



Islamabad POST

Monday, June 29, 2026

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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Pakistan urges adherence to ceasefire: Dar

Detailed News On Page-01

Pakistan sounds alarm over Sudan atrocities

Detailed News On Page-08

MSMEs engine of growth says D 8 Secy Gen

Detailed News On Page-07

Middle East tensions

Iran, US trade fresh strikes, accuse each other of truce breaches

Mojtaba Khamenei says child killings, war crimes against Iran must be pursued in domestic, international courts

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Iran and the US continued exchanging attacks in the Gulf, with both sides accusing each other of breaching the interim agreement reached less than two weeks ago to halt their four-month-long war. Tehran said Sunday it carried out a third day of retaliatory strikes against US attacks on Iranian territory, as both accused the other of violating their fragile ceasefire, straining negotiations meant to end the Middle East war. The exchanges underscored the fragility of a Pakistan-brokered peace process aimed at ending a war launched by the United States and Israel in February, which disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and rattled global energy markets. Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Sunday they were taking measures to control traffic in the vital Strait of Hormuz and that violating vessels would be dealt with more firmly than before. The only authorised passage by Tehran passes through a corridor running along Iran's coast. The Guards said they had also carried out retaliatory strikes in Kuwait and Bahrain. In a statement, they said the strikes "destroyed eight important US military facilities at the Ali al-Salem base in Kuwait and at the Fifth Fleet naval base in Port Salman in Bahrain". "Any enemy aggression, whatever the pretext, even against insignificant targets... will have a crushing response,"

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Trump threatens to annihilate Iran

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Tehran said on Sunday it carried out a third day of retaliatory strikes against US attacks on Iranian territory, as both accused the other of violating their fragile ceasefire, straining negotiations meant to end the Middle East war. The exchanges underscored the fragility of a Pakistan-brokered peace process aimed at ending a war launched by the United States and Israel in February, which disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and rattled global energy markets. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said on Sunday they were taking measures to control traffic in the vital Strait of Hormuz and that violating vessels would be dealt with more firmly than before. The only authorised passage by Tehran passes through a corridor running along Iran's coast. In a statement, they said the strikes "destroyed eight important US military facilities at the Ali al-Salem base in Kuwait and at the Fifth Fleet naval base in

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Briefs

Helicopter crash kills 14 in Saudi Arabia

DNA

RIYADH: A helicopter crash in Saudi Arabia killed 14 Saudi citizens on Sunday, the official press agency reported, adding that the aircraft belonged to state oil giant Aramco. The Saudi Press Agency, citing an official at the energy ministry, reported the helicopter crashed in Ras Tanura in the country's east. "The accident claimed the lives of all 14 passengers, all Saudi citizens," the agency said, adding that an investigation was under way to determine the cause of the crash. Aramco says it operates more than 60 aircraft, including helicopters serving more than 300 heliports in Saudi Arabia, making it one of the largest corporate fleets in the region.

Plane crash kills 11 in France

NEWS DESK

PARIS: A civilian aircraft carrying skydivers crashed near the eastern French town of Tomblaine on Sunday, killing all 11 people on board, local authorities said, in one of France's deadliest light aircraft accidents. The crash killed five instructors, five students, and the pilot, said Yves Seguy, the prefect of the eastern department of Meurthe-et-Moselle. "There were no bystanders among the victims," he added, speaking at a press conference. The aircraft, registered in Germany, crashed in a grassy area near the runway of the Nancy-Essey aerodrome, close to a residential area and two roads, an AFP journalist reported. The cause of the incident was not immediately clear.

Amidst rising tensions

FM Dar, EU HRVP Kaja Kallas discuss regional situation

HRVP Kallas expressed serious concerns over recent ceasefire violations and stressed that communication channels between all parties must remain open to prevent escalation

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar held a telephonic conversation today with European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Kaja Kallas. The two leaders reviewed the rapidly evolving regional situation and exchanged views on peace and stability efforts. HRVP Kallas appreciated Pakistan's sincere diplomatic efforts that culminated in the signing of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). However, she expressed serious concerns over recent

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Dar talks to Saudi, Bahrain FM's

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, on Sunday, discussed the latest evolving regional situation following the signing of the "Islamabad MoU".

