



Islamabad POST

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Ronaldo first player to score goals in six World Cups

Detailed News On Page-06

Defence minister urges Opposition to mend ways

Detailed News On Page-08

Islamabad to be made a modern city

Detailed News On Page-02



Trump becomes furious

US Senate votes to halt Iran war

Resolution directs Trump to remove US armed forces from hostilities with or against Iran

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The Republican-majority US Senate backed legislation on Tuesday to halt US military action against Iran, but it was not immediately clear how it would affect the war as President Donald Trump's administration negotiates a peace agreement with the Islamic republic. The Senate voted 50-48 in favour of the concurrent resolution, which passed the House of Representatives early this month, reflecting growing concern even among some of Trump's Republicans about the unpopular conflict that began on February 28. The vote was nearly along party lines, with four Republicans joining all but one Democrat in favour. Two Republicans did not vote. The resolution directs Trump to remove US armed forces from hostilities with or against Iran, but is likely to remain merely a symbolic vote. Under the 1973 War Powers Act, the measure does not get sent to the White House for Trump's signature. However, the White House has insisted the legislation is not constitutional and thus not binding. Legal experts say it remains a contested legal question likely to be settled in the courts. "The executive branch will likely ignore it on constitutional grounds, and it's not clear who might have standing to sue to enforce it," said Scott Anderson, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and senior editor of the online legal publication Lawfare.

Iran says deal to end Middle East war

"We consider the withdrawal of foreign military forces from the region a strategic goal" because, "not only do they not create sustainable security but they are also a source of instability," said Ghalibaf, who also serves as his country's parliament speaker

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: The deal between Iran and the United States to end the Middle East war is "America's declaration of defeat," Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the head of the Iranian negotiating team, said on Wednesday. "The Islamabad understanding was not the result of pressure and coercion, but rather the result of the resistance and authority of the brave Iranian nation," Ghalibaf said, referring to the text finalized through Pakistani mediation. "That is why, the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding became a declaration of America's defeat," he said, adding that security in the Middle East must be ensured by the countries of the region. "We consider the withdrawal of foreign military forces from the region a strategic goal" because, "not only do they not create sustainable security but they are also a source of instability," said Ghalibaf, who also serves as his country's parliament speaker. He was addressing a conference in Azerbaijan's capital Baku on Wednesday, which was broadcast on Iranian television. The United States maintains military bases in the Middle East and the host countries were targeted by Iranian attacks during the war in retaliation for the bombing of Iran by US and Israeli forces. "We see the future of the region not in confrontation but in interaction, and not in elimination but in coexistence," Ghalibaf said, in what appeared to be an overture to Gulf states targeted by Iranian strikes. Iran's chief negotiator also reiterated that peace in Lebanon was a fundamental pillar of reaching a definitive agreement with Washington. "For us, the ceasefire in Lebanon has been and is as important as the ceasefire in Iran, and the end of the war in Lebanon has been as important as the end of the war in Iran."



RAWALPINDI: Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Haftar, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir. - DNA

Six most wanted terrorists eliminated

NEWS DESK

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) and Lower Dir police killed six suspected terrorists during an operation in the district's hilly areas on Wednesday, according to an official statement. The statement, issued by the CTD, said the slain individuals were "most-wanted terrorists" who had been involved in a recent attack on the Badwan Bridge checkpoint in Lower Dir, in which Constable Mohammad Ismail was martyred. According to the statement, the CTD and district police had cordoned off the area after the attack on the Badwan Bridge checkpoint. It said that the CTD and district police received information about the presence of "a group of Fitna-al-Khawarij terrorists in the hilly areas of

Continued on Page 06

North Korea boosts Navy nuclear capability

APP

SEOUL: North Korea has commissioned a 5,000-ton destroyer that leader Kim Jong Un touts as a symbol of the country's growing naval and nuclear capabilities, state media reported Wednesday, as Pyongyang seeks to expand its ability to project military power at sea. North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said Kim told a commissioning ceremony Tuesday at the western port of Nampo that warships such as the Choe Hyon show that the nuclear armament of his navy is progressing as planned. KCNA said the Choe Hyon was formally placed into service with North Korea's navy after the ceremony and will be tasked with defending the country's western coast.

Continued on Page 06

General Haftar visits GHQ

Pakistan, Libya vow to strengthen defence relations

The Field Marshal highlighted Pakistan Army's commitment to promoting peace, stability and constructive engagement with friendly countries

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Haftar, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), HJ, COAS & CDF, at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi. Upon arrival at GHQ, the visiting dignitary was presented a Guard of Honour by a smartly turned-out tri-services contingent. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security dynamics, defence cooperation and avenues for enhanced military-to-military collaboration were discussed. Both sides underscored the importance of strengthening bilateral defence ties and expanding cooperation in areas of professional military training and security. The Field Marshal highlighted Pakistan Army's commitment to promoting peace, stability and constructive engagement with friendly countries. The visiting dignitary appreciated the professionalism of the Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged their contributions towards regional peace and security.

Rubio commits to UAE Security

DNA

ABU DHABI: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio discussed the US-Iran deal with UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed on Wednesday, renewing Washington's commitment to the country's security as he embarks on a tour of the Gulf. Rubio is seeking to reassure close US allies - who were hit hard by Iran during the Middle East war - about the memorandum of understanding with Tehran, which fails to address some of the Gulf's long-standing concerns about its missile program and proxies. "They discussed President Trump's memorandum of understanding with Iran, efforts to secure full and safe transit through the Strait of Hormuz, and the importance of peace and stability in the region," his spokesperson Tommy Pigott said.

Continued on Page 06

US-Iran MoU reinforces faith in dialogue: FO

The FO spokesperson said Pakistan extended its "sincere appreciation" to all countries and partners who expressed support for its peace efforts

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said on Wednesday that the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Lucerne Summit reinforced "our faith in dialogue and diplomacy as the most effective means for peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts". He made these remarks during a weekly media briefing in Islamabad, where he recalled Pakistan's efforts for peace between the US and Iran in recent days. Pakistan has been leading the peace efforts since the US and Israel launched attacks on Iran in late February, setting off a war and global fuel crisis as Tehran

took measures to disrupt traffic in the Strait of Hormuz - a vital maritime corridor for the supply of oil and gas. The latest major developments pertaining to Pakistan's efforts for de-escalation are the signing of the Islamabad MoU on June 18 - a 14-point accord aimed at ending the war - and key direct talks between the US and Iran, dubbed the Lake Lucerne Summit, held in Switzerland over the weekend. Pakistan's efforts have been acknowledged world over, which Andrabi also noted during his briefing. Pakistan welcomed the "positive recognition and encouraging remarks from various countries, partners and members of the international community

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

'Nuclear weapons only guarantee in war'

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Nuclear weapons are the "only" bulwark preventing the world from slipping into a global war, the Kremlin said Wednesday amid fears of a fresh multi-country arms race. The last nuclear arms control treaty between Russia and the United States, New START, expired in February, releasing restrictions on the world's two largest nuclear powers. There have been no signs so far of either side moving to renew or replace the accord, even though both parties agreed to reestablish high-level military talks. Speaking at a foreign policy forum in Moscow, the Kremlin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that the global security system was "eroding." "In fact, we have nothing left in this world apart from nuclear deterrence. It's the only thing that protects the world from a global war," he said. "As technology is developing, it is already clear that new types of non-nuclear weapons will emerge, but they may eventually match nuclear weapons in destructive power," he added.

France announces first Ebola case

PARIS: France on Wednesday announced its first confirmed case of Ebola identified on its territory, a doctor who had returned from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The health ministry "confirms today the identification of a first positive case of Ebola virus disease on national territory," it said. Contacted by AFP, the ministry specified that the case was identified in mainland France. - APP

Petroleum prices cut likely

Oil falls further on hopes of smoother flows via Hormuz

Brent crude drops to \$76.30, WTI slips to \$72.43 a barrel

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Oil prices fell more than 1% on Wednesday, extending this week's losses and trading near four-month lows, on signs that more oil tankers stranded in the Gulf are set to move out of the Strait of Hormuz. Brent crude futures fell 78 cents, or 1.0%, at \$76.30 a barrel as of 0350 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate slipped 78 cents, or 1.1%, to \$72.43 a barrel. Both benchmarks settled down around 1% on Tuesday, touching their lowest levels since early March. "Positive signals from the Persian Gulf are fuelling optimism about oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz. Vessel crossings increased in recent days, although they remain well below pre-war levels," ING commodity strategists said in a note on Wednesday. Prices have also come under pressure this week after Washington granted Tehran a 60-day sanctions waiver following initial peace talks, allowing it to sell oil, and as hostilities in Lebanon eased. "Crude oil prices were weighed down by hopes of easing US-Iran tensions and a recovery in oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz," said Tomomichi Akuta, senior economist at

Continued on Page 06

Qatar says US-Iran hotline crucial

DNA

DUBAI: Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said his country would resume normal liquefied natural gas production "within a few weeks", the Financial Times reported on Wednesday. But establishing a hotline between the US and Iran is essential to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, he told the FT in an interview. Al-Thani noted that the so-called "hotline" agreed by the warring parties at their talks in Switzerland was needed "to counter 'disinformation' and ensure co-ordination while mines were cleared from the crucial waterway." He noted that the communication was essential to get information needed to guarantee the safety of vessels. "So the hotline's purpose is to make sure that any ship that gets any type of threat is to be verified by Iran... and to let

Continued on Page 06

AJK: Bilawal, Fazl come down hard on Asif

PPP chief slams defence minister for further "inflaming" AJK situation; JUI-F emir urges dialogue

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Thursday castigated Defence Minister Khawaja Asif over his remarks questioning the identity of people in Rawalakot, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the epicentre of protests led by the proscribed Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) against the reservation of 12 seats in the AJK's Legislative Assembly for refugees. Speaking on the NA floor, JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman urged patience and tolerance, saying that many emotional statements had been made in the House, including by Speaker Ayaz Sadiq himself. "When the government's reaction becomes emotional, that is not befitting of the government's stature," he said.

The National Assembly took up the matter as Defence Minister Khawaja Asif came under criticism for remarks he reportedly made about residents of AJK, prompting objections from both the PPP and JUI-F. The unrest in the AJK began ahead of a June 9 strike called by the JAAC in protest against the reservation of 12 seats for refugees in the July 27 elections to the region's 45-seat legislative assembly. The refugees live in Pakistan after being displaced from Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Fazlur Rehman criticised Asif and said that his statements were not befitting of a defence minister and would only further inflame tensions. "You have handed fighting to Khawaja Asif and reconciliation to Ishaq Dar," he told the government. He said he had received a formal letter from the Awami Action Committee and had forwarded it to the government, but had yet to receive a response.

He said the committee had shared its charter of demands and that protests should not be met with state action based on speeches alone. "Violence should not be used on the basis of speeches by protesters," he said. Fazlur Rehman welcomed the committee's decision to postpone its planned march toward Muzaffarabad, saying he had responded to the committee's letter via video message. PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, whose party is a coalition partner at the Centre, directed sharp criticism at certain federal ministers, saying some were creating difficulties for the prime minister rather than helping resolve issues. "Why do we have ministers who say that residents of Rawalakot are not Kashmiris?" he demanded, adding that the minister responsible had still not apologised. "One federal minister, instead of extinguishing the fire, poured more fuel on it," Bilawal said, urging

the prime minister to control his team. He said space should be given to Maulana Fazl to play a mediating role in resolving the matter. Bilawal also raised the issue of Karachi's local government system, questioning whether the MQM-P considered Karachi more important than its political seats, and challenged coalition partners to bring Lahore's municipal system to Karachi as well. In a sharp warning directed at MQM-P, Bilawal said that if the prime minister and the government were not accepting their demands and were only offering lollipops, they should leave the federal government. "How long will you continue on this lollipop? Get out of the federal government," he said. On Gilgit-Baltistan, Bilawal said PPP was forming a government there with the support of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party and PML-N, and announced that local government elections in GB would be held within 90 days.

Islamabad to be transformed into modern capital: Talal

The minister highlighted that billions of rupees are being invested in the Safe City project, which will evolve into one of the country's first smart city systems, integrating security, public services, and urban management

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry has said that the government is undertaking unprecedented measures to transform Islamabad into a modern, sustainable, and globally competitive capital city. He stated that major infrastructure interventions are being implemented to address longstanding challenges in water supply, waste management, traffic flow, security, hospitality, and urban services, laying the foundation for the city's needs over the next 40 to 50 years, said a release issued here on Wednesday.

Addressing a well-attended session at ICCI, Talal Chaudhry observed that despite being the federal capital, Islamabad lacks several essential municipal institutions and services found in modern cities. He noted that rapid population growth has put immense pressure on existing infrastructure, creating significant challenges in water management, solid waste disposal, traffic regulation, and urban planning. He said the government has already initiated around

fifteen major infrastructure interventions and is working to remove more than twenty-five key bottlenecks affecting the city's development. The minister highlighted that billions of rupees are being invested in the Safe City project, which will evolve into one of the country's first smart city systems, integrating security, public services, and urban management. He further revealed that new dams are being planned to address future water requirements, while efforts are underway to establish modern waste management systems, improve municipal services, and strengthen Islamabad's capacity to accommodate growing business and diplomatic activities.

He also announced plans for a state-of-the-art Convention Centre and Expo Centre, which will provide the business community with world-class facilities and reduce dependence on other cities for international exhibitions and conferences. Earlier welcoming the Minister, ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that the Islamabad Chamber, as the representative institution of the federal capital's business communi-

ty, fully supports initiatives aimed at improving Islamabad's infrastructure and investment climate.

He appreciated the government's focus on long-term urban development and stressed that sustainable economic growth requires modern civic facilities, efficient municipal services, and a business-friendly environment.

The ICCI President also raised concerns regarding rising FAR charges for multistorey buildings and regulatory issues affecting the real estate and construction sectors by emphasizing that the sector be facilitated as per the vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

He stressed that while the federal budget had introduced several positive measures for the sector, these benefits could only be fully realized if relevant authorities reviewed valuation mechanisms and adopted policies that encourage investment, construction activity, and job creation. He reaffirmed ICCI's commitment to working closely with the government to address business community concerns and accelerate economic growth in the federal capital.



ISLAMABAD: Shiite Muslims touch Alam during 8th Muharram ul Haram procession taken out Jamia Al-Murtaza (G-9/4) which concludes at Imambargah Imam Sadiq (G-9/2) in the Federal Capital.

