a dignified ceremony held today at the Branch Registry of the Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan in Karachi, Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi took oath as Acting Chief Justice of the FCCP during the absence of Chief Justice Mr. Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan. According to a press release issued here Tuesday, the oath was administered by Justice Kaareem Khan Agha in the presence of judges, officers, and officials of the Court. Chief Justice Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan is currently on an official visit to Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, where he is attending an international legal conference aimed at promoting judicial cooperation, exchange of legal expertise, and dialogue on contemporary constitutional and legal issues.—APP

Integrated task management system launched

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On the directions of Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Mustafa Kamal, the Ministry of National Health Services Regulations & Coordination have launched an Integrated Task Management System (ITMS) aimed at enhancing transparency, accountability, and efficiency through digital governance in all its subsidiary departments programmes. The announcement was made during a meeting chaired by Federal Health Minister Mustafa Kamal with the heads of attached departments and senior officials of the Ministry on Tuesday. During the meeting, officials were briefed on the newly introduced system and its key features. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said the introduction of the internal Task Management System marks a significant step towards effective e-governance within the Ministry. He emphasized that promoting digital systems in line with the requirements of the modern era is essential for improving institutional performance. He stated that the new system will ensure that all tasks are managed online, clearly assigned, and fully traceable. A complete record of

task allocation, progress, responsibilities, and completion status will be maintained through the platform. Under the new framework, all official directives and instructions issued by the Ministry have been consolidated a centralized digital platform. The system also provides a real-time dashboard, enabling live monitoring of assigned tasks and allowing progress to be reviewed at any time from a single interface. The Minister announced that he will personally monitor the implementation and progress of delegated tasks through the system. He noted that the initiative represents a major milestone in transforming the Ministry into a fully digital and paperless institution. "From now onwards, all official business will be conducted through the Task Management System, and accountability, performance evaluation, and reward and disciplinary mechanisms will be determined accordingly," he said. Mustafa Kamal added that the system will reduce reliance on conventional working methods and is fully aligned with the Government's vision of promoting transparency, effective governance, and modern digital solutions.

He directed all officers and heads of departments to adopt the new system with complete seriousness and to prepare their teams accordingly so that the Ministry's performance and service delivery can be further strengthened.

NUST takes green leap with 3.5 MW solar PV project

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) signed a contract with Foundation Solar Energy (Pvt) Ltd (FSEL) for the installation and commissioning of a 3.5 MW Solar PV System at the NUST H-12 Campus, here. The contract was signed by Dr Adeel Waqas, Principal US-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Energy (USPCASE), NUST, and Brig. (R) Imran Masood Kashfi, Company Secretary FSEL. Awarded through a transparent and competitive bidding process, the project marks a significant milestone in NUST's commitment to sustainability and its transition towards cleaner and more reliable energy sources. Besides reducing dependence on conventional

energy sources, the project will contribute towards lowering the university's carbon footprint and promoting environmentally responsible campus operations. The project also reflects NUST's commitment to leveraging its own institutional expertise, with USPCASE, NUST playing a leading role in planning and steering this strategic initiative. Speaking at the occasion, Rector, Dr Muhammad Zahid highlighted the importance of integrating sustainability into institutional planning and development. He remarked that the project reflects NUST's commitment to adopting practical solutions that address contemporary energy challenges, and "it is just a matter of time that we would be fully solarised."

He further emphasised that universities have a responsibility to not only generate knowledge but also lead by example in advancing sustainable practices and responsible resource utilisation. He further said, "As with other SDGs, we are working on other facets of sustainability, and NUST, Allah willing, shall play a leading role not only in Pakistan but also internationally." By investing in renewable and clean energy infrastructure, NUST continues to demonstrate its commitment to responsible environmental stewardship, innovation-driven development and the adoption of solutions that contribute to Pakistan's evolving energy landscape. The contract signing ceremony was attended by senior leadership from NUST and FSEL.—DNA

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Tough lessons learnt

THE recent disruption to energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz sent shockwaves far beyond oil and gas markets. The effects quickly rippled through global shipping, industrial supply chains and household bills, while adding to inflationary and fiscal pressures. But the crisis also reinforced an urgent reality: For many countries, the energy transition — the shift from fossil fuels to renewable sources — is as much about security and economic resilience as it is about sustainability. For much of the past decade, the central question shaping the transition debate was whether clean technologies could scale quickly enough to compete with fossil fuels. In many sectors and regions, that question has been answered. In 2025, renewables and nuclear power generated 42 percent of global electricity usage, renewable generation grew by 9 percent, and global investment in clean energy reached a record \$2.3 trillion. The harder question now is whether countries can build diversified and secure energy systems that remain affordable, sustainable and resilient under stress.

The countries responding most effectively are investing in domestic capacity and diversified energy sources. New World Economic Forum research suggests that many countries are struggling to succeed on all three fronts at once. While global progress on clean energy deployment continued in the past year, the foundations that determine whether progress can last — investment, infrastructure, policy stability and innovation — came under pressure. Energy security showed the clearest signs of strain, as geopolitical tensions, infrastructure bottlenecks and supply-chain concentration grew more acute. The Strait of Hormuz crisis only accelerated this trend. This vulnerability is increasingly shaping how governments think about the energy transition. In the past, progress was measured largely by deployment: how quickly or affordably countries could build renewable capacity, scale electric vehicles or attract investment. Today, security has become a more important measure of success: the ability to maintain reliable and affordable energy systems amid growing geopolitical uncertainty.

The countries responding most effectively are reducing their exposure to external shocks by investing in domestic capacity and diversified energy sources. China offers an example. While it continues to partially depend on imported fossil fuels and domestic coal, it is also accelerating electrification and grid expansion with fast and large-scale renewable deployment. Wind and solar now generate 22 percent of the nation's electricity. The significance here is not only about pace and scale. It is the objective to reduce exposure to external shocks by building a more resilient and internally integrated energy system. Europe is taking a different path toward a similar objective. Since



Israel Versus Iran: Before and After the War

Qamar Bashir



The same applies to Lebanon. The reported creation of a deconfliction mechanism involving the U.S., Iran, and Lebanon shows that even conflicts involving Hezbollah cannot be treated as isolated Israeli military problems. They are now part of a wider regional equation. Yet Israel continues to insist that its forces retain “full freedom of action” in southern Lebanon and that they will remain there as long as necessary. This defiance may please hardliners, but it also reveals Israel's inability to adjust to the new environment. Militarily, the war has also changed perceptions. Israel entered the conflict with an image of invincibility

BEFORE the war, Israel stood in the Middle East as a regional bully wearing the armor of American power. Its military superiority was real, but its confidence came from something larger than its own tanks, aircraft, intelligence networks, or missile-defense systems. It came from the certainty that the United States would protect it on every front: militarily, diplomatically, financially, and politically. Israel acted as if it could strike anywhere, occupy territory, defy resolutions, ignore neighbors, and still remain immune from consequences because Washington would always stand behind it. That illusion has now been shaken. The Iran-Israel war has exposed a reality that was long hidden beneath layers of propaganda and military spectacle: Israel's regional dominance was never entirely its own. It was borrowed power. It was American weapons, American money, American diplomatic cover, American vetoes, American intelligence, and American fear projected through Israel. Without that unquestioned backing, Israel is not an untouchable regional hegemon. It is a small state surrounded by a vast Muslim neighborhood whose anger has accumulated for decades.

The playground analogy fits perfectly. Israel behaved like a smaller bully protected by a much larger bully. So long as the larger protector stood behind it, the smaller bully could threaten everyone else. But when the larger protector begins to step back, reassess its interests, or ask whether this relationship is damaging its own standing, the smaller bully suddenly faces the reality of the playground. The crowd it once intimidated no longer looks helpless.