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SOME REST IN COMFORT, OTHERS IN SURVIVAL



MULTAN: "In the quiet shade of struggle, rest is not luxury but necessity, a fragile pause in a world that forgets the weary." This is a story of millions of Pakistanis who are forced to live even below the poverty line. - (Caption DNA/Photo APP)

Iran FM for a security framework with Gulf countries

AGENCIES

TEHRAN: Iran's foreign minister has called for the establishment of a security framework with Gulf countries, after Iranian strikes against US bases in the Gulf in retaliation for American attacks, AFP reports. "We should reach a new framework that includes all countries in the region and without the presence or interference of any country from outside the region," Abbas Araghchi said at a news conference on a visit to the Iraqi capital, Baghdad. Meanwhile, Hezbollah lawmaker Hassan

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Extensive pre-monsoon rainfall spell till July 3

DNA

ISLAMABAD: NDMA Sunday advised citizens to stay alert as intermittent pre-monsoon rains are expected across Pakistan from June 28 to July 3, warning of heightened risks of glacier melting, flash floods, and landslides in northern areas, urging people to avoid risky travel, remain informed, and take necessary safety precautions.

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Fitna al Hindustan strikes

President, PM slam terrorist attack on Rangers' camp

The prime minister commended the security forces for successfully foiling a cowardly terrorist attack by Fitna al-Hindustan terrorists on a Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) camp in Karachi

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD, President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Sunday, strongly condemned the terrorist attack carried out by the Indian proxy terrorist group on a Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) camp in Karachi. The president paid tribute to the three Pakistan Rangers personnel who embraced martyrdom in the attack carried out by Indian backed Jamat ul Ahrar terrorists and prayed for the elevation of their ranks. President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release. He said the nation would never forget the sacrifices of its brave soldiers in the fight against terrorism. President Zardari asserted that the nefarious

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Taliban involved in Karachi attack

DNA

KARACHI: In a major development, an injured terrorist affiliated with the outlawed group Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, who was involved in the attack carried out on a Pakistan Rangers camp, has made startling confessions. His revelations have brought to light substantial evidence implicating the Afghan Taliban regime in supporting cross-border terrorism. The arrested terrorist, identified as Usman Ali, provided detailed information

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Iran-Pakistan trade to be boosted thru Taftan railway station

11.75-hectare station authorised to handle loading, unloading, customs clearance of imported and exported goods, states FBR

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has officially declared the Taftan border railway station a land customs station for import and export operations, a step expected to streamline rail-based trade, lower transport costs and strengthen formal commerce between Pakistan and Iran.

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Law, order continue to deteriorate in the Capital

The CDA's negligence in maintaining street lights has compounded the problem. Without illumination, even the most basic deterrent against crime is missing; Islamabad's image as a modern, secure capital at stake

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad's fragile security situation was once again laid bare when a senior journalist was robbed at gunpoint in Sector G-11 during the early hours of June 26. The incident occurred around 12:15 a.m., barely 500 meters from the Ramna police station, raising serious questions about the effectiveness of law enforcement in the capital city. According to the FIR, the robbers intercepted him near G-11 and fled directly toward Mehrabadi, a notorious settlement adjacent to the sector. Residents describe Mehrabadi, part of the larger katchi abadi network, as a hub of criminal activity where even police patrols hesitate to enter. The journalist, visibly shaken, told this media house: "Nobody dares to go there, not even the police." Despite the proximity of the crime scene to a police station, no patrols were present at the time. The victim lodged a formal complaint with Ramna police, and an FIR has been registered. Investigations have reportedly begun, but locals remain skeptical about whether justice will be served. Residents point to the failure of Islamabad's much-touted Safe City project, noting that most surveillance cameras in the area are either dysfunctional or not monitored effectively. The project, launched with great fanfare, was meant to provide real-time monitoring of the capital's streets.