Cotton commissioner inspects research trials

MULTAN: Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (PCCC) Chief Executive Officer and Cotton Commissioner Dr Khadim Hussain on Wednesday visited the Cotton Research Institute (CRI) Multan, where he conducted a detailed inspection of National Coordinated Varietal Trials (NCVT) and ongoing research experiments. Dr Khadim reviewed trial planning, experimental plots and current crop performance, describing preliminary data generated through the trials as highly valuable for future varietal selection and cultivation strategies. Chief Scientist CRI Muhammad Jameel briefed participants on field experiment methodology and data collection procedures. The NCVT Committee, comprising Dr. Nazar Iqbal, Director General Federal Seed Certification and Registration Department (FSC&RD), Dr. Muhammad Idrees Khan, Secretary PCCC, Ms. Sabahat Hussain, Director CCRI, and other agricultural scientists, inspected advanced cotton lines and appreciated progress achieved on scientific grounds. Deliberations focused on yield potential of new lines, disease and pest resistance, and performance under climatic stress. The committee unanimously resolved that NCVT results would be utilised to formulate an integrated strategy aimed at improving availability of superior seed, strengthening seed registration and facilitating transfer of modern agricultural technologies to farmers.—APP

Kundi promises action on Mohmand issues

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday assured representatives of the gems and jewellery sector and a delegation from Mohmand district that their concerns would be taken up with relevant authorities for timely resolution. A delegation of the Sarafa, Goldsmiths, Gems and Jewellery Traders and Exporters Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, led by its president Amin Hussain Babar, called on the Governor and highlighted issues facing the gems and jewellery sector. The delegation said that despite its vast potential, the sector had not received the atten-

tion it deserved and could significantly contribute to exports, revenue generation and employment opportunities. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Kundi said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa possessed immense reserves of precious stones and mineral resources and that development of the gems and jewellery industry could help boost exports and create jobs. He assured the delegation that their proposals and concerns would be taken up with relevant federal institutions and departments. In a separate meeting, a representative delegation from Mohmand district led by Dr Alam Zeb Mohmand

met the Governor. Pakistan Peoples Party Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President, Syed Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha was also present. The delegation apprised the Governor of various public issues, including prolonged and unscheduled power outages, reconstruction of Machni Bridge, lack of basic facilities in 25 villages, road infrastructure and other development-related matters. Governor Kundi assured the delegation that their issues would be raised with the concerned departments. He said a high-level meeting involving the TESCO chief executive officer, commissioner Peshawar, secretary PKHA.—DNA

Kohatians association holds first digital election

PESHAWAR: The Kohatians Association has successfully completed its first democratic election through an electronic voting system, marking a significant milestone in the organization's history and expanding participation among members in Pakistan and abroad. The Kohatians Association was established to connect graduates of Cadet College Kohat, strengthen alumni engagement and promote professional, social and community networks among former cadets, said a press release.—APP

Change of Name



I Syeda Eesha Batool Son/Daughter of _Syed Maqsood Shah_ Resident of __house no 126 street 26 chaklala scheme 3 Rawalpindi__, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under: That I was registered with FBISE at SSC level under Registration No. __1222182101__ and passed the SSC Annual/Supplementary Examination 2012 under Roll No. __146628__ where my name is __Syeda Ayesha batool___. That I have decided to change my name from __Syeda Ayesha batool__ to __Syeda Eesha Batool__ which is written as __Syeda Ayesha Batool__ in Board's documents/record. Hence the same may be changed/corrected. That the statement given above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, belief and nothing has been concealed or withheld.

From ruin to recovery Swat's Trout fish farmers struggling to revive business

PESHAWAR: Nearly four years after the devastating floods of 2022 ravaged Swat Valley, trout fish farmers are still struggling to rebuild an industry that once provided livelihoods to thousands of families and served as a major attraction for tourists visiting the scenic region. The climate-induced floods destroyed around 300 trout farms across Swat, washing away fish stocks and damaging critical infrastructure. The disaster forced many farm owners and workers to abandon their businesses and seek alternative sources of income elsewhere. What was once a thriving aquaculture industry now faces an uncertain future, with only a handful of farms resuming operations despite persistent efforts by owners to revive their businesses. "Out of around 300 trout farms destroyed in the 2022 floods, only about 15 have become operational

again, and that too on a limited scale," said Naeqebullah, whose farm on Cheel Road in Madyan suffered extensive damage during the calamity. To restart his business, Naeqebullah sold a piece of family land and invested the proceeds in rebuilding the farm. However, his current production remains far below pre-flood levels. "Before the floods, I used to rear around 20,000 kilograms of trout and operated nine large and six small ponds. Now I have only four ponds and a stock of about 8,000 kilograms," he said. According to Naeqebullah, the fish currently being reared at his farm are still in the growth stage and are expected to be ready for sale by December 2026. Another farmer, Usman, lost six trout farms and all of his fish stock in the floods. To restart operations, he sold a family-owned shop in a commercial area of Swat and managed to reopen

only one farm in Madyan on a small scale. Farmers say financial constraints remain the biggest obstacle to recovery. Most are unable to construct flood-protection walls or invest in modern infrastructure, leaving them vulnerable to future disasters. "The fear of another flood is always there," Naeqebullah said. "Without protective infrastructure, our farms remain exposed to the same risks that devastated us in 2022." The challenges have been compounded by a sharp rise in fish feed prices. Many local feed producers have either reduced or ceased production due to declining demand following the destruction of farms. As a result, the price of a 25-kilogram bag of trout feed has increased from around Rs2,500 before the floods to nearly Rs7,000, forcing farmers to purchase feed from markets in Punjab.—DNA

CUI, PPRA sign MoU to launch professional trainings

ISLAMABAD: COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) and the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) have formalized a strategic partnership to strengthen professional capacity in Pakistan's public procurement sector through the development of specialized certificate and diploma programmes. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed at CUI's Islamabad Campus today, by Mr. Hasnat Ahmad Qureshi, Managing Director, PPRA, and Dr. Faheem A. Qureshi, Registrar, COMSATS University Islamabad. The ceremony was presided over by Prof. Dr. Raheel Qamar, Rector, CUI, and attended by senior officials from both institutions. Under the agreement, CUI and PPRA will jointly design and deliver professional training programmes, including short certificate courses and diploma qualifications, focusing on public procurement systems, contract management, regulatory compliance, transparency, accountability, and efficiency in government procurement. The initiative aims to address the growing need for formally trained procurement professionals in Pakistan. The programmes will be open to government officials, procurement practitioners, and university students, providing them with both academic knowledge and practical skills required for effective procurement management. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. Raheel Qamar, Rector, CUI, said that the partnership marks an important step toward institutionalizing professional excellence in public procurement. He emphasized that capacity building in procurement is essential for strengthening governance, improving service delivery, and promoting transparency in public institutions. He also said that a key feature of the collaboration will be the use of CUI's advanced digital learning infrastructure, including its AI-based Adaptive Learning Model, to ensure that training content remains personalized and responsive to the evolving needs of Pakistan's public sector. Mr. Hasnat Ahmad Qureshi, Managing Director, PPRA, highlighted the Authority's commitment to enhancing procurement practices through regulatory reform and investment in human capital. He said that the collaboration with CUI would help develop a skilled and ethically grounded procurement workforce capable of meeting modern public sector challenges. The MoU also provides for a structured review mechanism through which both institutions will regularly assess programme performance and update course content in line with changes in the public procurement regulatory framework.—DNA


Gwadar Port gateway to transform country into global economy

For which, Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhel thanked both the Chinese government and the Chinese people. The two leaders agreed to increase people-to-people contacts between Pakistan and China

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhel on Tuesday said that we are more optimistic about the bright future of Pakistan and Balochistan, the real development and functionality of Gwadar Port would emerge as a silent economic revolution. He said that Gwadar Port is a gateway that would transform Pakistan into a global center of worldwide economic and trade activities, from Central Asia to South Asia and throughout the Middle East, Pakistan has the potential to play the role of a bridge that would connect the economic markets, cultures and industries of the entire region adding that this political and economic vision of ours is not just infrastructure, but it is a wise move for economic integration and sustainable development. He expressed these views while talking to the Acting Consul General of China (Mr. Feng Deheng) in Karachi, the capital of Sindh province. Political Director (Mr. Zhang Song) and (Mr. Wang Zhaoxiang) were also present on the occasion. Gov-

ernor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhel said that Pakistan and China have celebrated the 75th anniversary of political and diplomatic relations, this long history of partnership is a testament to the enduring friendship and strength of both Pakistan and China, which have stood shoulder to shoulder in decades of development, challenges and mutual trust. He said that now our full attention is also focused on the bright future of the province, adding that China has vast knowledge and experience in artificial intelligence and modern technology, this excellence and expertise of China could help and provide intellectual guidance in the formation of a generation in Balochistan. The Governor said that through our public sector universities, China could secure world-class education for our students and equip them with modern skills as per the requirements of the modern world saying that in this way, China would take our youth to new heights of success and achievement in terms of scholar-

ships and new educational opportunities. During the meeting, the Acting Consul General of China (Mr. Feng Deheng) said that Pakistan has demonstrated its diplomatic capacity on the global stage and succeeded in bringing both the United States and Iran to the negotiating table after almost half a century. He said that this diplomatic feat not only raised Pakistan's stature on the global stage but also created a new chapter in the history of diplomacy adding that Pakistan and Balochistan are keen to invest, China is interested in ensuring that the infrastructure of the entire Balochistan from Gwadar to Zohb is strong, capable of increasing economic activities and ensuring sustainable development in the living standards of the people of Balochistan. For which, Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhel thanked both the Chinese government and the Chinese people. The two leaders agreed to increase people-to-people contacts between Pakistan and China.—DNA



PAKISTAN NAVY

MILITARY ENGINEER SERVICES

NOTICE OF TENDER

- Applications alongwith all credentials are invited by the CMES (NAVY) ISLD/LHR for prequalification of firms/contractors for issue of tenders for following work under CMES (Navy) Isld/Lhr at Islamabad in the light of Clause-13, 15 and 16 of PPRA Rules-2004:-

a.	Provision of glass cabin in bathroom at E-8 Islamabad.
b.	Uplift of Retaining wall/ stone pitching along Nullah at E-8 Islamabad.
c.	Replacement of SMD Controller with electric & power cable at E-8 Islamabad.
d.	Abnormal Repair of works at E-8 Islamabad
e.	Repair/Replacement of works at E-8 Islamabad.
f.	Misc Works / Facilities at Islamabad.
g.	Misc Works/Facilities at Lahore
- Firms/contractors who are enlisted with MES in category 'D' or higher OR with other Govt Departments, having experience of this type of work; may only apply.
- Applicants not providing the following information / documents will not be considered for prequalification / issue of tenders:-

Sl No	Description of similar nature of works executed during last two year and in hand	Sponsoring agency/client	Amount of work (Rupees in Million)	Completion period (Months)	Date of Physical completion	Percentage progress of work in hand	Performance report on each work by the sponsoring agency / client
4.	The contractors will also furnish List of Moveable & Immoveable assets, Personnel (skilled/unskilled). Machinery/equipments, Bank Statement, General Sales Tax (GST) Registration, NTN Certificate etc.						
5.	Firms/contractors not registered with Pakistan Engineering Council (Renewal of Registration for the year 2026) will not be considered for issuance of tender documents.						
6.	Pre-qualification documents can be obtained from CMES (N) Isld/Lhr, Sector E-8 Islamabad.						
7.	The applications will be scrutinized and tenders will be issued to the pre-qualified firms / contractors. The tenders required to be received in CMES (N) Isld/Lhr Sector E-8 Islamabad by 1130 hours on 09 Jul 2026 and will be opened on the same date at 1200 hours.						
8.	Contractors who desire; may witness the opening of tenders.						
9.	The Accepting Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the applications in the light of para-33 of PPRA rules-2004. Incomplete application shall not be entertained.						

PID (I) 10384/25

National Days and Armed Forces Days

JUNE

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

- Rescue (Police).....15
- Bomb Disposal.....15
- Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
- Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
- Motorway Police...9266044
- Motorway Police.9270601-20
- Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
- Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

- ### Enquiry
- Edhi Ambulance.....115
- PIA Flight Info.....114
- PIA Cargo.....9280979
- Railway Inquiry.....117
- Railway Exchange 9270831-5
- WASA Rawalpindi...5555489
- CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

- CMH.....5611111
- MH.....5611116
- Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
- DHQ.....5556311-4
- RGH.....9290301-7
- Holy Family.....9290322-7
- PIMS.....9261170-79
- Polyclinic.....9218300-09
- Shifa International 4603666



Departments

- CDA.....9221334-43
- CDA.....9208301-04
- Met Office.....9250360-6
- RDA.....5555864
- TMA.....5770886
- Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Stall holder at their brunt stalls at Weekly Bazaar H-9 in the Federal Capital.

Asifa for stronger partnership with UN on climate priorities

The first lady underscored the importance of innovation in public health and said that emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, should be utilised to help ensure that polio vaccines reach every household. She also acknowledged the UN's continued assistance in strengthening maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition services across Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: First Lady Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari, MNA, Wednesday, said Pakistan highly values its close and multifaceted cooperation with the United Nations and attaches great importance to the work of the UN country team in Pakistan. The first lady met Mohamed Yahya, United Nations Resident Coordinator and the representatives of different UN agencies in Pakistan, who called on her at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release. The meeting focused on Pakistan's cooperation with the United Nations system, national development priorities, climate resilience, education, social protection, health, and sustainable development. The meeting was attended by Senator Saleem Mandviwala, MNA Shazia Marri, and representatives of WFP, UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, UNHCR, IOM, UNESCO and UN Women. The first lady appreciated the contributions of UN agencies, funds and programmes working across the country and expressed the desire to further strengthen cooperation, particularly in the areas of public health, children, sustainable development goals and climate change. She reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to working closely with the United Nations country

team in advancing national development priorities and plans. During the briefing, the first lady was informed that the UN has maintained a longstanding presence in Pakistan since 1947 and currently employs around 4,000 staff members across the country. She was also briefed on the work of various UN agencies in supporting Pakistan's development, humanitarian and social sector priorities. Discussing health-related initiatives, the first lady reiterated Pakistan's commitment to achieving a polio-free future and appreciated the UN sustained support for polio eradication efforts. Mohamed Yahya thanked the first lady for championing the cause of polio eradication and noted that the next twelve months would be crucial for achieving this objective. The first lady underscored the importance of innovation in public health and said that emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, should be utilised to help ensure that polio vaccines reach every household. She also acknowledged the UN's continued assistance in strengthening maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition services across Pakistan. In this regard, she noted the importance of the Benazir Nashonuma Programme in improving outcomes for women and children nationwide. The first lady was informed that approximately 41 per cent of

children in Pakistan suffered from stunting, one of the highest rates globally, and that malnutrition adversely affected children's health, learning outcomes and future opportunities. The briefing also highlighted challenges related to maternal health, anaemia, adolescent pregnancies and access to skilled healthcare services. Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari said that child health and maternal care form an important part of the Pakistan Peoples Party's manifesto and stressed the need for collective efforts to improve healthcare and nutrition outcomes for women and children. The meeting also discussed women's health, girls' education, economic participation and protection from gender-based violence. The first lady reaffirmed her support for initiatives aimed at improving opportunities for women and expanding access to education, healthcare and economic empowerment. Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari expressed hope that the United Nations system would continue supporting Pakistan's efforts to mobilise development and climate finance. She described climate change as one of the most consequential challenges of the time. Recalling the floods of 2022 and 2025, she appreciated the support provided by the UN system in disaster response and recovery efforts, including its role in co-hosting the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan in Janu-

ary 2023. She appreciated initiatives such as Living Indus and Recharge Pakistan, describing them as important contributions towards climate adaptation and long-term resilience. She expressed the hope that the UN would continue supporting Pakistan during the transition phase as its humanitarian coordination presence in the country scales down, particularly in strengthening the disaster response capacities of national institutions. The first lady noted that many communities in Pakistan continued to face significant socio-economic challenges, where access to quality education and adequate nutrition remains difficult. Referring to Sindh's post-flood rehabilitation efforts, she highlighted the provincial government's large-scale housing initiative for flood-affected families as an important step towards rebuilding resilient communities. Assuring the UN delegation of her support, the first lady said, "My voice is your voice in advancing the causes of child health, nutrition, education, polio eradication, women's empowerment and social development. We remain committed to working together to improve the lives of our people and ensure that no child or woman is left behind." Mohamed Yahya reaffirmed the UN commitment to supporting Pakistan's development priorities through continued cooperation with national institutions and stakeholders.