That is the great change after the war. The United States appears to have realized that unconditional support for Israel is no longer cost-free. Washington's interests in energy security, global shipping, regional stability, relations with Gulf states, nuclear inspections, oil markets, and wider diplomatic influence cannot be sacrificed endlessly at the altar of Israeli maximalism. Israel was useful to the United States when Israeli goals and American objectives overlapped. But when Washington required restraint, diplomacy, and regional de-escalation, Israel resisted. That resistance has created a visible wedge. The emerging U.S.-Iran framework is the clearest proof of this new reality.

Direct talks in Switzerland, mediation by Pakistan and Qatar, discussions on nuclear inspections, the Strait of Hormuz, frozen assets, oil sales, and Lebanon show that Washington is no longer viewing the Middle East only through Israel's eyes. It is now talking directly to Tehran because Iran is a reality that cannot be bombed out of existence, sanctioned into surrender, or excluded from regional security.

This alone marks a historic shift. Before the war, Iran was presented as isolated, cornered, and vulnerable. After the war, Iran is sitting across the table from the United States, discussing inspections, shipping lanes, sanctions waivers, oil exports, frozen funds, and regional ceasefire mechanisms. That is not isolation. That is recognition. The Strait of Hormuz also demonstrated Iran's strategic weight. When a vital waterway through which a major portion of global oil moves becomes part of the negotiation, the world is reminded that Iran is not a marginal actor. It sits at the heart of global energy geography. Any serious regional order must include Iran, not merely threaten it.

The same applies to Lebanon. The reported creation of a deconfliction mechanism involving the U.S., Iran, and Lebanon shows that even conflicts involving Hezbollah cannot be treated as isolated Israeli military problems. They are now part of a wider regional equation. Yet Israel continues to insist that its forces retain “full freedom of action” in southern Lebanon and that they will remain there as long as necessary. This defiance may please hardliners, but it also reveals Israel's inability to adjust to the new environment. Militarily, the war has also changed perceptions. Israel entered the conflict with an image of invincibility. Its air force, Iron Dome, David's Sling, Arrow system, cyber capability, and intelligence reach had created the impression that no regional adversary could seriously challenge it. But mass drone and missile warfare has altered the battlefield. Iran demonstrated that quantity, persistence, and saturation can challenge even the most advanced defense systems. Hezbollah and other regional actors have also learned that cheaper, mass-produced systems can create pressure that billion-dollar defense platforms cannot always absorb.

This is not to say Israel has become militarily weak in an absolute sense. It remains heavily armed and technologically advanced. But the myth of effortless superiority has been broken. Before the war, Israel believed escalation would always favor it. After the war, escalation looks dangerous, expensive, and uncertain. The psychological damage may be even greater than the physical damage.

A country that sells itself as invincible cannot easily absorb the perception of vulnerability. Its citizens now see that endless military operations do not bring lasting security. Internal divisions, protests, political fragmentation, and frustration with permanent war have deepened. A state cannot live forever in emergency mode. A society cannot remain healthy if every political problem is answered with bombs, raids, assassinations, occupations, and blockades.

Israel's deeper problem is not military. It is political

and moral. For decades, Israel has avoided the central question: how can it live permanently in a region whose people it refuses to treat as equal stakeholders in peace? It cannot normalize its future while denying Palestinians their rights. It cannot bomb Lebanon into friendship. It cannot assassinate its way into legitimacy. It cannot occupy territory and expect acceptance. It cannot treat Iran as a ghost to be destroyed rather than a regional power to be engaged. The path forward is obvious, but Israel's leadership refuses to see it. Israel must start behaving like a normal country. A normal country builds relations with neighbors. A normal country respects borders. A normal country understands that military power has limits. A normal country negotiates, compromises, and recognizes that security cannot be built only on domination.

If Israel accepted a genuine two-state solution, respected Palestinian rights, withdrew from occupied territories, ended reckless military adventurism, and engaged the region through diplomacy, the Middle East could enter a new era of prosperity. Trade, technology, energy cooperation, reconstruction, and regional connectivity could replace permanent war. But if Israel continues to live inside a narcissistic illusion that it is divinely entitled to dominate the region regardless of law, geography, demography, or diplomacy, then harder days lie ahead. The war has already established one point beyond dispute: Iran cannot be ignored. It cannot be erased. It cannot be conquered by airstrikes. It must be treated as a central regional power whose interests must be addressed in any durable settlement.

Before the war, Israel appeared to be the unquestioned regional hegemon and Iran the besieged adversary. After the war, Israel looks more vulnerable, more isolated, and more dependent on a United States that is now pursuing its own direct path with Tehran. Iran, meanwhile, has emerged as a necessary participant in the future architecture of the Middle East. That is the real before-and-after story. The war did not merely test missiles and drones. It tested illusions. It revealed that American backing is not destiny, military superiority is not permanent security, and regional arrogance cannot substitute for diplomacy. Israel's age of unquestioned dominance is fading. A new Middle East is emerging, and Israel must either adjust to it—or be crushed by the consequences of refusing to live like a normal state among normal neighbors.

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

Pakistan's Vigilance Against India's Dirty Game in Azad Kashmir

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



India, our eternal enemy, has once more shown its true cowardly face. Unable to confront Pakistan honourably on the battlefield, it has resorted to its familiar tactics of a long-standing proxy war. Through infiltration of agents, funding of disruptive elements, dissemination of false propaganda, and clever exploitation of local grievances via social media and covert networks...

THERE is an old and wise Urdu saying that a single dirty fish can pollute the entire pond. The truth of this proverb has once again been laid bare in the verdant hills and valleys of Azad Kashmir, where generations of peace-loving people have lived in harmony, sharing one another's joys and sorrows like members of a single family. Their pond was clean, tranquil, and prosperous. Yet, as has happened so many times before, an external hand has sought to muddy these sacred waters by introducing elements of discord and division from outside.

In recent weeks, the serene landscape of Azad Kashmir has been disturbed by calculated unrest. Protests led by the Joint Awami Action Committee have erupted across several areas, including Rawalakot, Muzaffarabad, and Poonch. What began as agitation over local issues such as reserved legislative seats for refugees, rising prices, and governance concerns has turned tense, resulting in tragic clashes, loss of precious lives, injuries, shut-down strikes, and disruption of normal life. This is precisely the kind of chaos that Pakistan's adversaries relish and actively seek to exploit.

India, our eternal enemy, has once more shown its true cowardly face. Unable to confront Pakistan honourably on the battlefield, it has resorted to its familiar tactics of a long-standing proxy war. Through infiltration of agents, funding of disruptive elements, dissemination of false propaganda, and clever exploitation of local grievances via social media and covert networks, India plants “dirty fish” — mischievous proxies and instigators — into the peaceful waters of Azad Kashmir. These elements work methodically to fan the flames of discontent, amplify minor differences into major divisions, and sow seeds of hatred, suspicion, and chaos where peace once prevailed. This proxy warfare is part of India's broader strategy of “bleeding by a thousand cuts,” avoiding direct confrontation while

attempting to weaken Pakistan from within.

The pattern is not new; it is part of a long, sinister design. Before targeting Azad Kashmir so directly, the same enemy struck at East Pakistan, then attempted to destabilise Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and other parts of the country through similar proxy tactics — supporting insurgent groups, spreading disinformation, and funding anti-state activities. The scars of those earlier conspiracies still remind us of India's cunning and relentless malice.

This adversary is patient and treacherous. It avoids open war, preferring instead to strike from the shadows through infiltration, propaganda, and the instigation of internal divisions. In Azad Kashmir today, the goal remains clear: to disturb the hard-earned peace, weaken the unbreakable bond between the people and the state, and create conditions that serve Indian interests, especially ahead of important regional developments including upcoming elections.