Instead, it has become symbolic of inefficiency and neglect. Adding to the insecurity is the absence of basic infrastructure. The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has failed to install or maintain street lights in many sectors, including G-11. The darkness provides cover for criminals, who exploit it to carry out robberies, car thefts, and assaults. Outlaws benefit directly from this negligence, as poorly lit streets make it easier to ambush unsuspecting citizens and escape undetected. Residents of G-11 expressed frustration, saying that if such brazen crimes can occur in well-populated, settled sectors, the situation in sparsely populated areas must be even worse. "If criminals can strike here, what hope is there for those living in less secure neighborhoods?" one resident remarked. Another added that the absence of routine patrols and the reluctance of police to confront criminal networks entrenched in informal settlements have emboldened offenders. The incident underscores a growing perception that Islamabad's law and order machinery is faltering. The lack of police presence, ineffective surveillance, and unchecked criminal activity in adjoining katchi abadis have created an environment where citizens feel increasingly vulnerable. This robbery is not an isolated case but part of a troubling pattern. Sector G-11, due to its proximity to Mehrabadi, has long been considered unsafe after dark. The absence of routine patrols and the

reluctance of police to confront criminal networks entrenched in informal settlements have emboldened offenders. Residents say that criminals often retreat into Mehrabadi after committing crimes, knowing that police rarely pursue them there. The CDA's negligence in maintaining street lights has compounded the problem. Without illumination, even the most basic deterrent against crime is missing. Citizens argue that the darkness is not accidental but systemic, reflecting a lack of accountability in civic management. The result is a city where criminals roam freely while law-abiding residents live in fear. **Impact on Journalists and Citizens** For journalists, who often face threats due to their profession, the incident is particularly alarming. It highlights not only the risks faced by ordinary citizens but also the dangers confronting those tasked with holding institutions accountable. A senior journalist being robbed so close to a police station sends a chilling message: nobody is safe, regardless of profession or status. Citizens across Islamabad are demanding urgent reforms. They want functional surveillance systems, regular patrols, and decisive action against criminal hideouts. Until then, the capital's reputation as a "safe city" will remain little more than a slogan. Ramna police station has registered an FIR and initiated investigations. Officials claim that efforts are underway to trace the culprits, but residents

remain doubtful. Past experiences suggest that investigations often stall, with little follow-up or accountability. Critics argue that unless police are willing to confront criminal networks in katchi abadis, such incidents will continue unabated. Islamabad's law and order crisis reflects a broader governance failure. The CDA's inability to provide street lighting, the police's reluctance to patrol high-risk areas, and the malfunctioning Safe City project all point to systemic neglect. Citizens feel abandoned, left to fend for themselves in a city that was once considered one of the safest in Pakistan. The situation also raises questions about urban planning. Informal settlements like Mehrabadi have grown unchecked, becoming sanctuaries for criminal activity. Without integration into formal policing and civic management, these areas will continue to undermine the security of adjoining sectors. The robbery of a senior journalist in G-11 is more than just another crime story. It is a stark reminder of Islamabad's deteriorating security environment. With law enforcement hesitant, civic authorities negligent, and criminals emboldened, the capital is at risk of sliding into lawlessness. Unless urgent reforms are implemented—restoring street lights, repairing surveillance systems, and ensuring police accountability—citizens will remain vulnerable, and Islamabad's image as a modern, secure capital will continue to erode.

Bill to replace outdated Christian Marriage Law submitted in KP assembly

Once enacted by the Provincial Assembly, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Christian Marriage Act, 2026, will repeal the application of the Christian Marriage Act, 1872, within the province and establish a modern, transparent, and rights-based legal framework for Christian marriages that better serves present and future generations

PESHAWAR: In a landmark step towards strengthening the rights of religious minorities, Ms Shazia Tehmas Khan, Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) from Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), has tabled the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Christian Marriage Bill, 2026. The bill has been jointly drafted by MPA Shazia Tehmas Khan, Blue Veins & NCHR, with technical support by Mr Qamar Nasim, Program Manager at Blue Veins, under the Sub NCHR/KP's Sub Committee on Minority Rights. The proposed Bill seeks to replace the 154-year-old Christian Marriage Act, 1872, an outdated colonial-era law, with a modern legal framework that reflects Pakistan's constitutional guarantees, contemporary administrative standards and the evolving needs of the Christian community in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The legislation establishes a comprehensive legal framework for the solemnization, registration, regulation, and legal recognition of Christian marriages in the province. It introduces stronger safeguards against child marriage, forced marriage, coercion, fraud, misrepresentation and unlawful solemnization while ensuring that Christian marriages continue to