SSP leads field monitoring

ISLAMABAD: Senior Islamabad Police officers, led by SSP Operations Qazi Ali Raza, remained in the field to oversee security arrangements and operational preparedness for 8th Muharram processions across the federal capital. An official told APP on Wednesday that police officers were monitoring procession routes, security points and deployment of personnel to ensure a peaceful and secure environment for mourners. SSP Qazi and other senior officers reviewed security measures on the ground and inspected arrangements put in place for the smooth conduct of Muharram processions. According to the official, officers also checked the performance and alertness of personnel deployed at sensitive locations and along procession routes. Islamabad Police had adopted comprehensive security measures and were utilizing all available resources to ensure foolproof security, effective coordination and timely response during Muharram-ul-Haram. He said special emphasis was being placed on maintaining close coordination among operational units and ensuring uninterrupted monitoring of religious gatherings and processions. Citizens were urged to cooperate with law enforcement agencies and immediately report any suspicious activity through Pucar-15, the Info App or the Mohafiz Muharram App.—APP

Call for climate-resilient CPEC development

ISLAMABAD: Experts on Wednesday underscored the importance of integrating disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate resilience and science-based planning into infrastructure development under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) at the concluding of a five-day international training workshop on DRR and Green Development. The workshop, COMSATS University Islamabad, was jointly organized by the Alliance of National and International Science Organizations for the Belt and Road Regions (ANSO), the China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences (CJRC), and the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS), in collaboration with the UNESCO Chair for Mountain Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience and ANSO-DRR. Speaking as the chief guest at the closing ceremony.—APP

PILDAT lauds parliamentary scrutiny of budget

LAHORE: The Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) has welcomed and appreciated the robust parliamentary scrutiny of the Federal Budget 2026-27, carried out by the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue, terming it an important step towards strengthening Parliament's constitutional role in public financial over-

sight. The PILDAT noted on Wednesday with appreciation that the Standing Committee on Finance, under the chairmanship of Syed Naveed Qamar, MNA, devoted substantial time and effort to examining the budget. The committee held a series of detailed meetings to review budgetary proposals, hear views from government officials, stakeholders and experts, and scrutinize taxation and

expenditure measures before their consideration by the National Assembly. The PILDAT said this level of engagement reflects a growing recognition of the central role parliamentary committees must play in ensuring accountability, transparency and informed fiscal decision-making. The institute observed that the committee's work demonstrated the importance of moving beyond a purely plenary debate on the budget towards a more systematic, evidence-based and committee-led review process. It emphasized that parliamentary committees are uniquely positioned to undertake detailed examination of budget proposals, assess their implications and make recommendations that can improve both the quality of legislation and the management of public finances.—APP

Major water projects to secure long-term supply for twin cities

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry on Wednesday said the government was taking serious measures to permanently address water shortages in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, with significant progress being made on key water infrastructure projects, including the Ghazi Barotha initiative. Speaking to the media outside Parliament House, he described water scarcity as one of the country's most pressing challenges and said the government was pursuing a comprehensive policy to ensure sustainable solutions. He said multiple projects were being implemented to guarantee a reliable water supply for residents of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, adding that the government was committed to strengthening water infrastructure to meet growing urban needs. Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry termed the Ghazi Barotha project a vital undertaking and reaffirmed the government's determination to complete it. He noted that successive efforts had been made in the past to improve water supply to Rawalpindi through various approved projects, while the present government was continuing and accelerating those initiatives. "Our objective is to resolve Rawalpindi's water issues in a manner that citizens do not face major shortages for coming several years," he said, emphasizing the government's long-term vision for water security. Responding to a question regarding the local government system, the parliamentary secretary said special attention was being given to addressing urban infrastructure and civic service challenges in major cities, particularly Karachi. He said the federal government would continue to play its role in resolving public issues and welcomed constructive proposals aimed at highlighting and addressing citizens' concerns. Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry also noted that the government had successfully secured the passage of the federal budget with the support of its coalition partners and would now focus more intensively on resolving both major and minor public issues. Answering another question, he said Karachi and Lahore were both important metropolitan centers with distinct challenges and development requirements. However, he added, the government was actively pursuing development projects and infrastructure improvements in both cities to enhance public services and quality of life.—DNA

SC restores trial court verdict, dismisses pre-emption claim

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has ruled that in a suit for the right of pre-emption, the date, time and place of Talb-e-Muwathibat (immediate demand) must be specifically pleaded and proved, holding that failure to fulfill this mandatory legal requirement is fatal to the claim. The Court set aside the judgments of the appellate court and the Peshawar High Court and restored the trial court's decision dismissing the suit. According to a detailed judgment, a three-member bench comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan heard the case titled Sherzai and Others v. Saadullah Khan. The judgment was authored by Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan. The dispute arose from the transfer of 6 kanals and 8 marlas of land in Kohat. Saadullah Khan had filed a pre-emption suit, claiming that upon learning about the sale of the property, he immediately

exercised Talb-e-Muwathibat and subsequently completed the formalities of Talb-e-Ishhad (demand with witnesses). However, the trial court dismissed the suit on the ground that the plaintiff did not specify the date and place where Talb-e-Muwathibat had allegedly been made. The appellate court and later the Peshawar High Court overturned the trial court's ruling and decreed the suit in favour of the plaintiff, prompting the appellants to approach the Supreme Court. In its judgment, the Supreme Court observed that the right of pre-emption is a weak and delicate right that can only be enforced through strict compliance with all statutory requirements. The Court emphasized that Talb-e-Muwathibat constitutes the very foundation of a pre-emption claim, making it essential for a claimant to clearly plead and prove the time, date and place at which the demand was made. The bench held that

where this fundamental requirement is absent, all subsequent proceedings lose their legal efficacy. Referring to a number of judicial precedents, the Court ruled that omission of the mandatory particulars of Talb-e-Muwathibat in the plaint amounts to a fatal defect, which cannot be cured by evidence produced at a later stage. The Court further noted that the plaintiff had also failed to establish the complete chain of information regarding how he came to know about the sale transaction, thereby casting further doubt on the legal validity of the alleged demand. Allowing the appeal, the Supreme Court set aside the judgments of the Peshawar High Court and the appellate court and restored the trial court's decree dismissing the suit. The judgment underscores that even minor non-compliance with the mandatory legal requirements governing pre-emption claims can result in the failure of such claims.—APP

Groundwater recharge, rain water harvesting at Kachnar Park

ISLAMABAD: International Water Management Institute (IWMI) on Wednesday hosted a media exposure visit to its groundwater recharge and rain water harvesting initiative at Kachnar Park in Islamabad's I-8 sector, a pioneering nature-based solution aimed at mitigating urban flooding and replenishing groundwater resources. Representatives from print, electronic, and digital media visited the project site to observe innovative interventions being implemented to improve urban water management and strengthen climate resilience. During the visit, Dr. Mohsin Hafeez, Strategic Program Director - Water, Food & Ecosystems at IWMI, briefed journalists on the initiative's objectives, operational framework, and its contribution to sustainable urban water security. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Hafeez said the project is designed to capture and channel rainwater into groundwater aquifers, helping reduce surface runoff and flood risks while replenishing depleted groundwater reserves. He noted that the initiative forms part of broader efforts to develop climate-resilient urban infrastructure through nature-based solutions.—APP

Briefs

Int'l workshop
on disaster
risk reduction
for CPEC held

ISLAMABAD: An international workshop on disaster risk reduction and green development for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has concluded after bringing together experts, researchers and policymakers from across Asia. They discussed climate resilience, sustainable development and disaster preparedness, according to a statement issued by the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS), according to a Gwadar Pro's report. The five-day ANSO-CPJRC-COMSATS International Training Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Green Development for CPEC was held at COMSATS University Islamabad from June 18 to 22. The event was endorsed as an official activity of the United Nations International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (IDSSD 2024-2033). The workshop featured 18 speakers from China and Pakistan who delivered lectures and training sessions on subjects including landslide dynamics and geophysical flow modelling, glacier systems and high-altitude hazard monitoring, disaster risk assessment, early warning systems, resilient infrastructure and de-risking investments under CPEC. —APP

Mushaal, Iranian
envoy discuss
regional situation

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick, prominent Kashmiri rights advocate, former Special Advisor to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, and wife of incarcerated Hurrayat leader Yasin Malik, met the Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan along with her family. During the meeting, both sides discussed matters of mutual interest, the evolving regional situation, and efforts aimed at promoting peace and stability. The engagement came amid ongoing diplomatic initiatives in the region and ahead of Muharram-ul-Haram, a period symbolizing sacrifice, patience, and steadfastness. During the meeting, Mushaal Hussein Mullick emphasized that peace remains the only viable path toward progress, prosperity, and sustainable development. She said the message of Muharram-ul-Haram teaches humanity the values of sacrifice, patience, perseverance, and service to mankind, principles that are essential for addressing contemporary global challenges and fostering harmony among nations. Welcoming recent peace efforts between Iran and the United States, Mushaal Mullick described the development as a positive step towards regional harmony and global stability. She stressed that dialogue, diplomacy, and mutual respect remain the most effective tools for resolving conflicts and reducing tensions around the world. —APP

JUI-F chief calls for
dialogue, political
restraint

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Wednesday called for political restraint, institutional respect, and meaningful dialogue to resolve national issues. Speaking in the National Assembly, he stressed that the Constitution should be respected by all sides. Referring to the situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, he said that demands presented by groups should be examined seriously as part of a constitutional and political process. He also highlighted that a banned Joint Action Committee had reached out to him for a mediatory role, stating that he had conveyed his willingness to assist in facilitating talks. He said dialogue remained the only viable path forward and warned that the use of force against protest movements could further worsen the situation. On internal security, he expressed concern over the deteriorating law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. He cautioned that political instability and inflammatory statements could harm national unity at a time when collective resolve was needed. —APP

Petroleum Minister orders
HDIP restructuring plan

The Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to reforming and strengthening institutions across the energy sector to support investment, improve governance, and enhance Pakistan's long-term energy security



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik has directed the Hydrocarbon Development Institute of Pakistan (HDIP) and the Directorate General of Petroleum Concessions (DGPC) to submit a comprehensive restructuring plan within two weeks aimed at strengthening the institute's governance, efficiency, and strategic role in Pakistan's energy sector. The directive was issued during the Minister's visit to HDIP headquarters and laboratory facilities, where he reviewed the institute's operations, technical capabilities,

and testing services. During the visit, the Minister toured various laboratories and observed the analytical, certification, and testing services being provided to support the petroleum sector. Emphasizing the need for institutional modernization, Ali Pervaiz Malik instructed HDIP management to undertake reforms that would enhance organizational performance and align the institute with the evolving needs of the energy sector. He stressed that the restructuring exercise should focus on strengthening governance, improving operational effectiveness, and positioning HDIP as a leading technical institution for the country's hydrocarbon

sector. The Minister noted that key governance and leadership positions, including the Board of Governors and executive appointments, must be filled on priority to establish a robust and efficient governance framework capable of driving institutional reforms and ensuring accountability. Ali Pervaiz Malik further directed HDIP to actively pursue cooperation with leading international institutions and laboratories to improve quality standards, adopt global best practices, and strengthen technical capabilities. He observed that enhanced international collaboration would help raise the credibility and competitiveness of Pakistan's hydrocarbon

sector. The Minister noted that key governance and leadership positions, including the Board of Governors and executive appointments, must be filled on priority to establish a robust and efficient governance framework capable of driving institutional reforms and ensuring accountability. Ali Pervaiz Malik further directed HDIP to actively pursue cooperation with leading international institutions and laboratories to improve quality standards, adopt global best practices, and strengthen technical capabilities. He observed that enhanced international collaboration would help raise the credibility and competitiveness of Pakistan's hydrocarbon

Pak to save \$3.2b thru shift
from imported coal to Thar coal

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan expects to save more than \$3.2 billion over the next 26 years by converting the Jamshoro Unit-1 power plant from imported coal to locally mined Thar lignite, according to a feasibility study presented to the Ministry of Energy. The study found the project is technically feasible, economically beneficial and environmentally manageable, Gwadar Pro reported. As per an official statement, the conversion would generate an estimated \$2.1 billion in foreign exchange savings by reducing reliance on imported fuel. Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari said the project aligns with the government's broader energy reform agenda and efforts to increase the use of indigenous resources. The initiative is expected to strengthen energy security while reducing exposure to international coal price volatility and currency fluctuations. According to the study, the project would deliver a cost-benefit ratio of 1.8 and create total benefits of approximately \$3.24 billion over its lifespan. Those benefits include lower generation costs, reduced financing expenses and economic gains linked to the expansion of coal mining operations in the Thar region. The feasibility study, prepared by international consulting firm Dornier Group with support from EY Parthenon, concluded that Jamshoro Unit-1 can be converted to operate entirely on Thar lignite through targeted engineering modifications rather than a full boiler replacement. Officials said the approach preserves existing infrastructure and minimizes capital costs. With the feasibility phase complete, the government plans to move into implementation readiness, including regulatory approvals, engineering verification, procurement planning and financing arrangements. —DNA