Yet Pakistan has developed robust and highly effective counter-insurgency strategies that have repeatedly proven their worth. Through a combination of intelligence-based operations, kinetic military actions, and comprehensive non-kinetic measures — including socio-economic development, deradicalisation programmes, and close coordination between civil and military institutions — the nation has successfully cleansed many troubled areas in the past. Operations like Zarb-e-Azb and Radd-ul-Fasaad demonstrated to the world Pakistan's unwavering resolve and professional capability to uproot terrorism and proxy networks from its soil. The same spirit of vigilance, precision, and national unity now stands ready to protect Azad Kashmir.

The people of Azad Kashmir have always demonstrated remarkable resilience and unwavering loyalty to Pakistan. This latest test calls upon that same spirit. All political parties and leaders in the region must

rise above narrow personal and partisan differences. Internal rivalries must be set aside immediately for the greater interest of the homeland. It is the solemn duty of every responsible citizen and leader to identify these foreign-planted elements, expose their nefarious designs, and remove them before they cause lasting damage. The ponds must be cleansed so that peace, prosperity, and harmony may return.

Our valiant Pakistan Army and law enforcement agencies stand ever ready, as they always have, to defend the motherland and its people. Their vigilance, sacrifices, and proven counter-insurgency expertise form the strongest shield against external threats and proxy warfare. But the most effective defence begins with the awareness and unity of the people themselves. When the masses remain alert, united, and loyal, no amount of external mischief or Indian proxy tactics can succeed.

Pakistan has faced such conspiracies many times in the past and has emerged stronger with each challenge. The enemy may introduce dirty fish, but it cannot prevail as long as the pond — the people of Azad Kashmir and Pakistan — refuses to accept pollution. By rejecting division, maintaining internal harmony, and standing firm as a lead-lined wall against foreign interference and proxy designs, the people will once again frustrate the designs of those who wish them ill.

The strength of Pakistan lies not only in its armed forces but in the unbreakable unity of its people from the shores of Karachi to the peaks of Kashmir. If we stand together with wisdom, determination, and love for the nation, no dirty fish, however cunningly introduced through India's proxy war, can ever dirty our pond. The future of Azad Kashmir, like that of Pakistan itself, will be written by those who cherish peace, reject foreign meddling, and place the honour and integrity of the homeland above all else. In this sacred duty, there can be no compromise.

Briefs

Tougher phase of US-Iran talks lies ahead: DPM Dar

FROM PAGE 01
understanding, the deputy prime minister said there was no hidden deal behind the agreement and that all provisions were contained in the written Islamabad Accord. He said Pakistan had no vested interest in the matter and had played a sincere mediating role solely in the interest of the Muslim world and global peace. Pakistan took the initiative to bring the parties to the negotiating table and, through sustained diplomatic efforts, first helped secure a ceasefire between them, he added. Dar said US and Iranian delegations held six rounds of talks spanning 21 hours in Islamabad, marking the first direct negotiations between the two countries in 47 years. He said US Vice President JD Vance, Iran's parliamentary speaker and the Iranian foreign minister represented their respective sides in the talks. Representing Pakistan, Dar said he, Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Asim Munir and the national security adviser participated as mediators and witnesses. He added that Islamabad kept regional countries informed throughout the diplomatic process. According to Dar, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, the European Union, Canada, Australia, Japan and China also backed Pakistan's efforts to facilitate the talks. He said the final signing of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding took place on June 18. Dar further said the R4 Forum, comprising Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey, had now been established. He described it as a shared platform representing around half a billion people rather than a political bloc, adding that it connected the Red Sea, the Mediterranean and Africa. The United States and Iran made "encouraging progress" at the first round of talks aimed at reaching a final peace deal, mediators said on Monday, although tension persisted over Lebanon and the Strait of Hormuz. A joint statement from mediating nations Pakistan and Qatar said the US and Iran agreed to a roadmap towards a final deal within 60 days. Technical talks will continue for the rest of the week in the Qatari-owned Swiss mountain resort of Buergerstock, according to the statement, which was released by the Qatari foreign ministry. They also agreed on a mechanism to end fighting in Lebanon between US ally Israel and Iran-aligned Hezbollah, and opened a communications line to help ensure safe passage for commercial ships through the contested strait, the statement said. US Vice President JD Vance said that a first round of US-Iran talks in Switzerland had laid a good foundation for reaching a final deal on ending the Middle East war. Pakistan, he said, would continue to play an honest and sincere role in promoting dialogue and diplomacy aimed at achieving a peaceful and lasting resolution. PM Shehbaz Sharif commended the leadership of both the United States and Iran for their continued commitment to constructive engagement. He also thanked friendly and brotherly countries for their support in advancing what he described as a historic diplomatic process. The prime minister expressed special gratitude to Qatar for its critical role in creating conditions that enabled the negotiations to move forward. He also thanked the Swiss government for facilitating and hosting the talks.

Kylian Mbappe double sends France into knockout rounds

Mbappe's goals came in his 100th France game nearly three hours apart after a near two-hour stoppage

DNA

PHILADELPHIA: Kylian Mbappe scored his second double of the tournament and Ousmane Dembele added a third as France eased into the last 32 with a 3-0 victory over Iraq on Monday in the first match of this World Cup beset by a lengthy weather stoppage. Mbappe's goals, on his 100th international appearance, came nearly three hours apart after thunderstorms in the region delayed the second-half kickoff by a shade under two hours. "The first half was good," said France manager Didier Deschamps. "In the second half, we picked up where we left off, bearing in mind that it wasn't easy given what happened, and we managed to put the game beyond reach. That's a very good thing." Mbappe now sits on 16 all-time World Cup goals, pulling level with Germany's former record holder Miroslav Klose. Earlier on Monday, Lionel Messi set a new benchmark of 18 World Cup goals with a brace in Argentina's 2-0 win over Austria. Mbappe's four goals also put him one behind Messi in the 2026 World Cup Golden Boot race. Reigning Ballon d'Or winner Dembele scored after halftime for twice champions France, who will face Norway on Saturday with Group I top spot on the line. The Norwegians beat Senegal 3-2 on Monday to move level on three points with the French. Dembele had faced criticism for what some regarded as a poor performance in France's 3-1 opening win over Senegal. "There's no issue," Deschamps said. "Ousmane is confident in himself. He can sometimes get people talking, but I have complete faith in him. He's still finding his bearings because his role is different from the one he has at his club."



Iraq remain alive for one of the eight third-place spots. They will probably need a win in their group finale against Senegal and help elsewhere. They could be without Aymen Hussein, who scored in their 4-1 opening defeat by Norway but came off in the 26th minute on Monday with an apparent injury. "You have one moment of excellence from one of the best players in the world," said Ali Al-Hamadi, who replaced Hussein. "You have to come out and keep the same intensity against these great players. And in the end I think we made too many mistakes again," he added. France dominated the early stages and Mbappe capitalised in the 14th minute. After an innocent-looking sequence on the right, the striker received Michael Olise's pass, took one touch to his left and, with defenders affording him space, unfurled a powerful strike from the edge of the area that sailed beyond Ahmed Basil's dive. The weather delay could have served as a recovery period for Iraq, who spent most of the first half chasing the ball. Instead, they gifted France and Mbappe a second in the 54th minute after a dreadful mistake from a goal kick. Basil was unable to control a short goalkick from defender Zaid Tahseen and Dembele was on hand to set up Mbappe's simple tap-in. Dembele scored himself 12 minutes later after controlling Olise's incisive pass and finishing low past Basil. With the outcome never really in doubt, the weather provided most of the drama. After referee Drew Fischer blew his halftime whistle as the storms were already beginning, the skies opened up further and spectators were told to seek shelter in the stadium concourses. The players finally re-emerged for warm-ups about one hour and 40 minutes later and, even then, the restart was delayed further as stadium personnel used squeegees to shuttle standing water off the east side of the pitch.