be conducted in accordance with the religious practices of different churches and denominations. The Bill also introduces modern procedures for marriage registration, secure maintenance of physical and electronic marriage records, improved coordination with civil registration authorities, including NADRA and enhanced legal certainty for Christian families. It further protects the legitimacy and rights of children, strengthens accountability through transparent regulation of marriage registrars and ordained ministers, and introduces safeguards against fraudulent practices. Speaking on the introduction of the Bill, Ms Shazia Tehmas Khan said: "This Bill is a historic step towards ensuring equal rights, dignity, and legal protection for the Christian community of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Developed through extensive consultations with churches, clergy, community leaders, and legal experts, the legislative draft is firmly grounded in Biblical values and Christian traditions while remaining fully consistent with the Constitution of Pakistan. It replaces an outdated colonial-era law with a modern legal framework that protects Christian families and respects their

faith." Rizwan Ullah Shah, Coordinator, National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said the NCHR remains committed to promoting rights of religious minorities through dialogue and inclusive lawmaking. We are pleased that the Commission's Sub-Committee on Minority Rights contributed to the consultative process that helped shape this important legislative reform for the Christian community, he added. Qamar Naseem, Program Manager, Blue Veins, who provided technical support in drafting the legislation, said this Bill reflects the collective input of Christian community elders, church leaders, clergy, legal experts, and civil society. It modernizes Christian marriage law while preserving Christian traditions, strengthening legal protections, and responding to the practical needs of Christian families in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Once enacted by the Provincial Assembly, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Christian Marriage Act, 2026, will repeal the application of the Christian Marriage Act, 1872, within the province and establish a modern, transparent, and rights-based legal framework for Christian marriages that better serves present and future generations.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Workers busy in digging with heavy machinery for installing new sewerage line at Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed Road, during development work, in the Federal Capital.

Call for proactive steps as monsoon threats intensify

LAHORE: Coordinator to the Federal Tax Ombudsman Saif Ur Rehman on Sunday called for prompt action and effective precautionary measures to minimize the risks of floods and landslides as forecasts indicate heavier-than-usual rainfall during the ongoing monsoon season. In a statement issued here, he urged the authorities to activate effective early warning systems to alert vulnerable communities living near rivers, streams and hilly areas well in advance about potential threats. He also stressed the need for the immediate clearance of drainage channels, strengthening of embankments and deployment of emergency response teams in flood-prone regions to deal with any untoward situation. Saif Ur Rehman appealed to citizens to strictly follow weather advisories, avoid unnecessary travel to high-risk areas and fully cooperate with local authorities during emergency operations. He said public awareness and community participation were essential to reducing the impact of natural disasters and emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts among rescue services, district administrations and other relevant departments to minimize the loss of life and property. Expressing optimism, he said that with proactive planning, improved coordination and timely preventive measures, Pakistan could effectively mitigate the adverse effects of monsoon-related floods and landslides while protecting lives, infrastructure and livelihoods.—APP

PEMRA suspends Geo News transmission for 15 days over Muharram broadcast

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has suspended the licence of Geo News for 15 days with immediate effect over the broadcast of religious visualisation during a special Muharram transmission. According to an order issued by PEMRA's Authority Committee, the regulator took notice of a programme titled Safare-Ishq, aired by Geo News, operated by M/s Independent Media Corporation (Pvt.) Ltd., during its special transmission for Muharram 10 on June 26, 2026. PEMRA said the programme contained religious visualisation which, given the religious, cultural and social sensitivities surrounding the