Govt cannot act
as rival in inter-
employee disputes

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has upheld the decision of the Sindh Service Tribunal in a seniority dispute involving college lecturers in Sindh and dismissed all petitions filed by the provincial government, observing that in matters relating to seniority, the genuinely affected parties are the employees concerned, not the government. The Court held that where no employee challenges a tribunal's decision, the government, as a neutral employer, should implement the ruling rather than prolong litigation as an adversarial party. According to a detailed judgment, a three-member bench comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi and Justice Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui decided 18 civil petitions filed by the Government of Sindh. The detailed judgment was authored by Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar. The case arose from appointments of lecturers (BS-17) in various subjects in the College Education Department. The Sindh Public Service Commission (SPSC) had recommended candidates for appointment at different times and through separate selection processes. Subsequently, a consolidated seniority list was prepared, prompting objections from certain lecturers who contended that their dates of selection had not been

properly considered while determining seniority. After exhausting departmental remedies, the affected lecturers approached the Sindh Service Tribunal, which, through a majority decision, ruled in their favour and directed corrections in the seniority list. The Supreme Court held that Rule 11(a) of the Sindh Civil Servants (Probation, Confirmation and Seniority) Rules, 1975 clearly provides that an employee selected in an earlier recruitment process shall rank senior to an employee selected in a later process. The Court observed that this fundamental principle cannot be ignored merely because a combined seniority list has been prepared. The judgment noted that the seniority of English lecturers had already been corrected on the same basis because their appointments stemmed from a separate advertisement and an earlier recruitment process. Therefore, applying a different standard to lecturers of other subjects would be contrary to the governing rules. Referring to earlier precedents, the Court reiterated that the dates of selection and recommendations are material factors in determining seniority and cannot be disregarded. It held that the Sindh Service Tribunal had correctly interpreted and applied the relevant service rules. The Supreme Court also highlighted an important legal principle, observing that in seniority disputes the real aggrieved parties are the employees whose rights are directly affected, not the government itself. The Court stated that if no employee challenges a tribunal's decision, the government should act as a neutral employer and implement the judgment instead of assuming the role of a contesting litigant. The bench further observed that the Government of Sindh had failed to demonstrate any legal injury or violation of its rights arising from the tribunal's decision. —APP

Pak advocates new phase of
China-South Asia coop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has emphasized the need to advance China-South Asia economic cooperation from traditional trade relations toward deeper industrial partnerships during the 2026 Belt and Road Trade and Investment Forum, held in Beijing under the theme "Creating the New Pattern for a Shared Future." Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, Vice President of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Pakistan Chapter) has reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), describing the country as a key partner in promoting regional connectivity, trade, investment, and economic integration across South Asia. He noted that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative, has sig-

nificantly contributed to Pakistan's infrastructure development, energy security, industrialization, and regional connectivity. He emphasized that the next phase of Belt and Road cooperation presents tremendous opportunities for businesses across South Asia through enhanced industrial partnerships, value-added manufacturing, skills development, and investment cooperation. The 2026 Belt and Road Trade and Investment Forum was held in Beijing under the theme "Creating the New Pattern for a Shared Future." The Forum comprised two high-level panel sessions, focusing on "Centering on Infrastructure and Public Welfare, Jointly Building High-Quality Inter-connectivity and Promoting Trade and Investment," and "Advancing Global Cooperation and Development." Organized by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) and the

China Chamber of International Commerce (CCOIC), the Forum brought together government officials, business leaders, chambers of commerce, and policymakers from across Asia and beyond to explore new avenues for trade, investment, connectivity, industrial cooperation, and innovation. Speaking at the inaugural session, Mr. Chandni Raj Dhakal, President of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI), highlighted the remarkable progress achieved in China-South Asia economic relations and called for elevating cooperation from traditional trade relations to a deeper industrial partnership. Representing nearly 1.8 billion people across South Asia, Mr. Dhakal noted that bilateral trade between China and South Asia surpassed US\$200 billion for the first time in 2025 and continued to record robust growth during the first months of 2026.

Khurram says Iran-
U.S. talks cement
Pakistan's status

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Finance Minister Khurram Schehzad said on Wednesday that the Iran-U.S. talks under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding reflect Pakistan's leadership role in promoting regional peace, reviving global peace efforts, strengthening trade ties, encouraging investment, supporting economic expansion, improve fiscal discipline for long-term national and regional gains. While speaking exclusively to private news channel, he praised Pakistan's foreign policy for its active role in reviving global peace and advancing diplomatic engagement across regions. He said Pakistan is moving forward with a clear focus on attracting investment, ensuring stability, promoting sustainable growth, and presenting a balanced budget this year as part of its broader economic strategy. He noted that these achievements reflect the remarkable joint efforts of Pakistan's civil and military leadership, which have produced fruitful results in strengthening the country's global standing. —APP

HEC body
okays
programme
learning
outcomes

ISLAMABAD: The Outcome Based Education (OBE) Implementation Committee of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan has finalised and recommended Programme Learning Outcomes for the undergraduate degree programmes that do not fall under the purview of any accreditation or regulatory council. After approval of the Commission, the governing body of HEC, the recommended Programme Learning Outcomes will be circulated among all the higher education institutions (HEIs). The OBE Implementation Committee held its maiden meeting under the convensorship of Prof. Engr. Dr Samreen Hussain on another day. The committee sanctioned the Programme Learning Outcomes, in addition to an implementation approach, and Working Group Terms of Reference (ToRs), as a first step towards the execution of Outcome Based Education across all disciplines. According to details, the committee considered and recommended two distinct sets of Programme Learning Outcomes for undergraduate degree programmes not currently under any accreditation or regulatory council — one set is for Natural, Human & Social Science disciplines, while the other set is tailored for Art, Design & Media disciplines. The two sets are benchmarked against national and international frameworks to ensure consistency and comparability of graduate quality. The convenor presented a progress report on the special task assigned by the Chairman HEC. —APP

Interior
Minister
praises CTD

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has commended the Counter Terrorism Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and police personnel for a successful operation against militants in the Lower Dir region. The minister praised the professional competence of CTD and police teams after six terrorists were killed during the operation. He said the brave personnel had thwarted the militants' nefarious designs through their courage and effective action. "The nation is proud of the brave officers and personnel of the CTD and police," Naqvi said, paying tribute to their role in protecting public safety and maintaining peace in the province. —APP

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The Hormuz Trap

MEHWISH MUMTAZ

FOR decades, Pakistan's economic reliance on the Gulf Cooperation Council has been comforting, linear, and fundamentally predictable. We exported low-skilled labor, imported crude oil, and relied on a steady floor of worker remittances to cushion our perennial current account shocks. In the past, whenever our fiscal reserves dried up and default loomed, Islamabad's playbook was predictable: a flurry of high-profile diplomatic visits to Riyadh or Abu Dhabi to secure central bank deposits or deferred oil payments. That transactional safety net is now gone. A harsh mix of regional security risks and a calculated shift in how Gulf states deploy their financial weight has disrupted the old way of doing business. The immediate trouble is down at the docks. Recent geopolitical skirmishes and drone strike on Middle Eastern shipping lanes have choked the Strait of Hormuz. This hits Pakistan disproportionately. Nearly four-fifths of our trade with the Gulf depends entirely on a single transit point: Dubai's Jebel Ali port. This extreme geographic concentration has left our export sector completely exposed. When major shipping lines suspended or throttled operations through these waters, the financial fallout was immediate and severe, causing our exports to Gulf economies to slip during the peak of the logistical turmoil. This supply chain shock is happening just as Gulf states execute a permanent shift in their economic strategies. Led by Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's focus on a hyper-diversified economic footprint, Gulf capital is no longer interested in unconditional financial cushions. Their strategy has shifted entirely toward equity investments, tangible asset acquisition, and strategic economic integration. Through the Special Investment Facilitation Council, Islamabad has attempted to meet these new terms by marketing a pipeline of sovereign-grade projects tailored for Gulf sovereign wealth funds across corporate farming, mineral extraction, and renewable energy. Crucially, as Pakistan begins to phase out its stringent domestic austerity measures and looks toward industrial revival, the pressure to secure robust foreign exchange streams becomes even more urgent. However, macroeconomists must view this influx of investment with sober caution. If incoming Gulf capital is utilized merely to plug short-term fiscal gaps or fund localized real estate ventures, it will do little to alter Pakistan's precarious economic trajectory. Investment must be strictly tied to generating a sustainable, competitive exportable surplus.

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The asymmetry in our current trade profile remains alarming. Our overall export footprint in the Gulf is hitting a hard glass ceiling because traditional commodities like textiles, rice, and raw meat face brutal pricing competition from alternative Asian suppliers. To achieve a true breakthrough, our export basket must undergo immediate, radical diversification into non-traditional, high-value sectors. Fortunately, the government has begun identifying where this high-value pivot can happen. Pakistan's aggressive marketing of advanced military hardware at the World Defense Show in Riyadh demonstrated that our state-backed military engineering can align with the localized defense spending goals of Gulf states. Similarly, the growing participation of Pakistani medical and light engineering firms at major regional exhibitions proves that localized tech can find a foothold in premium markets. Additionally, the information technology sector requires no heavy maritime freight infrastructure, allowing it to bypass the physical bottlenecks that currently cripple our shipping routes. The upcoming operationalization of the Pakistan-GCC Free Trade Agreement promises to dismantle tariff barriers and lower the costs of vital energy imports. Yet, a trade agreement is merely an open door; domestic industries must still step through it with competitive, reliable goods. To survive the Hormuz trap and sustain economic growth beyond the austerity era, Pakistan needs a cohesive three-pronged domestic policy adjustment. First, we must rapidly diversify our trade logistics. Relying almost entirely on a single Gulf transit port is an unsustainable hazard. Emergency measures, such as deploying Pakistan National Shipping Corporation vessels to secure fuel imports and launching alternative commercial shipping routes to ports like Khorfakkan, must become permanent fixtures of our maritime strategy. Second, the Trade Development Authority must enforce zero-tolerance compliance with Gulf quality standards to prevent costly cargo rejections. Third, we must intentionally upgrade our labor export profile. The Gulf no longer needs an endless supply of low-skilled construction labor. Pakistan must deliberately train and export tech professionals, financial analysts, and healthcare workers who command higher wages and remit higher per-capita value back home. Economic diplomacy cannot exist in a vacuum. The road to a resilient, balanced relationship with the Gulf does not run through the central bank vaults of our allies. It runs through our own industrial estates, our software houses, and our tech incubators. If Pakistan fails to build the internal capacity to export high-value goods and secure its supply chains, we will find ourselves left behind in a rapidly changing regional economy.

National Paigham-e-Aman Committee: building a global model for peace

Hafiz M. Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi



The National Paigham-e-Aman Committee has developed a strong partnership with state institutions based on mutual trust and constitutional responsibility. Regular consultations with the Ministry of Interior, provincial governments, law-enforcement agencies and security institutions...

ISLAMABAD: Peace is not merely the absence of conflict; it is the presence of justice, mutual respect, responsible leadership and shared national objective. Nations that aspire to sustainable development must first cultivate a culture where diversity is viewed as a source of strength rather than division. In today's increasingly polarized world, building such a culture requires more than legislation, it demands dialogue, trust and collective ownership. It is within this broader vision that Pakistan established the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee (NPAC) - a unique national platform bringing together religious scholars, spiritual leaders, representatives of every school of thought, leaders of Pakistan's other faith communities, and state institutions to safeguard peace, promote religious harmony and strengthen national unity. The inclusion of Christian, Hindu, Sikh and other faith leaders alongside

Muslim scholars reflects Pakistan's commitment to interfaith harmony, mutual respect and inclusive nation-building. More than a committee, NPAC has evolved into a comprehensive framework for conflict prevention, confidence-building and social cohesion, serving as a practical model of coexistence where diversity is transformed into a source of collective strength and national solidarity. At a time when many societies continue to struggle with extremism, intolerance and identity-based polarization, Pakistan has demonstrated that consensus among religious leadership remains one of the country's greatest strategic assets. The National Paigham-e-Aman Committee represents that consensus in action. What distinguishes the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee from many similar initiatives around the world is its inclusive character. While rooted in the collective wisdom of Pakistan's religious scholars and spiritual leaders, the Committee also incorporates representatives of other faith communities, thereby extending its message beyond inter-sect harmony to encompass interfaith understanding. This broad-based participation has strengthened social cohesion, reinforced constitutional protections for all citizens and projected a powerful message that Pakistan's future rests upon unity, coexistence and equal respect for every community. The Committee was established on a simple but powerful principle: lasting peace can only be achieved when religious leadership, government institutions, civil society and citizens work together with a common sense of responsibility. Over the past several years, this vision has steadily translated into practical results. For the first time in Pakistan's contemporary history, scholars representing all major schools of thought have developed and unanimously endorsed a common national framework for religious harmony through the Paigham-e-Pakistan Code of Conduct for Muharram-ul-Haram. This landmark consensus rejects sectarian violence, terrorism, hate speech, religious vigilantism and the misuse of faith for political or ideological violence. It reaffirms the sanctity of all revered Islamic personalities, emphasizes respect for constitutional rights, protects religious minorities and reinforces the principle that differences in jurisprudence must never become a source of hostility. Perhaps its greatest achievement lies not in the document itself, but in the unprecedented unity behind it. Peace is sustained through implementation rather than declarations. Recognizing this reality, the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee has transformed the Code of Conduct into a nationwide movement through continuous engagement with scholars, mosque leaders, educational institutions, provincial administrations and security agencies. The Committee has organized conferences, seminars and dialogue forums throughout Pakistan, bringing together religious leaders who historically rarely shared a common platform. These engagements have strengthened confidence among communities while creating mecha-

nisms for resolving tensions before they escalate. One of the Committee's most demanding responsibilities has been preserving peace during Muharram-ul-Haram. Every year, Muharram tests the resilience of Pakistan's social fabric. This year, however, the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee succeeded in building an unprecedented national consensus. Religious scholars from every school of thought jointly reaffirmed their commitment to the Paigham-e-Pakistan Code of Conduct and publicly pledged complete cooperation in ensuring the peaceful observance of Majalis, processions and Friday congregations throughout the country. Provincial and district-level peace seminars in Islamabad, Lahore, Gujranwala, Dera Ghazi Khan and other cities reinforced the message that mutual respect, patience and restraint remain essential Islamic values. The Committee also launched a nationwide Muharram Helpline in close coordination with the Ministry of Interior, provincial governments and law-enforcement agencies, enabling citizens, religious leaders and volunteers to report any attempt to incite violence or sectarian hatred. This initiative reflects a modern understanding of peacebuilding, combining community engagement with institutional coordination and rapid response mechanisms. The National Paigham-e-Aman Committee has developed a strong partnership with state institutions based on mutual trust and constitutional responsibility. Regular consultations with the Ministry of Interior, provincial governments, law-enforcement agencies and security institutions have helped establish an effective mechanism for conflict prevention and crisis management. The Committee's engagement has demonstrated that religious leadership and state institutions are not competing actors; rather, they are complementary partners working towards the shared objective of protecting national unity and public order. The Sixth International Paigham-e-Islam Conference represented another significant milestone in this journey. Bringing together senior religious scholars, diplomats and international delegates from across the Muslim world, the conference reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to moderation, dialogue and responsible religious leadership. It also demonstrated that Pakistan's religious institutions are prepared to contribute meaningfully to regional and international conversations on peacebuilding. The announcement that the Seventh International Paigham-e-Islam Conference will welcome leading Islamic scholars alongside representatives of other faith traditions reflects an important evolution, from promoting inter-sect harmony within Pakistan to encouraging broader interfaith understanding globally. This collaborative approach has become one of the defining strengths of the Committee. The Committee's vision extends well beyond Pakistan's internal harmony. Recent diplomatic developments have reinforced Pakistan's growing reputation as a responsible advocate of dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution.