Manchester United secure land for new stadium

Minority owner Jim Ratcliffe, who holds a roughly 29 percent stake and oversees football operations, has favored building a brand-new stadium over renovating Old Trafford

DNA

LONDON: DManchester United have secured the majority of the land needed for their new 100,000-seater stadium, the Premier League club said on Monday. United had announced plans last year to build the 2 billion pound (\$2.65 billion) stadium, which would be the largest in Britain, next to the existing Old Trafford. The club said it had acquired a 25-acre site, located approximately 350 meters (about a quarter-mile) northwest of Old Trafford, from industrial space provider Indurent and a Blackstone portfolio company. "Being able to build so

close to Old Trafford allows us to preserve the heritage, traditions and rituals that are so important to our fans," Collette Roche, the CEO of United's new stadium development, said in a statement. "We are committed to building a world-class stadium with our supporters, not just for them, with atmosphere, affordability and accessibility at the heart of our thinking. Old Trafford has been home to the 13-time English Premier League champions since 1910. The stadium, which seats more than 74,000, has not undergone any major redevelopment since 2006 and has also faced issues including a leaking roof,

India beat Pakistan in hockey

DNA

LONDON: In a high-octane encounter that lived up to its billing, India secured a narrow 4-3 victory over arch-rivals Pakistan in the FIH Pro League here today. However, the win was met with a spirited fightback from the visitors, who played with remarkable grit despite a major setback. Pakistani chai The match was a rollercoaster of emotions, with both teams trading blows in a fast-paced contest. India drew first blood in the opening quarter, but Pakistan responded with characteristic resilience, leveling the score before halftime. The hosts regained their lead in the third quarter, only for the Green Shirts to equalize once more, setting up a grandstand finish.

DPO Dera reviews security measures

The DPO received a briefing from the officials concerned regarding security arrangements at the Thallahs and emphasized that foolproof security must be ensured during Muharram processions and religious gatherings

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: District Police Officer (DPO) Dera Ismail Khan, Ziauddin Ahmad, visited various Thallahs (Imambargahs) located within the jurisdiction of Cantt Police Station to review security arrangements ahead of Muharram-ul-Haram. During the visit, the DPO inspected security measures and met with police officers and personnel deployed at different locations. He was accompanied by SP City Division Muhammad Nauman, DSP City Malik Abid Iqbal, SHO Cantt Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the In-charge of the District Special Branch (DSB). The DPO received a briefing from the officials concerned regarding security arrangements at the Thallahs and emphasized that foolproof security must be ensured during Muharram processions and religious gatherings. He directed the deployed personnel to remain vigilant, alert and perform their duties with dedication to maintain peace and public safety during the holy month. Later, the DPO also visited various entry and exit checkpoints established in the area and reviewed the overall law and order situation. He expressed satisfaction over the arrangements and reiterated the police department's commitment to ensuring a peaceful environment for mourners and citizens. A police spokesperson said that all necessary measures were being taken to maintain security and facilitate religious activities during Muharram-ul-Haram across the district. - APP

Jordan coach proud of players

"Generally speaking, we had a great match, and we should be proud of our performance. Very first experience in the World Cup, we were better than the first match." "Now for us facing Argentina is an opportunity. It's an opportunity for us to perform well and leave a great mark worthy of Jordanian football."

SANTA CLARA: Jordan coach Jamal Sellami said his players' inexperience may have cost them in a 2-1 defeat by Algeria at San Francisco Bay Area Stadium on Monday, but he was proud of their World Cup campaign despite their early exit. Jordan bow out of their first World Cup after consecutive defeats in Group J. They lost 3-1 to Austria in their opener. "The Algerian team did some substitutions that might have made a difference. They had a very tall offensive player ... I think our lack of experience allowed them to score from two corner kicks when we were waiting to make our own substitutions with the cooling break." "Generally speaking, we had a great match, and we should be proud of our performance. Very first experience in the World Cup, we were better than the first match." "Now for us facing Argentina is an opportunity. It's an opportunity for us to perform well and leave a great mark worthy of Jordanian football." Sellami, who is Moroccan, said Jordan's Crown Prince Hussein had visited the players' dressing room after the match and offered them congratulations. "Whenever you lose, there is always a negative feeling you're not in the best state of mind as the players that they have shown, but his words were a tonic for their spirit." - APP

Argentina ease into round of 32 as Messi writes history

The 18th goal of his World Cup career moved Messi past Women's World Cup leader Marta of Brazil

ARLINGTON: Lionel Messi set the all-time World Cup goals record in the 38th minute and scored another near the final whistle to help Argentina ease past Austria 2-0 in Arlington, Texas, on Monday afternoon. Monday's win clinches a spot in the round of 32 for Argentina, which can earn first place in Group J if Algeria defeats Jordan or the match results in a tie. Messi wasted little time making up for a missed penalty kick in the opening minutes of the match. He eclipsed the record for career goals in the men's World Cup held by Germany's Miroslav Klose (16) with a one-touch punch with his left foot and put another in the net on a highlight-reel effort as the final seconds ticked off the clock. In the fifth minute of added time in the second half, Messi got a rebound of his own missed shot in front of the goal and found a seam through a cluster of Austrian defenders for the score just inside the right post.

Messi, who recorded a hat trick in Argentina's World Cup opening win over Algeria, played all 90 minutes Monday. He missed a penalty kick try following a video review of a foul by Austria in the penalty area. Officials determined Lautaro Martinez had been fouled and awarded Argentina the penalty try. Mes-

si pulled the penalty try wide right of the net. The 18th goal of his World Cup career also moved Messi past Women's World Cup leader Marta of Brazil. She has scored 17 in her six World Cup appearances. Austria was unable to mount much offence and didn't have a clear shot on goal in the first half. - DNA



Diaspora World Cup champions diversity over division

"It was a special game for me, that's why I didn't celebrate in the first goal because I feel a lot for the country (of Tunisia), I love this country," said Swedish-born Ayari, who could also have represented his mother's nation Morocco

TLANTA: When Sweden's Yasin Ayari scored seven minutes into his World Cup debut he raised his arms in apology rather than celebration out of respect for Tunisia, where his father is from. The case of the Brighton midfielder is far from unique at a World Cup awash with players who could play for multiple nations via birth or ancestral roots. "It was a special game for me, that's why I didn't celebrate in the first goal because I feel a lot for the country (of Tunisia), I love this country," said Swedish-born Ayari, who could also have represented his mother's nation Morocco. Scouting and recruiting dual-national players has become vital to achieving success on the global stage. Nearly a quarter of the 1,248 players selected for the 2026 World Cup represent a country other than their birthplace. Morocco became the first African nation to reach a World Cup semifinal four years ago and harbor hopes of at least matching that feat in the coming weeks. During an impressive performance to hold Brazil 1-1 in their tournament opener, they became the first side in World Cup history to at one point field a full foreign-born 11.

Curacao's fairytale appearance on the global stage owes much to the ties between the Caribbean island of 160,000 people and the Netherlands. Of the Blue Wave's 26-man squad, 25 are Dutch-born and they are led by former Netherlands boss Dick Advocaat. "We have the heart of our homeland. And we've gone through the Dutch youth academy. That's a good combination," forward Jurgen Locadia said after Curacao stunned Ecuador to secure their first World Cup point with a 0-0 draw. Curacao's Leandro and Juninho Bacuna are one of seven sets of brothers taking part at the World Cup, four of which are representing different nations. Paris Saint-Germain's Desire Doue forms part of France's star-studded attack, while his older brother Guela Doue is part of the Ivory Coast squad. Center-back siblings John and Harry Souttar play for Scotland and Australia respectively. Nico Williams chose to represent Spain, while older brother Inaki plays for Ghana, alongside Derrick Luckassen, the half-brother of Dutch forward Brian Brobbey. Cape Verde have been the revelation of

the tournament, holding former winners Spain and Uruguay to draws in their first two World Cup matches. At the heart of the Blue Sharks defense has been Roberto 'Pico' Lopes. Born in Dublin to an Irish mother and Cape Verdean father, Lopes was recruited via networking site LinkedIn, but only at the second attempt. Lopes had ignored the first message sent by then coach Rui Aguas nine months earlier as it was sent in Portuguese, a language the Shamrock Rovers center-back did not speak. Nestory Irankunda, who scored Australia's opening goal in a 2-0 win over Turkey, was born in a refugee camp in Tanzania to Burundian parents, who had fled civil war before moving to Perth when the winger was still a baby. Those stories that champion the power of immigration are particularly poignant in a World Cup that began against a backdrop of exclusion. Somali referee Omar Artan was denied entry to the United States, while four of the participating nations - Haiti, Iran, Ivory Coast and Senegal - are subject to US travel bans and visa restrictions. - Olize 'enriched' by upbringing -