subject, constituted a serious regulatory concern. The authority stated that the broadcast was, prima facie, liable to hurt the religious sentiments of viewers, undermine religious harmony, offend commonly accepted standards of responsibility and due care, and create a risk of disturbing public peace, tranquility and law and order. The order said the licensee, including its In-House Monitoring Committee, was required to exercise heightened editorial judgment, caution and control while airing religious content. According to PEMRA, the broadcast was inconsistent with the obligations of a licensee under Section 20(b), (c), (d) and (f) of the PEMRA Ordinance, 2002, read with Rule 15(1) of the PEMRA Rules, 2009, Regulation 18(1)(c) and (g) of the PEMRA (Television Broadcast Station Operations) Regulations, 2012, and Clauses 3(1)(a) and (d), 4(10), 5, 10(1) and 17 of the Electronic Media (Programmes and Advertisements) Code of Conduct, 2015. The authority also said the matter was inconsistent with its directive issued on June 15, 2026, regarding the observance of the sanctity of Muharram-ul-Haram. Exercising powers under Section 30 of the PEMRA Ordinance, the Authority Committee ordered the suspension of Geo News' licence for 15 days with immediate effect.—DNA

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Kundi lauds peaceful Muharram observance

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday paid tribute to the people of Pakistan and the security forces for ensuring the peaceful observance of Ashura across the country. In a statement, the Governor appreciated the security arrangements made by the Pakistan Armed Forces and police, saying the successful conduct of Muharram processions and gatherings reflected the dedication and professionalism of all law enforcement agencies. He congratulated Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, officials of the Ministry of Interior and other relevant authorities for their coordinated efforts in maintaining peace and security during Muharram. Kundi said Muharram conveyed a timeless message of sacrifice, patience, justice and steadfastness, urging the nation to uphold these values in daily life. He said the peaceful observance of Ashura reflected the maturity, religious harmony and unity of the Pakistani nation, adding that such solidarity was vital for overcoming challenges facing the country. Referring to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kundi said the peaceful observance of Ashura was the result of the collective efforts of the Inspector General of Police, law enforcement agencies, peace committees, religious scholars from both Shia and Sunni communities, and the general public.—APP

Nathiagali-Ayubia becomes summer wonderland for tourists

NATHIAGALI: The emerald hills of Nathiagali and Ayubia came alive as the recent pre-monsoon showers, drifting clouds, and bursts of sunshine transformed the scenic mountain resorts into a breathtaking summer paradise that attracted thousands of tourists seeking relief from the sweltering heat of the plains on Sunday. Nature appeared to paint its own masterpiece across the Galiyat region of Abbottabad, where sunshine-clouds interplay takes tourists over the moon. The pre-monsoon rain swept through the towering Himalayan foothills before giving way to bright sunshine, creating spectacular rainbows that stretched across the pine-covered mountains, spreading up to Murree and Kashmir. Low-hanging clouds drifted lazily over the valleys, wrapping forests and hillsides in a soft white veil and creating

postcard-perfect views that left visitors spellbound. Families, students, and adventure enthusiasts from across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab crowded the winding roads leading to Ayubia and Nathiagali. Vehicles lined the roads while restaurants, tea stalls, and roadside vendors bustled with activity as tourists soaked in the cool mountain breeze after weeks of intense summer temperatures. Children laughed while splashing through rain puddles, couples paused to photograph rainbows arching over the valleys, and elderly visitors quietly admired the mist rolling across forests that have captivated generations. One of the biggest attractions remained the historic four-kilometre Ayubia-Nathiagali horse trail, where the rhythmic clip-clop of horses echoed through dense pine forests. Riders carried smiling visitors

along the colonial-era track, offering panoramic views of towering deodar trees, wildflowers, and mist-covered mountain slopes. For local horse rider Faraz Khan, the tourist season in Galiyat has brought renewed hope for them. "Every rainfall seems to bring more visitors," he said while preparing his horse for another ride. "The combination of rain, sunshine, and drifting clouds makes the forests look magical. Many tourists tell us they feel as if they have entered another world. This season is not only beautiful—it also provides livelihoods for dozens of horse riders and local families." Horse riding has become much more than recreation. It supports dozens of families who depend on tourism during the summer months, creating employment opportunities for guides, craftsmen, and transport providers.—DNA

SIMs on expired ID cards likely to be blocked: PTA

LAHORE: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority has launched a public awareness campaign regarding mobile SIMs registered on invalid, cancelled or expired identity cards and directed users to update their documents in a timely manner. According to PTA, mobile numbers that are linked to inactive, cancelled or expired computerised national identity cards of the National Database and Registration Authority could be suspended or blocked under regulatory rules. The authority has advised mobile users to renew their national identity cards before their expiry date so that there was no disruption in mobile service. The PTA has also clarified that after renewing the identity card, users should immediately update their information in the records of relevant mobile company so that registration details were correct. According to the agency, only those SIMs would remain active that were registered on valid and verifiable identity documents, while users who do not renew on time may face suspension of mobile service.—APP