As Pakistan continues to contribute to regional stability through constructive diplomacy, the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee has consistently supported initiatives that encourage negotiation over confrontation and cooperation over conflict. The Committee believes that religious diplomacy, interfaith engagement and responsible scholarship can serve as valuable complements to traditional diplomacy in addressing many of today's global challenges. Serving as Prime Minister's Coordinator for the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee has been both an honour and a profound responsibility. The Committee's achievements are not the work of any single individual. They represent the collective efforts of countless scholars, Mashaykh, government officials, security institutions, provincial administrations, volunteers and citizens who have placed Pakistan's national interest above personal or sectarian considerations. My role has been to facilitate dialogue, build consensus and ensure that every school of thought feels equally represented and respected within this national platform. Consensus is never created through authority alone. It is built patiently through listening, consultation, mutual respect and unwavering commitment to the common good. While much has been achieved, our work is far from complete. The National Paigham-e-Aman Committee now enters a new phase of institutional development. Our priorities include expanding provincial and district peace committees, strengthening youth engagement, promoting digital literacy to counter online extremism, deepening interfaith dialogue, empowering women as ambassadors of peace, supporting educational institutions in promoting tolerance, and enhancing international cooperation with religious and academic organizations committed to peaceful coexistence. We also seek to position Pakistan as a global centre for dialogue among civilizations and faith communities, building upon our experience in fostering national consensus. Peace cannot be legislated into existence. It must be nurtured through education, dialogue, responsible leadership and public participation. The National Paigham-e-Aman Committee stands as a testament to what Pakistan can achieve when scholars, institutions and citizens unite around shared values rather than differences. Our vision is clear: a Pakistan where diversity strengthens unity; where disagreement never becomes hostility; where religious freedom and constitutional values reinforce one another; and where future generations inherit a society defined by moderation, compassion and justice. This is not just the mission of a committee, it is a national responsibility, and it is a responsibility we must continue to fulfil together with wisdom, sincerity and unwavering faith in Pakistan's future. - The writer is the Prime Minister's Coordinator for the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee & Chairman, Pakistan Ulema Council

The Changing Global Geopolitical Dynamics and the Global Order

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Today geopolitical tensions have arisen which depend on a complex interplay of different factors. Diplomacy, conflict resolution and international cooperation play important roles in managing and reducing these tensions. Currently, the United States holds the position of the world's sole superpower

THE world's political system change over time is a bit like how living things grow and develop. It is a complicated system with different parts that work together. Sometimes, there's an imbalance in power between different parts of the world, like big countries having more power than others. When power is spread out more evenly in the world, the system can switch big changes for better. The system needs change to keep growing and develop. As it changes, it creates new parts. These new parts make the system work better because they become really good at what they do. One interesting example of this is the Gateway region. Eastern Europe is becoming a place that connects different parts of the world. In the future, the Middle East might also become a Gateway. And in the next few decades, about thirty more Gateway states might appear. These are small countries that will break away from bigger ones to help the world system connect and work together. These gateways help the system to adapt change, interplay and relationship among countries. Today geopolitical tensions have arisen which depend on a complex interplay of different factors. Diplomacy, conflict resolution and international cooperation play important roles in managing and reducing these tensions. Currently, the United States holds the position of the world's sole superpower. Over the next decades, the country will adopt new strategies to maintain affordable electricity. This strategy bears similarities to isolationism, as the United States will refrain from significant involvement in regional military conflicts. Instead, it will provide support to its allies through supplies, training and limited airpower, opting for a more indirect approach to addressing regional issues in Europe, the Middle East and Asia. This strategic shift is expected to help the United States maintain its global hegemony. In Europe, the European Union (EU) may undergo dissolution or redefinition as a smaller trading zone covering a reduced portion of the continent. The current free trade structure appears unsustainable due to member

states, particularly Germany, becoming overly reliant on exports. This dependence leaves their economies highly susceptible to fluctuations in demand beyond their borders. Germany may experience an economic downturn due to inevitable export market fluctuations, leading to its diminished influence in Europe by 2040. This decline may open up opportunities for Central Europe, notably Poland, to become a more significant regional power. Russia will continue to grapple with the repercussions of relatively low oil prices. The income derived from this sector has been essential for maintaining internal stability. With a significant reduction in this income, Russia may either transform into a confederation or experience separatist movements by 2040, raising important questions regarding the future of its nuclear arsenal. In Asia, as China's competitiveness in export markets wanes, high unemployment will become a major concern for the Chinese government. To prevent an economic downturn, the government may seek to consolidate its power and embrace authoritarian measures. Nevertheless, China's diverse regional setting will present challenges to such centralized control. Consequently, by 2040, China may experience a return to regionalism marked by a degree of chaos. As China weakens, a power vacuum in East Asia may emerge, which Japan is well-positioned to fill, given its robust economy and significant military capabilities? In the Middle East, it is difficult to foresee an end to or effective control of Islamic extremism. Instead, it may continue to expand its influence and territory. Turkey and Iran are the only regional actors with the potential to counter these extremist groups, but Iran may not take any such action. Given the ambitions of these extremist groups to reinstate the caliphate, Turkey may find itself compelled to intervene militarily to safeguard its borders. This military and economic assertion by Turkey may lead to a resurgence of a regional power reminiscent of the Ottoman Empire, positioning Turkey as the dominant regional force by 2040. The future geopolitical environment is marked by a complex

interplay of factors that will shape global dynamics over the next decades. The United States, as the current sole global power, is poised to adopt a new strategy resembling isolationism to maintain its dominance. Europe faces potential challenges as the European Union may redefine itself, while Germany's economic vulnerability could shift the balance of power in the region. In Russia, weakened oil prices could lead to internal fragmentation, raising concerns about the future of its nuclear arsenal. In Asia, China's economic decline may usher in a return to regionalism and give rise to Japan as a leading power. Meanwhile, the Middle East continues to grapple with the persistence and expansion of Islamic extremism, with Turkey potentially reasserting itself as a dominant regional force. The evolving geopolitical landscape will demand careful diplomacy, conflict resolution, and international cooperation to address these emerging trends and strains in the years to come. The dominant theme can be seen playing out over the course of the next decades is increasing disarray in Europe and Asia. It is expected the prolong stability in North American with U.S. rivals working to increase their footholds in Latin America. Despite the growing instability in Eurasia, also expect to see three regional powers emerge: Japan, Turkey and Poland. These countries will be outliers in an otherwise fragmented Eastern Hemisphere. The changing global geopolitical scene is a dynamic and ever-evolving phenomenon that presents both opportunities and challenges for nations around the world. As new powers rise and traditional alliances shift, the need for diplomacy, cooperation and adaptability becomes increasingly paramount. In this period of interconnectedness and interdependence, it is essential for nations to recognize the importance of multilateral cooperation, embrace sustainable and inclusive policies and work towards a more peaceful and prosperous global future. The complexities of the 21st century demand creative solutions and a commitment to shared values, as we navigate the shifting tides of global geopolitics in a manner that promotes peace, stability and prosperity for all.

Briefs

Oil falls further on hopes of...

FROM PAGE 01
Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting. "Further progress in nuclear negotiations could push prices back to pre-war levels," he added. On Tuesday, Oman and Iran agreed to press on with discussions about the future administration of navigation in the Strait. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said any Iranian attempt to levy transit fees would violate international law. Still, uncertainty remains over the durability of the accord. US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that Iran had agreed to nuclear inspections into "infinity," while Tehran said it had made no such concession in negotiations. Investors are also watching how quickly Middle Eastern producers can restore exports and whether more ships will enter the region. An Iranian military source told Fars news agency that a limited number of vessels are being allowed to pass through the strait each day under coordination with Iran's Revolutionary Guards Navy. Ship-tracking data showed that three stranded super-tankers passed through the strait on Tuesday. The UN shipping agency said an evacuation plan to enable hundreds of ships with 11,000 seafarers stranded in the Gulf to sail through the strait is underway after the US-Iran ceasefire deal.

Rubio commits to UAE Security

FROM PAGE 01
Rubio also "thanked the UAE for their leadership and unparalleled support, praised their courage and resilience in the face of Iran's attacks, and reaffirmed the US commitment to the security of the Emirates," Pigott added. The secretary of state arrived in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday evening and held closed-door talks with Sheikh Mohamed the following day, then set off for Kuwait. After that he will travel on to Bahrain, where he will attend a Gulf Cooperation Council meeting on Thursday. He insisted that no country is allowed to impose tolls on the Strait of Hormuz after Oman and Iran, which border the waterway, said they were considering charging "costs" for ships navigating the key conduit for Gulf oil and gas. "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 capital.

Six most wanted terrorists eliminated

FROM PAGE 01
Lower Dir" and tried to arrest them when they came out of their hideouts in the area. "But, the terrorists opened indiscriminate fire on police parties", the statement said, adding that law enforcers fired back in retaliation. Fitna al-Khwarizj is a term that the state uses for the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan. The CTD statement said fire exchange during the operation continued for a long time, and "six terrorists were found dead in the ensuing search operation". According to the CTD, the slain individuals were wanted in several cases of terrorism. "Six Kalashnikovs, three hand grenades and multiple cartridges were found in their possession," the statement said, adding that the search operation was ongoing to arrest their accomplices who had fled. The statement said KP Inspector General of Police (IG) Zulfiqar Hameed commended the district police and CTD and affirmed that these operations "will continue with full force until terrorism is eradicated from the province and that the writ of the state will be maintained". Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi also praised the CTD and police for the "successful operation", according to a post by the Interior Ministry on X.

FIH apologises to Pak after flag error

Error displays Pakistan flag without white stripe, omitting symbol for minorities during Pro League match

DNA

BERN: The International Hockey Federation (FIH) on Tuesday apologised to the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) after a flag error occurred before Pakistan's Pro League fixture against arch-rivals India at the Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre in London. The incident occurred when the two teams lined up for their respective national anthems before the commencement of the blockbuster fixture. As per tradition, the flags of the participating teams are displayed in front of the teams, but the organisers of the ongoing nine-team tournament presented the Pakistan national

flag without its distinctive white strip, which represents the minorities in the country. The error drew widespread criticism on social media and overshadowed the high-octane encounter between the two traditional rivals, which India won 4-3. Minutes after the conclusion of the fixture, FIH Pro League Director Hilary Atkinson wrote a letter to PHF President Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, apologising for the error, for which the federation took "full responsibility", before ensuring to avoid similar mistakes in the future. "I would like to sincerely apologise for the incorrect display of your team's flag during the FIH Hockey Pro League match this afternoon in London, England," the letter read.

"We apologise unreservedly for this error. We understand that a team's flag is an important symbol of identity, pride, and representation and we deeply regret any [offence] this may have caused to your team, supporters, people and National Federation. "We take full responsibility for this operational mistake and will be reviewing our processes to ensure that similar errors do not occur in the future." The FIH Director also urged the PHF president to accept their sincere apology and appreciated the national team's participation in the ongoing Pro League. Atkinson further reiterated the apex body's commitment to treating all participating sides with respect and professionalism,

adding that the FIH remains open to discussing the matter further. "Please accept our sincere apologies for this incident. We greatly value your participation in FIH Hockey Pro League as has been shown by the commitment to support your team through the season and we appreciate your understanding. We remain committed to treating all teams with the respect and professionalism they deserve. "Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact us." It is pertinent to mention that the 4-3 defeat at the hands of India extended Pakistan's losing streak to 13 matches and also relegated the side from the next edition of the FIH Pro League.