By contrast, FIFA have moved toward a more understanding approach to players facing difficult choices on who to represent, often while still teenagers. Now players under 21 can switch allegiance if they have three or fewer senior caps and have not played in a major tournament. But it is not just smaller nations taking advantage of the change in rules. England's Declan Rice, who will win his 75th cap against Ghana on Tuesday, played three times for the Republic of Ireland before the call came to represent the Three Lions. Jamal Musiala represented England at youth level where he grew up before being snapped up by Germany. Bayern Munich star Michael Olize was born in London to a British-Nigerian father and Franco-Algerian mother. "I actually come from four countries: France, Algeria, Nigeria and England. I consider myself very lucky to possess these four parts, which all enrich me," Olize told an interview with Bayern's members magazine. France won the battle for Olize's services, which could just prove vital to who wins the World Cup. - APP

Sharif defends Iran's right to ballistic missiles

FROM PAGE 01

Sharif praised Iran as a "great nation" that fought bravely during times of war and highlighted the deep historical and cultural ties between the two neighbors. He stressed that Pakistan values its relations with Iran and remains committed to enhancing cooperation across political, economic, and security domains. The Iranian President, during his official visit to Islamabad, expressed gratitude to Pakistan's leadership and people for their wholehearted support during recent regional tensions. He noted that he had productive meetings with President of Pakistan, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir. "I especially came to thank the Pakistani leadership and the people of Pakistan for their solidarity and support," the Iranian President remarked. Earlier in the day, the Iranian President was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the Prime Minister's House. He was received with a guard of honor, and Pakistan Air Force JF-17 Thunder jets escorted his aircraft upon arrival, symbolizing the importance of the visit. The two sides discussed strengthening bilateral cooperation, regional stability, and mutual support in international forums.

Trump claims Tehran agreed to...

FROM PAGE 01

The statement comes amid ongoing debates over Iran's nuclear activities and the future of international agreements governing them. Trump's remarks suggest that Washington views the inspection framework as a cornerstone of its policy toward Tehran, even as questions remain about the scope and enforcement of such commitments. Iran has consistently maintained that its nuclear program is for civilian energy purposes and has denied seeking nuclear weapons. The country has also expressed willingness to cooperate with international watchdogs, though disputes over access and sanctions have often complicated the process. Observers note that Trump's characterization of "infinity" inspections may reflect political messaging rather than a formal treaty clause. Verification mechanisms typically involve agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which conducts inspections under defined protocols. Whether Iran has formally agreed to unlimited inspections remains subject to clarification. The announcement is likely to spark reactions across the region, where Iran's nuclear program has long been a source of tension. Allies and rivals alike will be watching closely to see how the claim translates into practice and whether it leads to greater stability or renewed disputes.

Rubio arrives in UAE, says...

FROM PAGE 01

Regional observers note that Gulf countries, including the UAE and Saudi Arabia, have long opposed any unilateral Iranian control over the Strait. They view attempts to levy fees as a challenge to international norms and a potential threat to their economic lifelines. Rubio's comments are expected to reassure allies that Washington remains committed to safeguarding maritime routes and countering any unilateral measures. The Secretary of State's visit to Abu Dhabi highlights ongoing U.S. engagement with Gulf partners on security and trade issues. Discussions are likely to focus on maritime cooperation, regional stability, and collective efforts to deter threats to international waterways. Rubio's firm stance signals Washington's readiness to confront challenges to global navigation rights and reinforces its alignment with regional allies.

Briefs

Gold prices decline by Rs 10,400 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold witnessed a sharp decline in the local market on Tuesday, with 24 karat gold per tola falling by Rs 10,400 to settle at Rs 432,236 compared to Rs 442,636 on the previous trading day, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 9,360 to Rs 368,985 from Rs 378,345, whereas 10 grams of 22 karat gold went down by Rs 8,508 to Rs 338,575 against Rs 347,083. In the international market, the price of gold declined by \$104.00 to \$4,098.00 per ounce from \$4,202.00. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola dropped by Rs 487 to Rs 6,664 from Rs 7,151, while the price of 10 grams of silver decreased by Rs 438 to Rs 5,641 from Rs 6,079. The price of silver in the international market also decreased by \$4.861 to \$61.853 per ounce from \$66.714 per ounce.—APP

PSX continues with bearish trend, loses over 778 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 778.95 points, a negative change of 0.44 percent, closing at 177,692.92 points against 178,471.87 points on the last trading day. During the session, the ready market recorded a trading volume of 765.143 million shares with a traded value of Rs 35.443 billion, compared to 807.467 million shares valuing Rs 36.175 billion in the previous session. The market capitalization declined to Rs 19.936 trillion from Rs 19.976 trillion a day earlier. Out of 493 active companies in the ready market, 146 advanced, 308 declined and 39 remained unchanged. K-Electric Ltd. topped the volume chart with 83.430 million shares, followed by WorldCall Telecom with 71.245 million shares and Sui South Gas with 32.348 million shares. The top gainers included Pakistan Engineering Company Limited, which increased by Rs 50.97 to close at Rs 945.75, and Tandlianwala Sugar Mills Limited, which gained Rs 46.31 to settle at Rs 534.01. On the losing side, PIA Holding Company Limited declined by Rs 47.00 to close at Rs 17,530.00, while Khairpur Sugar Mills Limited fell by Rs 112.78 to close at Rs 2,297.36.

In the futures market, turnover stood at 682.151 million shares with a traded value of Rs 34.603 billion, compared to 669.542 million shares worth Rs 30.672 billion in the previous session. Out of 318 futures-market companies, 85 recorded gains, 226 declined and 7 remained unchanged, according to PSX data.—APP

Egypt seeks to expand wheat imports, storage ties with Poland

CAIRO: Egypt is discussing increasing wheat imports from Poland as part of efforts to diversify sources of strategic commodities and bolster food security, the supply ministry said on Tuesday. Supply Minister Sherif Farouk met Polish Secretary of State Malgorzata Gromadzka in Cairo to discuss cooperation in grains, meat and other food commodities, the ministry said in a statement. The talks also covered cooperation in developing Egypt's grain silo industry, localising manufacturing and transferring Polish technology to increase storage capacity, reduce waste and improve grain handling. Egypt, one of the world's largest wheat importers, has sought in recent years to diversify supply sources and strengthen strategic reserves. Polish agri-food exports to Egypt amounted to 104 million (\$118 million) in 2025, up 18 percent from 2024, according to a recent official Polish statement, mainly fresh eggs, pears and quinces, cheeses and quarks, as well as animal intestines, bladders and stomachs.—APP

Pakistan, Turkiye spark new energy ties

The meeting reflected the strong and brotherly relations between Pakistan and Turkiye and reaffirmed the commitment of both countries to further deepen economic and institutional cooperation for mutual benefit

DNA

ANKARA :The Honourable Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation, Mr. Muhammad Ali, held a productive meeting with the Honourable Minister for Energy and Natural Resources of the Republic of Turkiye during his visit to the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources.