UNSC resolutions 'Insufficient' without enforcement

UNITED NATIONS: Speakers at an informal meeting of the UN Security Council Tuesday called for stronger monitoring, reporting, and non-selective implementation of the 15-member Council's decisions to help restore global confidence in it. Hosted by China and Pakistan, the session on "Bridging the Implementation Gap: Security Council Resolutions and the Maintenance of International Peace and Security" highlighted that delayed or selective compliance adversely affects the Council's credibility. "A Security Council resolution is not an end in itself; it is a promise of action, a legal obligation, and a measure of the international community's resolve," said Pakistan UN Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad and Co-Chair of the meeting held under Arria-Formula format named after a former Venezuelan Ambassador to the UN, Diego Arria. Arria-Formula meetings are informal, enabling Security

Council members to have a frank and private exchange of views on relevant subjects. "If implemented, it (a resolution) can prevent war, settle disputes, protect civilians and restore faith in rule of law," the Pakistani envoy went on to say. "If ignored and unimplemented, it becomes evidence, not of peace pursued, but of responsibility deferred and peace and security denied, and imperilled." On his part, Chinese Ambassador Fu Cong emphasized the legal authority of Security Council resolutions and the responsibility of all Member States to implement them in good faith and without double standards. "Non-implementation or delayed implementation undermines the authority of the UN and international law", he said. Ambassador FU urged the Council to bridge the implementation gap by focusing on dialogue, mediation, and de-escalation rather than rushing to punitive measures or exacerbating conflicts. Security

Council members and a large number of member states and experts took part in the discussion which centered on how the "full, faithful, timely and non-selective" application of the Council resolutions is vital for maintaining international peace. Several participants argued that delayed, partial, or selective execution of Council mandates reflects double standards and directly damages the UN's credibility. They pushed for practical measures to enforce accountability, including more frequent periodic reviews and tracking mechanisms for unimplemented resolutions. At the outset, the meeting was briefed by UN Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khairi, the Executive Director of Security Council Report, Shamala Kandiah, and the International Crisis Group representative, Richard Gowan. The briefers emphasized that implementation lies at the heart of the Council's credibility, authority and effectiveness. - APP

Oman opens shipping routes

MASCAT: Oman said it would keep the Strait of Hormuz open to shipping without imposing any tolls and had designated two temporary routes north and south of the existing shipping lane to facilitate the safe passage of vessels departing the region. In coordination with the International Maritime Organization, Oman established temporary maritime corridors to help ships leave the area safely amid heightened security risks. The Strait of Hormuz, a vital route for roughly a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas supplies before the war, has been heavily disrupted since the United States and Israel launched a war against Iran on February 28, curbing commercial shipping and rattling global energy markets. In a notice to mariners, Oman said the existing Traffic Separation Scheme in the strategic waterway was currently unsafe for use and that vessels departing through the strait could instead use temporary routes located to the north and south of the existing shipping lanes. The scheme, adopted by UN shipping agency in 1968, established routing lanes through Iranian and Omani waters in the strait. - APP

Colombia beat DR Congo 1-0 to reach World Cup knockouts

Colombia will face Portugal in Miami on Saturday, while DR Congo take on Uzbekistan in Atlanta

DNA

MAXICO: Victory in Guadalajara, courtesy of a 76th-minute goal from Daniel Muñoz, took them top of Group K with six points - two clear of Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal with one game to go in the first round. Portugal, held 1-1 by DR Congo in their opening match, earlier hammered Uzbekistan 5-0 in Houston, with Ronaldo scoring twice. Colombian fans turned the Mexican stadium into a sea of yellow, vastly outnumbering supporters of the African nation. The South Americans, who beat Uzbekistan 3-1 in their tournament opener, dominated the early stages, peppering Lionel Messi's goal. Muñoz squandered an early chance and shortly afterwards had a goal ruled out for offside while James Rodríguez unleashed a stinging shot that was brilliantly saved as Colombia kept probing. Mpsai made further sharp stops from Johan Mojica and Luis Díaz as the Colombians, playing with pace and invention, continued to dominate. But their intensity dipped after the first drinks break, allowing DR Congo to edge back into the contest and pose their own occasional threat. Mpsai made another stunning save with his leg from Díaz in the 50th minute to keep the game goalless. DR Congo briefly threatened but Crystal Palace defender Muñoz made up for his first-half miss when his shot was deflected past a wrong-footed Mpsai. The African team did not give up and as the clock ticked past 90 minutes Colombian goalkeeper Camilo Vargas was forced to scramble to his left to turn a fierce Nathanael Mbuku shot behind. Colombia, who failed to qualify for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, will face Portugal in Miami on Saturday, while DR Congo take on Uzbekistan in Atlanta. The Africans still have an outside chance of reaching the last 32 in their first appearance at the World Cup since 1974, when the country was known as Zaire.

US-Iran MoU reinforces faith in dialogue: FO

FROM PAGE 01
regarding our constructive role in promoting regional peace, dialogue and de-escalation efforts", he said. "Such recognition reflects the international community's trust in Pakistan, as well as Pakistan's commitment to advancing dialogue, peace, security and stability across the region and beyond," he added. The FO spokesperson said Pakistan extended its "sincere appreciation" to all countries and partners who expressed support for its peace efforts. Moreover, he acknowledged the "responsible and constructive role" of Pakistan's media throughout the peace process. "Pakistan's media demonstrated professionalism and maturity by respecting the strict requirements of confidentiality, discretion and trust that are indispensable to any credible facilitator," he said. Elaborating on the specifics of points agreed on after talks in Switzerland, he said the US and Iran reached an understanding on various aspects of the implementation of the Islamabad MoU. He added that it was agreed that a high-level committee would be established for political oversight for mediation; the two sides had agreed on a roadmap towards reaching a final peace deal in 60 days; communication lines were to be established between the parties to avoid incidents of miscommunication and ensure the safe passage of commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz; and a de-confliction cell was to be set up between the US, Iran and the Lebanese government.

North Korea boosts Navy nuclear capability

FROM PAGE 01
Since unveiling the ship in April 2025, Kim has portrayed the Choe Hyon as a major step toward expanding his military's operational reach and preemptive strike capabilities. KCNA has said the warship is equipped with a range of systems, including anti-aircraft and anti-ship weapons as well as nuclear-capable ballistic and cruise missiles. South Korean officials and experts say the vessel was likely built with Russian assistance amid deepening military ties between the countries, but some analysts have questioned whether it's ready for active service. North Korea has put the Choe Hyon through a series of tests in recent months ahead of its deployment, including launches of what it described as nuclear-capable cruise missiles from the vessel. "It has clearly become a thing of the past when our navy existed as a force for defending the sea off our land," Kim said in a speech at Tuesday's ceremony. "It is rising into a full-fledged service equipped with strategic means as the program of equipping the Navy with nuclear weapons is following its planned course unerringly." After years of spurring ballistic missile development, Kim has shifted his focus more toward naval capabilities, including the ongoing construction of a nuclear-powered submarine. Naval capabilities were also a key focus when Kim outlined his five-year military goals at February's Workers' Party congress, which included calls for intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of underwater launches.

Qatar says US-Iran...

FROM PAGE 01
the ship pass safely." Sheikh Mohammed said Qatar, the world's second-largest LNG exporter whose facilities were hit by Iran in the early weeks of the war, had already started to prepare its tankers after the warring parties signed a memorandum of understanding last week. "Within a few weeks, production will come back to normal, except the damaged facility," Sheikh Mohammed said. "Our teams have been mobilized already for a few weeks. QatarEnergy is preparing for operations to come back to normal as soon as the situation in the strait normalizes."

England left frustrated by Ghana as match ends in a draw

DNA

FOXBOROUGH, United States: England suffered a World Cup setback on Tuesday as Thomas Tuchel's side were held to a frustrating 0-0 draw by Ghana, leaving them with work still to do as they bid to progress to the knockout stage as Group L winners. Nico O'Reilly came closest to scoring with a late header for England that hit the bar, but after the promise of their opening 4-2 win over Croatia, this was a performance that will raise doubts as to their chances of going all the way and winning the tournament. They dominated possession and had 19 shots to their opponents' two, yet rarely looked like scoring past Ghana's stand-in goalkeeper Benjamin Asare in a match watched by 63,983 fans at the Gillette Stadium near Boston. Both teams have four points with one game still to play in Group L, with progression to the next round all but assured but their final positions still in the balance. In damp, cool conditions, England delivered a stodgy performance that echoed some of their faltering displays during Euro 2024. However, there are no dramatic consequences, as England take a step closer to the last 32. All they need to do now is safely negotiate their final group fixture against Panama at the MeLife Stadium on Saturday, and they will be able to turn their attentions to the knockout rounds.

Panama knocked out of World Cup after narrow defeat by Croatia

Croatia face second-placed Ghana, who are level on four points with England, in their final group match

TORONTO: Ante Budimir guided Croatia to a 1-0 win over a stubborn Panama side in their World Cup Group L clash on Tuesday, giving the Balkan side a crucial three points and eliminating the Central Americans on a night where the stakes were high for both sides. Croatia and Panama came into the match looking for their first points of the tournament and knowing that a loss would send them home early after England and Ghana drew 0-0 earlier in the other game in the section. Toronto Stadium was painted red, white and blue - the colours of both countries' flags - on a windy evening by Lake Ontario. Croatia's faithful serenaded attendees with a moving rendition of Hrvatski Band Aid's "Moja domovina" rally song before kick-off, setting the tone for a lively match. Croatia finally found a way past Panama's organised back line in the second half when Marco Pasalic played a clever backheel to Josip Stanisic, who skipped forward and swung a cross into the box that Budimir guided home to put Croatia ahead and send

their wall of fans behind the goal into a frenzy. They nearly added another when Pasalic was played in all alone, though he could not beat goalkeeper Orlando Mosquera and then sent the rebound skyward. Both teams went toe-to-toe in a physical midfield battle but it was Panama who gave Croatia plenty of scares in the opening period with their pace down the wings as Jose Luis Rodriguez and Amir Murillo sent crosses into the box, though no one connected. The victory was a sweet finale on a special night for 40-year-old Croatia midfield maestro Luka Modric, who made his 200th international appearance and was thrown in the air by his teammates to mark the achievement at the end of the match. While Panama have been eliminated, they still have a lot to play for in their final group-stage match as they continue to search for their first win at a World Cup, though it is a difficult ask against Group L leaders England. Croatia face second-placed Ghana, who are level on four points with England, in their final group match. - APP

Ronaldo becomes first player to score in six World Cups with two goals against Uzbekistan

Ronaldo's goals come after he was criticized for failing to score in Portugal's 1-1 draw against Congo in the team's opening match

DNA

HOUSTON, USA: Cristiano Ronaldo became the first player to score in six different World Cup tournaments on Tuesday by getting two goals in Portugal's 5-0 win over Uzbekistan. The 41-year-old Ronaldo made history in the sixth minute when João Cancelo crossed it to him and he shot with his right foot to make it 1-0. He ran toward the bench and celebrated with his teammates after the score. He scored again in the 39th minute when he got a pass from Bruno Fernandes and shot with his right foot just inside the near post to make the score 3-0. Ronaldo was named man of the match. The goals make him the second-oldest player to score at a World Cup behind Cameroon forward Roger Milla, who was 42 when he scored at the 1994 tournament in the United States. Ronaldo's goals come after he was criticized for failing to score in Portugal's 1-1 draw against Congo in the team's opening match. Ronaldo and Argentina captain Lionel Messi became the only men in history to play in



six World Cup tournaments this year. Ronaldo's scoring streak started in his debut in 2006 and he also netted goals in 2010, 2014, 2018 and 2022. While he shares the record for most tournaments with Messi, he stands alone in scoring a goal in each edition after Messi failed to score a goal at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. Ronaldo's goals Tuesday gave him 10 career goals in the tournament. Messi has 18 after a hat trick in Argentina's opener against Algeria and two more goals Monday against Austria that made him the all-time leading scorer in tournament history. His performance extended his record by giving him 145 international goals, and his 10 career goals in the World Cup moved him past Eusebio's nine to make him Portugal's all-time scoring leader at the tournament. Tuesday's game was the 230th of Ronaldo's international career, which is the most in history. This is likely to be the final World Cup for Ronaldo, who won the European Championship with Portugal in 2016 and the Champions League five times with Manchester United and Real Madrid.

Briefs

PSX rebounds with bullish momentum

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 1,878.35 points, a positive change of 1.06 percent, closing at 179,571.27 points against 177,692.92 points on the last trading day. During the session, the ready market recorded a trading volume of 851.298 million shares with a traded value of Rs 40.381 billion, compared to 765.143 million shares valuing Rs 35.443 billion in the previous session. The market capitalization increased to Rs 20.135 trillion from Rs 19.936 trillion a day earlier. Out of 489 active companies in the ready market, 289 advanced, 167 declined and 33 remained unchanged. K-Electric Ltd. topped the volume chart with 112.892 million shares, followed by Pak Int. Bulk with 73.295 million shares and WorldCall Telecom with 38.761 million shares. The top gainers included Service Industries Limited, which increased by Rs 126.68 to close at Rs 2,357.15, and Khairpur Sugar Mills Limited, which gained Rs 88.31 to settle at Rs 2,385.67. On the losing side, Pakistan Engineering Company Limited declined by Rs 27.94 to close at Rs 917.81, while Colgate-Palmolive (Pakistan) Limited fell by Rs 20.53 to close at Rs 1,259.53. In the futures market, turnover stood at 738.511 million shares with a traded value of Rs 34.105 billion, compared to 682.151 million shares worth Rs 34.603 billion in the previous session.—APP

Most Gulf markets ease as caution lingers, rate concerns persist

DUBAI: Most major Gulf equity markets closed lower on Wednesday, as persistent uncertainty over the durability of the U.S.-Iran accord coupled with expectations of higher interest rates weighed on investor sentiment. The two countries, which concluded a first round of negotiations in Switzerland on Monday, gave conflicting accounts of key elements of the framework agreement signed last week to end the war, including financial incentives for Iran, control of the Strait of Hormuz and Israel's parallel war in Lebanon. U.S. President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that Iran had agreed to nuclear inspections into "infinity," while Tehran denied making any such concession, raising doubts about the viability of the fragile peace deal. Saudi Arabia's benchmark index fell 0.3%, with Al Rajhi Bank losing 1.4%. However, Umm Al Qura for Development and Construction Co surged 10% and Dar Al Arkan Real Estate Development Co advanced 5.8%. The kingdom's real estate authority has begun accepting applications for foreign real estate ownership, it said in a statement on Tuesday, part of a push to attract foreign investment in the kingdom.—APP

India hails progress in US trade talks, but no deal yet

NEW DELHI: India hailed trade talks with the United States on Wednesday as a "key step" towards a deal, but stopped short of announcing a breakthrough in remaining differences. Indian Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said two days of talks with visiting US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer were held in a "constructive and forward-looking manner", in a post on social media New Delhi and Washington announced an initial understanding in February that would see the United States drop tariffs from 25 percent to 18 percent, and India cut duties on a range of industrial and agricultural products. But negotiations have dragged since the US Supreme Court struck down much of President Donald Trump's sweeping tariff regime. They then became more complicated when Washington chose to launch a probe into unfair trade practices against several countries including India.—APP

UNSC resolutions insufficient without enforcement

Hosted by China and Pakistan, the session on "Bridging the Implementation Gap: Security Council Resolutions and the Maintenance of International Peace and Security" highlighted that delayed or selective compliance adversely affects the Council's credibility

UNITED NATIONS: Speakers at an informal meeting of the UN Security Council Tuesday called for stronger monitoring, reporting, and non-selective implementation of the 15-member Council's decisions to help restore global confidence in it. Hosted by China and Pakistan, the session on "Bridging the Implementation Gap: Security Council Resolutions and the Maintenance of International Peace and Security" highlighted that delayed or selective compliance adversely affects the Council's credibility. "A Security Council resolution is not an end in itself; It is a promise of action, a legal obligation, and a measure of the international community's resolve," said Pakistan UN Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad and Co-Chair of the meeting held under Arria-Formula format named after a former Venezuelan Ambassador to the UN, Diego Arriva. Arria-Formula meetings are informal, enabling Security Council members to have a frank and private exchange of views on relevant subjects. "If implemented, it (a resolution) can prevent war, settle disputes, protect civilians and restore faith in rule of law," the Pakistani envoy went on to say. "If ignored and unimplemented,

it becomes evidence, not of peace pursued, but of responsibility deferred and peace and security denied, and imperilled." On his part, Chinese Ambassador Fu Cong emphasized the legal authority of Security Council resolutions and the responsibility of all Member States to implement them in good faith and without double standards. "Non-implementation or delayed implementation undermines the authority of the UN and international law", he said. Ambassador FU urged the Council to bridge the implementation gap by focusing on dialogue, mediation, and de-escalation rather than rushing to punitive measures or exacerbating conflicts. Security Council members and a large number of member states and experts took part in the discussion which centered on how the "full, faithful, timely and non-selective" application of the Council resolutions is vital for maintaining international peace. Several participants argued that delayed, partial, or selective execution of Council mandates reflects double standards and directly damages the UN's credibility. They pushed for practical measures to enforce accountability, including more frequent periodic

reviews and tracking mechanisms for unimplemented resolutions. At the outset, the meeting was briefed by UN Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari, the Executive Director of Security Council Report, Shamala Kandiah, and the International Crisis Group representative, Richard Gowan. The briefers emphasized that implementation lies at the heart of the Council's credibility, authority and effectiveness. They underlined that resolutions must be accompanied by realistic mandates, clear implementation pathways, sustained reporting, adequate resources, political will, and follow-up mechanisms capable of translating Council decisions into practical action on the ground. In his opening remarks, Ambassador Asim Ahmad, the Pakistani envoy, also brought into sharp focus the unresolved Kashmir dispute and the Palestine question. In doing so, he said that selective or prolonged non-implementation weakens the Council's authority, prolongs unresolved disputes and deepens human suffering, including in situations such as in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and Palestine. His remarks on Kashmir drew a response

from the Indian Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish who claimed that Jammu and Kashmir was part of India and was therefore an internal matter. Ambassador Asim Ahmad hit back, insisting Jammu and Kashmir was an internationally-recognized disputed territory. "It is on the agenda of the Security Council—it was never part of India, and it is not and cannot be part of India." In his earlier remarks, the Pakistani envoy proposed practical measures, including an annual review of unimplemented and partially implemented resolutions, clearer implementation pathways, stronger follow-up on Chapter VI (enforcement) resolutions, and better alignment of the Secretary-General's good offices, peace operations and regional arrangements with Council decisions. The speakers reaffirmed that the Council must not only adopt resolutions but also ensure that its decisions are carried forward with consistency, objectivity and resolve. By jointly convening this timely discussion, China and Pakistan reaffirmed their shared commitment to multilateralism, the authority of the Security Council, and the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.—DNA

Palm oil falls tracking rival edible oils

JAKARTA: Malaysian palm oil futures declined for a second session on Wednesday, tracking the losses of rival edible oils in the Chicago and Dalian exchanges. The benchmark palm oil contract for September delivery on the Bursa Malaysia Derivatives Exchange was down 26 ringgit, or 0.56%, at 4,632 ringgit (\$1,120.19) per ton at closing. The contract traded in a tight range between 4,622 ringgit and 4,690 ringgit per ton during the day. "The market is likely to stay range-bound, tracking muted moves in rival vegetable oils and the energy market," a Kuala Lumpur-based trader said. Dalian's most-active soy oil contract was up 0.37%, while soy oil prices on the Chicago Board of Trade lost 0.42%. The most-active palm oil contract on the Dalian exchange was trading 0.46% lower. Palm oil tracks the price movements of rival edible oils, as it competes for a share of the global vegetable oils market. Oil prices fell more than 1% on Wednesday, extending this week's losses and trading near four-month lows, on signs that more oil tankers stranded in the Gulf are set to move out of the Strait of Hormuz.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, in a meeting with Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Alisher Tukhtaev.

From railways to AI Belt and Road partners look for the next stage of growth

BEIJING: For more than a decade, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been measured in railways, ports, highways and power plants. Now, some of its partners are asking what those links can make possible next. At a BRI investment forum in Beijing on Tuesday, officials and business representatives from Malaysia, Laos and Serbia talked not only about moving goods faster or building more infrastructure, but also about artificial intelligence, semiconductor supply chains, data centres, smart logistics and digital trade. The message was clear: connectivity is becoming a foundation for new growth. China has spent years helping build physical links that connect developing economies to regional and global markets. The next stage is about using those links to support higher-value industries — from chip packaging and AI infrastructure to cold-chain logistics, digital customs and regional supply chains, CEN reported. Malaysia offered one of the clearest examples. Low Kian Chuan, chairman of the Malaysia-China Business Council, said cooperation with China could expand from railways, industrial parks and logistics into semiconductors, data centres, electric vehicles and renewable energy. He described the opportunity as a mix of "China's technology, Asean manufacturing and global markets". Zhang Guolin, a director of the same council, presented Malaysia as a semiconductor and AI infrastructure hub. He said Malaysia accounts for about 13 per cent of global assembly, testing and packaging capacity, and pointed to Nvidia's cooperation with Malaysia's YTL on AI data centres. Malaysia's case shows how Belt and Road cooperation can connect with broader regional and global supply chains. China is not the only player in that ecosystem, but its technology, manufacturing capacity and market links can help partner countries strengthen their role in emerging industries. Laos faces a different opportunity. The China-Laos Railway, one of Belt and Road's most visible projects in Southeast Asia, gave the landlocked country a modern transport artery into China and the wider region. But Oudet Souvannavong, president of the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the next stage should not be judged only by how fast cargo crosses borders. It should be judged by whether the entire chain works — from production and processing to logistics, digital coordination, finance and delivery. For Laos, the railway is not the end goal. It is the foundation for something larger: agricultural processing, cold-chain logistics, digital customs, smart warehousing and regional supply chains Serbia shows another side of the shift. Marko Cadez, president of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, said the country wanted deeper cooperation with China in AI, robotics, electric vehicles and digital technology. He said Serbia already had two major supercomputers, expected a third by the end of the year, and aimed to become Southeast Europe's largest supercomputing cluster, with an AI factory and standalone 5G network.—DNA

Over 100 European business leaders join Pakistan Rice Festival

The event was held under the theme, "From Pakistan's Fields to Europe's Tables," to further introduce Pakistani basmati rice in the European market, strengthen business-to-business connections, and create new investment opportunities in the agriculture and food sectors

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan has appreciated the successful holding of Pakistan Rice Festival 2026 in the Netherlands, stating that such international trade events play an important role in promoting Pakistani exports, expanding access to new markets, and projecting a positive image of Pakistan globally he Minister commended the efforts of Pakistan's Ambassador to the Netherlands, Syed Haider Shah, Trade and Investment Counsellor Muhammad Shafiq Haider Virk, and the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), said a release issued here Wednesday. He said that Pakistani basmati rice has become an important symbol of Pakistan around the world, and its growing international demand is encouraging for the country's agriculture sector and exporters. Jam Kamal Khan termed the participation of more than 100 importers, retailers, food industry experts, renowned chefs, diplomatic representatives, and business leaders from across Europe as a reflection of growing international confidence in

Pakistan. He said that the Government of Pakistan remains committed to increasing agricultural and food exports, promoting investment, and further strengthening global trade linkages. The event was held under the theme, "From Pakistan's Fields to Europe's Tables," to further introduce Pakistani basmati rice in the European market, strengthen business-to-business connections, and create new investment opportunities in the agriculture and food sectors. Speaking on the occasion, Pakistan's Ambassador to the Netherlands, Syed Haider Shah, said that Pakistani basmati rice is being exported to more than 100 countries worldwide. He noted that its distinctive aroma, long grain, and excellent cooking qualities have made it increasingly popular among global consumers, retailers, and culinary experts. He said Pakistan is committed to ensuring quality, sustainability, traceability, and full compliance with international food safety standards in the agriculture and food products sector. Pakistani basmati, he added, is not merely an agricultural product but a distinctive brand protected through Geographical Indication (GI), representing centuries of agricultural heritage and internationally recognized quality. During the event, participants were offered an oppor-

tunity to sample different varieties of premium Pakistani basmati rice, particularly Super Kernel Basmati. Traditional as well as modern dishes prepared with Pakistani basmati rice were also presented. The participants were also given a detailed briefing on the Geographical Indication status of basmati rice, quality assurance mechanisms, traceability systems, and compliance with European market requirements. The event also included discussions on opportunities for enhanced agricultural and food-sector cooperation between Pakistan and the Netherlands. The upcoming Food Exhibition 2026, scheduled to be held in Karachi from November 23 to 26, 2026, was highlighted as Pakistan's next major trade milestone in the food and agriculture sector. To showcase Pakistan's wider export potential, a special activity titled "Goal for Pakistan" was also organized, highlighting Pakistan's achievements in the manufacturing of world-class footballs. The Netherlands is among Pakistan's most important export markets in the European Union. Bilateral trade between Pakistan and the Netherlands has reached approximately US\$1.94 billion, while more than 50 Dutch companies are engaged in business activities across different sectors in Pakistan.

Fears grow for civilians as paramilitary group closes in Sudanese city

CAIRO: Paramilitary attacks on a strategic city of a half-million people in central Sudan have raised international alarm that another round of mass violence against civilians is being planned as the country's war surges into its fourth year. "We must not allow the horrors of El Fasher to be repeated in El Obeid," a spokesman for UN Secretary-General António Guterres said in a statement. More than 6,000 people were killed in three days last year when the Rapid Support Forces seized el-Fasher in an attack that UN experts said bore the "hallmarks of genocide." The UN Security Council has said it is alarmed by reports of "substantial" reinforcements by the RSF around el-Obeid in North Kordofan. The United States, Britain and some other European countries have warned of "escalating atrocity risks." RSF deployments around el-Obeid suggest preparations for an offensive to retake it and whether the city ultimately falls depends on several factors, experts told The Associated Press. The RSF didn't immediately respond to requests for comment. The city on Sudan's main east-west road leading to the Nile Valley and the capital, Khartoum, is strategic for Sudan's army as it battles the RSF. The military broke more than yearlong siege on the city early last year. The city has a sprawling air base and is home to an infantry division. El Obeid is important beyond even the strategic implications because it shows what happens when you have two forces that are highly depleted attempting to gain advantage on the other in high proximity," said Nathaniel Raymond, executive director of the Humanitarian Research Lab at the Yale School of Public Health. The RSF wants to control the road to Khartoum, which Sudan's military retook last year, and its sister city, Omdurman, placing them again under threat, creating "havoc for civilians" and making it hard for humanitarian agencies returning to the capital area, Raymond said. Experts said an attack on el-Obeid would be different from the one on el-Fasher, which followed an 18-month siege and where many killings were ethnically motivated. This is not a genocidal move, it's a tactical one," Raymond said, warning of possible reprisal killings for those who are seen as allied with the military if the RSF retakes el-Obeid. The RSF can isolate el-Obeid from multiple directions, but sustaining a siege would cost the paramilitary significant manpower, vehicles and military equipment, said Ali Mahmoud Ali, Sudan researcher with the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data project, or ACLED. If the paramilitary manages to take and hold the city, the situation there "could deteriorate rapidly," he said. Over recent months, el-Obeid has been subjected to brutal drone strikes by the RSF that have destroyed civilian infrastructure including power facilities and neighborhoods. Drone attacks also have targeted bridges and key supply routes into the city, according to the UN Taghreed Al-Rashid, a 35-year-old resident reached by phone, said she feels reassured by the presence of army forces but is increasingly fearful of drone attacks targeting residential neighborhoods and markets. She said a recent strike on a power facility sparked a water crisis which has led her to pay \$5 per barrel of water. "We're committed to staying in the city despite our ongoing hardships because forced displacement is a bigger struggle," Al-Rashid said. The ongoing drone attacks have increased the civilian death toll in the Kordofan region. At least 2,670 people including combatants and civilians were killed in 2025, marking a 600 percent increase in drone-related deaths and an 81 percent increase in drone attacks compared to the previous year, ACLED found.—Agencies

MWL vows to global refugee protection, dignity

MAKKAH: The Muslim World League (MWL) has reaffirmed its profound commitment to addressing the plight of refugees and forcibly displaced populations globally, marking World Refugee Day with a call for enhanced protection and dignity for vulnerable groups. The organization emphasized that its extensive humanitarian efforts are deeply rooted in Islamic values, which advocate for elevating human dignity, relieving the needy, safeguarding the vulnerable, and promoting their fundamental rights to a secure, stable, and dignified life. In pursuit of these humanitarian objectives, the League continues to execute its responsibilities through strategic partnerships with international organizations and governments worldwide. These collaborative initiatives focus on delivering comprehensive support to refugees across multiple countries. The core of these operations involves providing essential life-sustaining services, including secure shelter, quality education, and reliable healthcare, as well as dedicated programs to protect children and economically empower families. Furthermore, the Muslim World League is actively implementing social integration programs and capacity-building initiatives designed to help displaced individuals rebuild their lives. Carried out under the direct oversight and coordination of host governments, these projects aim to alleviate human suffering and restore hope.—APP

Iran-Gulf-Iraq talks to focus on future Hormuz operations

LONDON/DUBAI: Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani visited Muscat on Wednesday for talks with Oman on initiating negotiations involving Iran, Iraq and Gulf Arab states on the Strait of Hormuz, a diplomat briefed on the talks told Reuters. The discussions are separate from US-Iran peace talks and de-mining arrangements. Gulf states are expected to push for no transit fees, while Iran could propose environmental, navigation and security fees, the diplomat said. The Strait of Hormuz, a vital route for roughly a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas supplies, has been heavily disrupted since the United States and Israel launched a war against Iran on February 28, curbing commercial shipping and rattling global energy markets. 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 states and Iraq on the future management of navigation and maritime services in the strait.—APP

Briefs

Pakistan, Iran pledge deeper security coop as regional tensions ease

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran have agreed to expand cooperation in security, counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and immigration, as Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi held detailed talks with his Iranian counterpart, Eskandar Momeni, on bilateral relations and the evolving regional situation following a peace agreement. During the meeting, the two ministers reviewed Pakistan-Iran ties and discussed the latest developments in the region after the peace accord. They expressed satisfaction over the reduction in regional tensions and voiced hope that the agreement would produce far-reaching positive consequences for peace and stability. Momeni thanked Pakistan for the warm welcome extended to the Iranian president and his delegation during their visit to the country. Naqvi congratulated the Iranian interior minister on the joint declaration issued in Birgenstock, Switzerland, saying the agreement would not have been possible without the sincere efforts of the Iranian government and its leadership. "Pakistan has always sought peace and stability across the world," Naqvi said, adding that Islamabad would continue its efforts for lasting peace in the Middle East.

Iran's top diplomat speaks with Hamas

TEHRAN: Iran's top diplomat spoke with a senior official from the Palestinian militant group Hamas regarding talks between Iran and the United States, state television reported on Wednesday. Abbas Araghchi discussed the "latest developments" in the region with Basem Naem, a member of Hamas's political bureau, Iranian television said.

The call follows the signing last week of a memorandum of understanding between Iran and the United States aimed at bringing a lasting end to hostilities in the Middle East. The text does not mention Gaza but stipulates "an immediate and permanent cessation of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon."