The two ministers exchanged views on strengthening bilateral cooperation in the energy sector, investment opportunities, and avenues for enhanced collaboration between Pakistan and Turkiye. Discussions also focused on fostering strategic partnerships, promoting private sector participation, and sharing experiences in energy sector reforms and development. The meeting reflected the strong and brotherly relations between Pakistan and Turkiye and reaffirmed the commitment of both countries to further deepen economic and institutional cooperation for mutual benefit. The Adviser appreciated Turkiye's achievements in the energy sector and expressed Pakistan's keen interest in expanding cooperation in areas of common interest. Both sides agreed to continue engagement and explore opportunities for future collaboration.



OGDCL commences gas production from Sahito-1 discovery well

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) on Tuesday announced the successful commencement of gas production from the Sahito-1 discovery well in the Lower Goru Formation (Massive Sand) within the Khewari Exploration Licence located in Khairpur district, Sindh. The gas discovery at Sahito-1 was announced on March 26. The well was currently producing 6.0 million standard cubic feet per day (MMSCFD) of gas. Production was expected to increase progressively following the planned expansion of surface facilities, according to a news release. To facilitate early monetisation of the discovery, OGDC has laid a six-inch, five-kilometre flowline connecting the well to the Suleman Gathering Facility for onward processing at the Sinjhoru Plant. The processed gas was being injected into the network of the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGCL). Sahito-1 is located in the Khairpur district of Sindh. OGDC, as operator of the Khewari Exploration Licence, held a 75 percent working interest in the joint venture, while Government Holdings (Private) Limited (GHPL) held the remaining 25 percent interest. The commencement of production from Sahito-1 marked another important milestone in OGDC's efforts to accelerate the development and monetisation of indigenous hydrocarbon resources, strengthen domestic energy supplies, and contribute to the country's energy security.—DNA

CCP approves acquisition of BASF Pakistan

During its review, the Commission assessed the likely impact of the transaction on competition in the relevant market. The relevant product market was identified as the trade of chemicals, including specialty and industrial chemicals, while the relevant geographic market was determined to be Pakistan.

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) here on Tuesday approved the proposed acquisition of the entire shareholding of BASF Pakistan (Private) Limited by the UAE-based Kemyion Chemical Solutions Trading FZCO following a Phase-I review conducted under the Competition Act, 2010. Kemyion Chemical Solutions Trading FZCO submitted a pre-merger application to the Commission under Section 11 of the Competition Act, 2010, seeking approval to acquire 100 percent shareholding of BASF Pakistan (Private) Limited from BASF SE, Germany, pursuant to a Share Purchase Agreement dated November 18, 2025. Following a competition assessment, the Commission authorized the transaction under Section 31(1)(d)(i) of the Act, according to CCP press release. Kemyion Chemical Solutions Trading FZCO is a UAE-based company authorized to trade in acids, alkalis, basic industrial chemicals, construction chemicals, insecticides, petrochemicals, and plastic and nylon raw materials. BASF Pakistan (Private) Limited is engaged in the indenting and merchandising of a wide range of chemical products, including colorants, catalysts, solvents, oxo alcohols, and process chemicals. The seller, BASF SE, is a German multinational chemical company and the parent entity of the BASF Group. During its review, the Commission assessed the likely impact of the transaction on competition in the relevant market. The relevant product market was identified as the trade of chemicals, including specialty and industrial chemicals, while the relevant geographic market was determined to be Pakistan. The Commission observed that the acquiring company is not currently operational in Pakistan and does not generate any revenue or own any assets in the country. Consequently, the transaction would not result in any material change in market concentration. The assessment further found that the combined market share of the merger parties would remain unchanged and insignificant following completion of the transaction. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would neither create barriers to entry nor significantly enhance the market power of the merger parties. It further found no basis to conclude that the transaction would substantially lessen competition or create or strengthen a dominant position in the relevant market. Accordingly, the Commission authorized the transaction under the Competition Act, 2010. The approval reflects CCP's continued commitment to facilitating investment and efficient market transactions through timely merger reviews while ensuring that competition, market efficiency, and consumer welfare remain protected.—DNA

Govt committed to women's empowerment: Talal

CCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that women were not merely beneficiaries of peace but its architects, advocates, and guardians. He stressed that women play a transformative role as educators, entrepreneurs, policymakers, community leaders, and peace builders, contributing significantly to social cohesion, tolerance, and national development

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, on Monday said the Government of Pakistan remained firmly committed to women's empowerment and their meaningful participation in every sphere of national life, emphasizing that empowering women was essential for national progress, economic growth, social cohesion, and sustainable peace. He expressed these views while addressing the International Conference on "Women as Peace Leaders," jointly organized by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), said a release issued here on Tuesday. The conference brought together policymakers, security experts, academics, diplomats, business leaders, civil society representatives, and international delegates to discuss the pivotal role of women in peace-building, prevention of violent extremism, and strengthening national resilience. Talal Chaudhry said that the National Security Policy rightly recognized gender security as an integral component of national security and highlights the importance of an inclusive approach to peace and development. "Our vision is clear, a Pakistan where every girl can learn, every woman can lead, and every citizen can contribute to the nation's future," he remarked, adding that women's empowerment was not mere-

ly a social objective but a national imperative. ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that women were not merely beneficiaries of peace but its architects, advocates, and guardians. He stressed that women play a transformative role as educators, entrepreneurs, policymakers, community leaders, and peace builders, contributing significantly to social cohesion, tolerance, and national development. He highlighted ICCI's initiatives aimed at promoting women's entrepreneurship, employment, leadership, and economic empowerment, noting that peace and economic prosperity were inseparable and that empowering women is essential for building a stable, resilient, and prosperous Pakistan. Addressing the conference, Jawad Ahmad Dogar, National Coordinator NACTA, underscored that the prevention of violent extremism was a shared global responsibility requiring international cooperation and evidence-based policymaking. He noted that Pakistan's experience in combating terrorism has demonstrated that security responses alone were insufficient for lasting peace. He emphasized the need to address the ideological, social, digital, and structural spaces where radicalization took root and expressed confidence that the conference would generate valuable recommendations for future policymaking and research. Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Nigar Johar, HI(M) highlighted the disproportionate impact of conflict, terrorism, and violence on women. Drawing on her extensive experience as a healthcare professional and military leader, she said that women often bear the heaviest burden of conflict as victims,

Saudi-funded hospital beacon of hope for Yemenis

MARIB: In the heart of Yemen's Marib Governorate, the Specialized Hospital for Ophthalmology, fully funded by Saudi Arabia and providing its services free of charge, has become a beacon of hope for thousands of Yemenis seeking an opportunity to restore or protect their vision.

Since opening in late 2019 with full funding from the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center, the hospital has provided more than 516,000 diverse medical services free of charge, making it one of the most prominent specialized humanitarian initiatives in Yemen's healthcare sector. The treatment journey begins with examination and diagnosis, and ends with the provision of medication, prescription glasses, or surgical intervention, all at no cost to the patient. Behind these figures lie countless personal stories: Patients who traveled hundreds of kilometers, some of whom had lost the ability to work due to impaired vision, while others faced the threat of complete blindness before finding free treatment at the hospital, from the initial medical examination through to their departure after receiving treatment or undergoing surgery. Ahmed Al-Omari, the hospital's director, told Asharq Al-Awsat that the project represents one of the most significant humanitarian interventions carried out by KSRelief in Yemen's healthcare sector. He added that all services are provided free of charge, from the moment a patient enters the hospital until the completion of their treatment. Al-Omari said that the hospital has become a destination for patients from most Yemeni governorates amid difficult economic conditions and a declining ability among many families to cover treatment costs. He added that the growing trust in the services provided is reflected in the continued year-on-year increase in the number of beneficiaries. According to official statistics, from the hospital's opening to January, the clinics received about 257,673 patients. A total of 20,491 surgeries were performed, 150,979 pairs of prescription glasses were dispensed and 342,301 prescriptions were provided free of charge. In addition, tens of thousands of laboratory tests, medical imaging services and diagnostic procedures were provided. Al-Omari said the hospital specializes in ophthalmology and eye surgery. A patient's journey starts at the optometry clinics, where vision is assessed and refractive errors are measured, before moving to specialists for detailed examinations using advanced, specialized equipment. He added that the hospital has performed dozens of surgeries daily, notably cataract removal and intraocular lens implantation using phacoemulsification technology, in addition to procedures for glaucoma, strabismus and tear duct dilation, as well as cosmetic and other minor surgical interventions. Al-Omari said the hospital features a state-of-the-art medical imaging and diagnostics department equipped with advanced specialized devices, notably an optical coherence tomography device, the only one of its kind in the governorate, used to examine and image the retina and diagnose retinal diseases with high precision. While the hospital receives 180 patients daily across three specialized clinics, it faces challenges, according to Al-Omari, who cited the growing demand driven by patients arriving from across Yemen, along with occasional delays in the delivery of some medical supplies.—DNA