Hamas has welcomed the agreement and expressed hope that it would also help end the violence in the Gaza Strip, which has been devastated by over two years of war with Israel. Iran is a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause, making it a cornerstone of its foreign policy since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. During the call, Araghchi "reaffirmed the Islamic republic's continued support for Palestinians and their just cause until their legitimate national rights are fully realized," according to a transcript reported by Iranian television. - APP

Spanish PM denies corruption

MADRID: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez on Wednesday dismissed allegations of "widespread corruption" against his Socialists after his ex-top aide was jailed for a graft scandal that risks toppling the government. "Certain actors in politics and the media are trying to mix, to put on the same level and therefore confuse people, to create a sensation of widespread corruption which ... does not exist," Sanchez told parliament. - APP

European missions in Taipei warn against Chinese patrols

While European nations do not maintain formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan, their de facto embassies serve as important channels of communication

DNA

TAIPEI: The de facto embassies of Britain, France, and Germany in Taipei issued a rare joint statement on Wednesday, voicing concern over recent Chinese coast guard patrols off Taiwan's east coast. The coordinated message highlights growing European unease about Beijing's maritime activities in the Indo-Pacific. "We have noted with concern novel Chinese activity in the waters east of Taiwan. These actions threaten regional stability and the freedom of navigation and safety of international shipping," the statement read. China has stepped up patrols in waters

east of Taiwan, a region critical for international shipping lanes that connect East Asia with the Pacific. Analysts say the patrols are part of Beijing's broader effort to assert sovereignty claims and monitor maritime traffic around Taiwan. Taipei has described the patrols as provocative, warning that they could disrupt regional peace and stability. While European nations do not maintain formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan, their de facto embassies serve as important channels of communication. The joint statement underscores Europe's increasing involvement in Indo-Pacific security matters. Britain, France, and Germany have all signaled in recent years that they

intend to play a more active role in safeguarding freedom of navigation and supporting democratic partners in the region. The waters east of Taiwan are among the busiest shipping routes in the world. Any disruption could have significant consequences for global supply chains, particularly in energy and technology sectors. The European missions' warning reflects concerns that maritime incidents could escalate into broader geopolitical crises, affecting not only regional players but also international commerce.

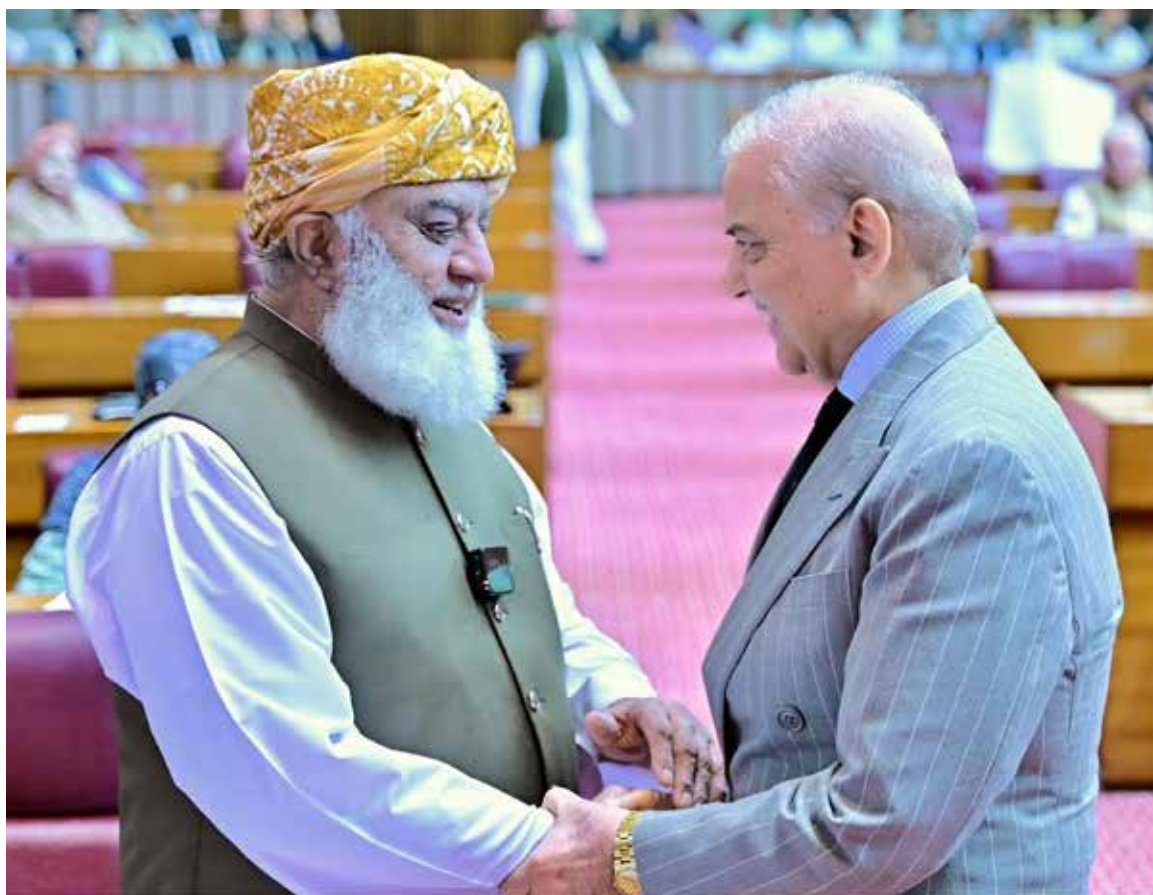
The joint statement is notable for its unified European stance. By emphasizing the importance of freedom of navigation, the missions align their position with international

law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The message, though carefully worded, sends a clear signal to Beijing that European powers are monitoring developments closely and are prepared to speak out against actions perceived as destabilizing. The coordinated European response highlights the growing internationalization of Taiwan Strait tensions. By drawing attention to risks for shipping and regional stability, Britain, France, and Germany have placed maritime security at the center of the debate. As China continues to expand its patrols, observers expect more countries to weigh in, reflecting the global stakes of regional disputes.

South Korea hockey team to tour Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has confirmed that the South Korean national hockey team will tour Pakistan from July 27 to August 9, 2026. During the visit, the South Korean squad will hold a training camp in Islamabad and play a series of practice matches against local teams. The detailed schedule of the camp and matches will be announced shortly, according to PHF officials. PHF Interim President Mubayyid Ahmad Wani stated that a 25-member South Korean delegation will arrive in Pakistan for the tour. He emphasized that the arrival of one of Asia's leading hockey teams will provide valuable exposure and experience for Pakistani players. "This visit is a significant opportunity for our athletes to compete against a top-tier Asian side. It will help raise the standard of our game and inspire our players," Wani said. He further noted that the tour reflects the international community's confidence in Pakistan's sporting environment and security arrangements. "The presence of South Korea's team is living proof of the excellent sporting atmosphere and world-class security measures in place in Pakistan," he added. The PHF believes the tour will not only strengthen hockey ties between Pakistan and South Korea but also showcase Pakistan's ability to host international sporting events successfully.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif shakes hands with President JUI-F Maulana Fazl ur Rehman in the National Assembly in Islamabad on 24th June 2026. - DNA

Israel, Lebanon discuss pilot project

"Today, and in the coming days, we embark on a new round of talks, which we hope will be decisive in achieving what we desire for the good of our nation and our people," Aoun said in a post on X

DNA

JERUSALEM: Israel and Lebanon are discussing a US-backed pilot project under which Israeli troops would hand over control of some territory in southern Lebanon to the Lebanese Armed Forces, according to three Israeli officials. The officials said the Lebanese troops involved would undergo US training and vetting to ensure they are not linked to Hezbollah, while Israel would maintain a military presence in the buffer zone. Lebanon and Israel began a new round of talks on Tuesday in Washington, with Beirut determined to press ahead with direct negotiations even as they appear to be overshadowed by Iran's decision to make Lebanon part of its talks with the US. Lebanese officials have insisted that face-to-face negotiations with Israel are the only way to secure an end to the war raging since March 2, when armed group Hezbollah fired at Israel in support of Iran and triggered Israeli air and ground attacks that have killed more than 4,000 people in Lebanon.

But four rounds of Lebanese-Israeli talks since April have failed to produce a durable ceasefire. Instead, the longest lull in fighting came this week after Iran and the US agreed a memorandum of understanding that stipulated fighting would halt across all fronts, including Lebanon.

That deal buoyed Iran-backed Hezbollah and dealt a blow to the Lebanese state, whose leaders including President Joseph Aoun had repeatedly warned that Tehran cannot negotiate on Lebanon's behalf. "Today, and in the coming days, we embark on a new round of talks, which we hope will be decisive in achieving what we desire for the good of our nation and our people," Aoun said in a post on X on Tuesday. Aoun rejected Israel's occupation of south Lebanon and other foreign interference, alluding to Iran, as a fifth round of Israel-Lebanon talks began in Washington.

"We accept nothing less than an end to the Israeli occupation and at the same time, the fall of foreign tutelage, because our only option is our national sovereignty and our sole wager is on the Lebanese state," Aoun said, according to his office.

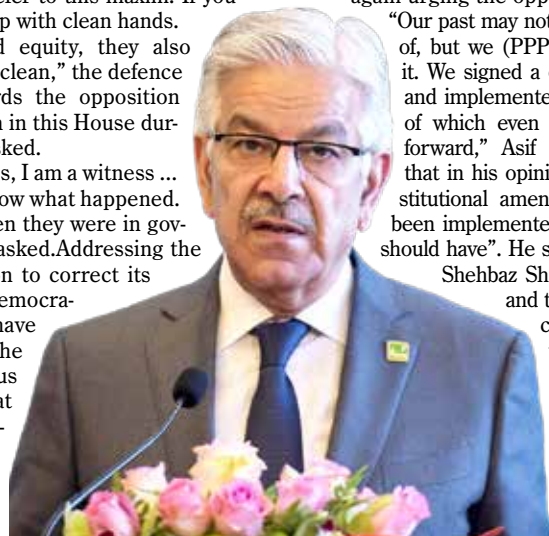
Khawaja Asif tells opposition to correct its ways

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Wednesday told the opposition to examine its own past before criticising the government and to sign a Charter of Democracy with the government. His remarks come a day after the opposition's bitter criticism of the government during a tumultuous day in the National Assembly. The opposition leader, Mehmood Khan Achakzai, launched into a harsh diatribe, criticising the government, the judiciary and the establishment. Speaking on the floor of the lower house of Parliament on Wednesday, Asif said, "Whenever I issue instructions or make any demand, I refer to this maxim: If you seek equity, you should come up with clean hands. "When these people demand equity, they also check whether their hands are clean," the defence minister said, pointing towards the opposition benches. "What did not happen in this House during their time in power?" he asked. "You (the speaker) are a witness, I am a witness ... even the walls of this House know what happened. What did they not do to us when they were in government?" the PML-N leader asked. Addressing the House, Asif told the opposition to correct its past and sign a Charter of Democracy with the government. "We have also made mistakes ... sign the Charter of Democracy ... But us and them should not forget what we have done in the past." Referring to the political turmoil of the 1990s, the defence minister said that there was a lot of blame between the PPP

and the PML-N - now coalition partners in the federal government. "There was a lot of blame between us, but later, both parties ... realised that we should take a break from these issues and sort things out among ourselves," he said. He said that both Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif decided that a proper code of conduct should be developed that maintains respect and dignity between the opposition and the ruling parties. Criticising the former PTI government, Asif said, "Sitting in your chair (the speaker), 55 pieces of legislation were passed in just half an hour, after which they dissolved the assembly. "It is a cardinal sin that, sitting in your chair, the former speaker takes such a step in favour of one party and dissolves the assembly," Asif said, again urging the opposition to look at their past.

"Our past may not have been something to be proud of, but we (PPP and PML-N) tried to learn from it. We signed a document, learned from our past, and implemented reforms based on it, as a result of which even constitutional amendments came forward," Asif said. The defence minister said that in his opinion, there was still a need for constitutional amendments, because they "have not been implemented or worked as effectively as they should have". He said that yesterday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif walked over to the opposition and talked to them. "This was not even conceivable when Imran Khan was the premier," he said. The defence minister said that when Imran was the prime minister, the PTI members didn't even talk to the opposition lest he be "offended". He mentioned that, in the past, there was civility among the political parties and in political culture.



Jones rules himself out of contest to be Britain's next PM

DNA

LONDON: Darren Jones, chief secretary to outgoing British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and one of his key allies, ruled himself out of any contest to succeed the Labour leader on Wednesday and threw his support behind the only candidate, Andy Burnham. "Andy Burnham is going to be the next prime minister. And if there was a contest of Labour Party members, he would win," Jones told Sky News. Jones had been touted as one possible candidate who could challenge Burnham in a leadership contest and his decision to back the former Greater Manchester mayor means Burnham is likely to become prime minister in the middle of July, rather than September after a leadership contest. Jones said he had been reassured by Burnham about his economic policy, an area of concern for investors after he said last year that the country had to stop being in "hock to the bond markets," comments he later said had been misrepresented. "We talked ... a lot about what he (Burnham) was thinking on the economy and what my thoughts were on that, and some of the potential ways forward for the new government," he said.

Nuclear inspectors will visit Iran's nuclear sites

NEWS DESK



TOKYO: The head of the UN's nuclear agency signaled Wednesday that Iranian nuclear enrichment sites would be visited by his inspectors, a key component in the interim deal between the United States and Iran to reach an end to the war. The comment by International Atomic Energy Agency head Rafael Mariano Grossi was the firmest yet from the United Nations agency, which is viewed as key in determining the status of Iran's nuclear stockpile. Since Israel launched a 12-day war on Iran in 2025, the IAEA has been blocked by Tehran from visiting enrichment sites where the Islamic Republic is believed to store enough highly enriched uranium to potentially build as many as 10 nuclear weapons, should it choose to rush for the bomb. Iran long has maintained that its program is peaceful, though it is the only country in the world to have uranium enriched up to 60 percent purity without a weapons program. The US and Iran offered contradictory remarks Tuesday about whether those sites would be inspected.

CNS Ashraf stresses adaptive strategies


RAWALPINDI: Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Naveed Ashraf, NI (M), T Bt, has underscored the evolving nature of modern warfare and the increasingly complex maritime security environment, highlighting the necessity of adopting adaptive and forward-looking strategies. Addressing the participants of the 55th PN Staff Course at Pakistan Navy War College Lahore, he emphasized that contemporary security challenges encompass both conventional and non-conventional threats, requiring enhanced preparedness, innovation, and a comprehensive approach to safeguarding national and regional maritime interests. - DNA

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