Oman and Iran to pursue talks on managing Hormuz navigation

MUSKAT: Oman and Iran agreed on Tuesday to press on with discussions about the future administration of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, including maritime services in the strategic waterway and the costs associated with them. In a joint statement issued after talks in Muscat, the two countries said a joint working group involving their foreign ministries would be formed to continue the discussions and that they would consult other littoral states and relevant parties.

The move appears to implement a provision of the memorandum of understanding signed last week that calls for Iran to hold talks with Oman and other Gulf coastal states on the future management of navigation and maritime services in the strait, a vital waterway for global oil supplies. The agreement was announced following a visit by Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, who met Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq and held talks with Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Albusaidi. In the statement, Oman and Iran, the two states bordering the strait, reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring safe passage through the waterway in accordance with international law while underlining sovereignty over their territorial waters.—APP

Etihad Rail announces launch of passenger services

DUBAI: Etihad Rail announced on Tuesday that initial passenger services would start on June 30 between Abu Dhabi and the eastern emirate of Fujairah taking just 1 hour and 45 minutes. The announcement came as Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Khalid bin Mohamed bin Zayed inaugurated the MBZ City Passenger Station and the unveiling of the UAE passenger rail network. Etihad Rail also announced that train stations in Dubai and Al-Dhaid will open on Sept. 30, followed by the Al-Dhafra station on Dec. 30 and the Sharjah station on March 30 next year. The train stations will have cafes, restaurants, retail outlets and several international brands, or passengers can opt for the onboard dining options while enroute to their destinations. Fares on the Abu Dhabi-Fujairah route will start at AED55 (\$15) for Comfort Class and AED120 for Premium Class. Passengers can book journeys on various platforms including the Etihad Rail mobile application and official website starting June 23.—APP

Kenya halts US Ebola facility

NAIROBI: Kenya has ordered a halt to preparations for a US-run Ebola quarantine facility, the health minister told a court Tuesday, after being held in contempt for ignoring a previous stop-work order. Kenyans have strongly opposed the plan and deadly protests have taken place since the facility was announced in May for potential US citizens evacuated from the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is grappling with a major Ebola outbreak. It has been constructed at Laikipia Air Base, about 200 kilometers (125 miles) from the capital, Nairobi, with some 50 isolation beds and was expected to be managed by US medical staff. Kenya's government ignored a previous order by the high court to stop work on the site. Rights groups had petitioned the court, saying the facility was being developed secretly and without consultation. On Monday, the court said health minister Aden Duale was held in contempt for failing to respond to the order and should appear for sentencing. He appeared in court on Tuesday and apologized, saying: "I have directed the immediate and complete cessation of any intended construction, site preparation, or related activities concerning the Laikipia Air Base facility pending the hearing and determination of the substantive petition or until further orders of this court." Three people have been killed in unrest near the facility in Laikipia.—APP

Briefs

UN Secy Gen talk about energy crisis

DNA

PARIS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called Tuesday for the world to act with "far greater urgency" to limit global warming, warning that fossil fuels were driving twin climate and energy crises. "On the surface, these crises may seem separate. But they share the same destructive force: Fossil fuels," Guterres said at London Climate Action Week, an annual gathering of policymakers, company executives and NGOs.

Oil inches down as Hormuz flows

DNA

LONDON: Oil prices inched down on Tuesday, extending losses from the previous session, as investors looked for clearer signs of progress in restoring crude flows through the Strait of Hormuz following US-Iran peace talks. Brent crude futures fell 20 cents, or 0.3%, to \$77.70 a barrel and US West Texas Intermediate declined to \$73.74 a barrel, down 12 cents, or 0.2%, as of 0323 GMT. Prices fell more than 3% on Monday after the United States granted Iran a 60-day sanctions waiver following initial peace talks, and as officials reported a lull in hostilities in Lebanon under the broader agreement. The developments followed a weekend that had appeared to put the week-old accord in jeopardy, including threats from US President Donald Trump to restart the war if Iran disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz after Tehran declared the strategic waterway closed.

AI can outpace cybersecurity norms

NEWS DESK

LONDON: The most advanced artificial intelligence models (AI) are improving quickly enough to outsmart prevailing cybersecurity know-how within months, the Five Eyes spy agency alliance has warned. The risk posed by AI-enhanced hacking is in the spotlight, after US startup Anthropic said in April that its cutting-edge Mythos models had unprecedented abilities to find software vulnerabilities. The security agencies of Britain, the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand urged governments and businesses to act swiftly to prepare themselves as AI evolves. "The rapid pace of frontier AI development means cyber risk assumptions can become outdated in months, not years," said a joint statement dated Monday. AI "lowers barriers for malicious actors and increases the speed and complexity of attacks", the Five Eyes advisory said. "Breaches will occur. Preparedness helps you contain them quickly and prevent escalation into major operational and financial crises."

Turkiye arrests over 200 before NATO summit

ISTANBUL: Turkish police on Tuesday arrested more than 200 people suspected of links to the Islamic State and outlawed far-left groups, officials said, before an upcoming NATO summit. The Ankara prosecutor's office said 209 people had been detained in the capital, while 32 others remained at large. Of those held, 185 are suspected of membership in several far-left organizations designated as terrorist groups by Ankara. They include the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C), which has claimed responsibility for attacks in Turkiye in the past. Authorities said the operations targeted multiple groups as part of broader security measures. - APP

Global CEO Serena Hotels bids farewell to Italian, Bulgarian envoys

The ambassadors expressed their appreciation for the hospitality and friendship they had experienced during their tenure in Pakistan, noting that they would carry fond memories of the country and its people



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Global CEO of Serena Hotels, Aziz Boolani, hosted a distinguished farewell dinner in Islamabad to honor the outgoing ambassadors of Italy and Bulgaria. The event brought together senior government officials, diplomats, and members of the business community in a warm gesture of appreciation for the ambassadors' contributions to strengthening bilateral ties. In his address, Boolani lauded the services of both diplomats, recalling the memorable moments shared during their tenure in Pakistan.

He emphasized that the ambassadors had played a vital role in promoting bilateral relations, fostering cultural exchange, and enhancing cooperation between their respective countries and Pakistan. "It is always tough to say goodbye, but that is the nature of diplomacy. One day, one has to leave, but they are remembered with cherished memories," he remarked. The farewell was attended by prominent figures including Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Natalie A. Baker, ambassadors, high commissioners, and senior government officials. Their presence underscored the importance of the occasion and the respect accorded to the departing envoys.

Aziz Boolani, accompanied by Mrs. Boolani, presented souvenirs to the outgoing ambassadors as a token of appreciation and friendship. Guests were treated to a rich culinary experience featuring traditional Pakistani and continental cuisines, prepared with the signature excellence of Serena Hotels. The menu highlighted the hotel's reputation for blending local flavors with international standards, leaving a lasting impression on attendees. The evening was marked by heartfelt speeches, warm camaraderie, and a spirit of gratitude. The ambassadors expressed their appreciation for the hospitality and friendship they had experienced during their tenure in Pakistan, noting that they would carry fond memories of the country and its people. This farewell dinner not only celebrated the achievements of the outgoing ambassadors but also reaffirmed Serena Hotels' role as a hub for cultural diplomacy and international engagement. Boolani's gesture reflected the hotel's commitment to fostering goodwill and strengthening Pakistan's ties with the global community.

At least 40 dead in France as Europe bakes

Three elderly people, aged between 80 and 95, died over the weekend in the Bordeaux region

DNA

PARIS: At least 40 people died in France, including two children left in a hot car, as a heatwave hung over Europe, smashing temperature records in several cities on Monday. As schools in France closed or modified timetables, forecasters in Britain predicted temperatures could break records for June this week. The temperature in Bordeaux in France's western wine country rose to 41.9 degrees Celsius (107.4 degrees Fahrenheit), breaking a record set last August. In Poitiers in central France it reached 41.2°C, beating a previous high set in 1947. In San Sebastian, in Spain's traditionally cooler north, the temperature was set to reach 40°C, more than double the city's historic average for June 22 according to the Reuters Climate Monitor, which showed Europe as the continent furthest from its historic norm on Monday. An April report by the World Meteorological Organisation found Europe is warming at more than double the global rate. First responders were unable to resuscitate two children, aged 2 and 4, who were found unconscious by their mother in the family car outside their home, said a prosecutor in Carpentras, southeast France. Three elderly people, aged between 80 and 95, died over the weekend in the Bordeaux region from health issues caused by the heatwave, local government official Sophie Brocas told France TV late on Sunday. "Swim only in places that are supervised," French Civil Safety service spokesperson Jerome Boulanger said after 13 people were reported drowned from Sunday into Monday.

day. Drowning deaths spiked by 172% in France last year during heatwaves as swimmers tried to cool off. The heatwave affecting large parts of Europe is known as an Omega block because it takes the shape of the Greek letter, with a bulge of hot air in the middle and cooler air either side, said Clair Barnes, a research associate in extreme weather and climate at Imperial College in London. "It's drawing warm air up from North Africa, from the Sahara, and that's why we have this really intense heat. It's very slow moving and it means there's kind of no wind, no breeze for respite," she said. Heatwaves and storms are being intensified by climate change, pushing temperatures higher and causing more rainfall, she said. The Met Office, Britain's national weather forecaster, said on Monday that a four-day heatwave there could push temperatures above 39°C in some places, easily breaking the June record of 35.6°C set in 1957 and 1976. Just a few weeks ago, Britain had shattered its record high temperature for May. Women walk with a parasol across Westminster bridge during the hot summer weather in London, Britain, June 21, 2026. "Thirty-six degrees is going to be disgusting," said data scientist Lewis Jennings, out walking in central London. Paris was due to register its highest temperature for June, with the mercury reaching 38.4°C, according to preliminary numbers from Météo-France. "We are seeing temperatures between 5 and 10 degrees above normal for this time of year, and in some northern areas even more than 10 degrees above average," said Rubén del Campo, spokesperson for Spain's AEMET weather agency.

Burnham prepares for a UK Labour leadership contest

Burnham's chances got a big boost on Monday when former Health Secretary Wes Streeting, who was considered his main rival, announced his support



DNA

LONDON: Andy Burnham, Britain's newest lawmaker and likely its next prime minister, was meeting Labour colleagues on Tuesday in preparation for a leadership contest in which he may be the only contender. Burnham is the strong front-runner to replace Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who announced Monday that he will step down within weeks after two years in office marred by missteps and judgment errors that eroded his standing with party and public. Burnham, a former Cabinet minister who served since 2017 as mayor of Greater Manchester, won a special election last week for a seat in Parliament with the express aim of challenging Starmer for the leadership. Burnham's chances got a big boost on Monday when former Health Secretary Wes Streeting, who was considered his main rival, announced his support. Britain's parliamentary system allows governing parties to change leaders — and thus prime ministers — without the need for a national election. The next general election does not have to be held until 2029. Nominations for the Labour leadership will open July 9 and close a week later. If Burnham is the only contender, he could be prime minister by July 17. If there is a contest, the winner should be in place by the time Parliament returns from its summer break on Sept. 1.

Burnham was a popular mayor of Manchester, overseeing a period of rapid regeneration for the city where the Industrial Revolution was forged, and has pledged to repeat his signature brand of "Manchesterism" on a national scale. Many Labour members hope Burnham's people skills and charisma can connect with the public more than the stolid, managerial Starmer could ever do. But his policies in many areas are unknown and untested. Some Labour lawmakers want to see a party election contest where he would face public debate and scrutiny. Burnham is expected to make a speech next week outlining some of his economic plans. Former Armed Forces Minister Al Carns, who quit this month to protest what he saw as inadequate defense spending, said "we need to have a clear and concise discussion about what this country wants to be." He has suggested he might run for the leadership but told broadcaster ITV that "I'm not ready to make a decision on this in any way, shape or form." Others have suggested Darren Jones, a senior Cabinet minister and Starmer ally, should run, though he has yet to comment. Potential candidates need the support of at least 81 Labour lawmakers, a fifth of the parliamentary party, to run. Many argue that a leadership contest will only focus attention on the party's internal divisions and extend a period of political uncertainty. "I think the transition should be swift and orderly," Cabinet Office Minister Nick Thomas-Symonds told the BBC. Starmer resigned on Monday after a weekend considering his future, acknowledging that the Labour Party no longer thinks "I am best placed to lead us into the next general election." He was the sixth prime minister in a decade to stand outside No. 10 Downing St. and announce a departure. It comes as Britain marks the 10th anniversary of its vote to leave the European Union, a decision that still roils the country's economy and politics. After weeks of insisting he would fight to keep his job, Starmer conceded to growing pressure to hand over to a new leader who can try and revive the government's flagging fortunes. He led Labour to a landslide election victory in July 2024, but since then his popularity and that of the party have plummeted. Starmer has struggled to deliver promised economic growth, repair tattered public services and ease the cost of living.

Pak praises Syria's post-Assad progress

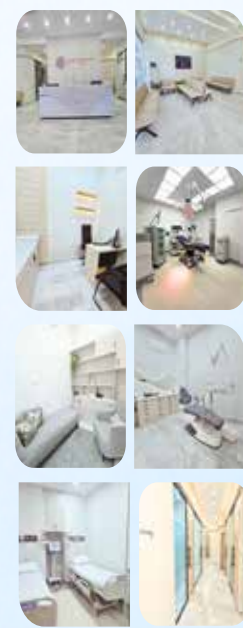
The country's new leader, Ahmed al-Sharaa, has engaged more closely with the international community and promised accountability for past atrocity crimes, while undertaking significant gov't reforms

UNITED NATIONS: Eighteen months after the fall of the long-standing Bashar Al-Assad regime, Pakistan has told the UN Security Council that Syria was making progress and transforming itself towards a better future. "The wisdom demonstrated by the Syrian leadership in navigating a highly volatile regional environment, while remaining focused on national priorities and recovery, deserve recognition and admiration," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said during a debate in the 15-member Council on the situation in Syria. In broader context, he said, the signing of the Islamabad 'Memorandum of Un-

derstanding' and constructive follow-up engagements in Lucerne, Switzerland, over the weekend, have the potential of advancing lasting peace, prosperity and cooperation in the wider region. According to UN reports, Syria has undergone major political and social shifts since a popular uprising ousted President Al-Assad in late 2024. The country's new leader, Ahmed al-Sharaa, has engaged more closely with the international community and promised accountability for past atrocity crimes, while undertaking significant government reforms. In his remarks, the Pakistani envoy called Israel's violations of Syrian sovereignty — namely, its recent military incursions, arbitrary arrests and the destruction of property and livelihoods — as "condemnable and destabilizing" and must be brought to an end. "The new five-year settlement expansion plan in the occupied Syrian Golan is illegal under international law and must be stopped immediately". - DNA



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