Azad Kashmir assembly and migrant seats

TANVEER HUSSAIN



THE 12 migrant seats in the Legislative Assembly of Azad Jammu and Kashmir have been a subject of political and constitutional debate for several decades. In 1947, as a result of the partition of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and the ensuing conflict, millions of residents from occupied Kashmir and Jammu migrated to Pakistan. From the very beginning, Pakistan maintained the position that the State of Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory, and its final determination must be made through the free will of its people in accordance with United Nations resolutions. Pakistan has consistently conveyed to the international community that due to state repression and oppression by India, a large number of people from Indian-administered Jammu and

Kashmir were compelled to seek refuge in Pakistan. These displaced Kashmiris, living in Pakistan, are still considered permanent residents of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, and their legal and political status has not been extinguished. It is under this concept that the principle of migrant representation was introduced. The first formal constitutional arrangement in this regard emerged in 1960 during the era of Field Marshal President Ayub Khan, when a new constitutional framework for Azad Kashmir was established and the Azad Kashmir State Council was formed. Alongside representatives from Azad Kashmir, migrants residing in Pakistan were also given representation in this council. Although the present form of the Legislative Assembly and its dedicated migrant seats did not exist at that time, this phase laid the foundation for the constitutional and political representation of migrants. Later, constitutional reforms were introduced in 1964 and 1968, but the principle of migrant representation was maintained. In 1970, under the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Government Act 1970, the first general elections based on adult franchise were held, and the Legisla-

tive Assembly of Azad Kashmir came into existence. Within this electoral system, separate constituencies were created for migrants residing in Pakistan, through which they began electing their representatives. In simple terms, these 12 seats are reserved for individuals and their descendants who migrated from Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan in 1947 and subsequent periods. Only registered migrants residing in Pakistan and their descendants are eligible to vote in these constituencies, while the general electorate of Azad Kashmir does not exercise voting rights in these seats. The current constitutional status of migrants was further strengthened in 1974 when, during the tenure of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution Act 1974 was enacted. Under Article 22 of this Constitution, 12 special seats were constitutionally reserved for migrants in the Legislative Assembly. Of these, 6 seats are allocated to migrants from the Jammu Division and 6 seats to those from the Kashmir Valley (including Srinagar, Baramulla, Anantnag, and other areas). In this way, migrant representation was given permanent con-

stitutional protection. The 12 migrant seats are not merely electoral constituencies but also reflect Pakistan's constitutional and diplomatic stance on the Kashmir issue. The primary purpose of these seats is not only political representation but also to demonstrate that Pakistan recognizes the right to self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and does not consider migrants deprived of their political identity linked to their homeland. Therefore, these seats are regarded as an important constitutional expression of Pakistan's Kashmir policy. Public opinion regarding migrant seats is divided. Some people consider these seats an essential component of the political and constitutional representation of the Kashmir issue. In their view, these seats represent the voice of millions of Kashmiris who were forced to migrate after 1947 and still maintain emotional, historical, and political ties with their ancestral homeland. This system preserves Kashmiri identity and strengthens Pakistan's principled position that the future of Jammu and Kashmir is yet to be decided. Furthermore, through these seats, the migrant population remains integrated into the political process and

is prevented from becoming isolated from the state mainstream, which is viewed as a positive democratic aspect. On the other hand, some critics argue that questions are raised regarding the transparency of voter lists and the electoral process of migrant seats. They also contend that major political parties in Pakistan may influence the electoral outcomes of these seats. Critics further argue that since these voters do not have a direct connection with the geographical territory of Azad Jammu and Kashmir or its local issues, there is sometimes a perceived gap between representation and ground realities. It is also debated that despite changing political and social conditions, no fundamental reforms have been introduced in the structure of these seats, which keeps discussions about their role ongoing. Since these seats are part of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution of 1974, they cannot be abolished through any government notification or ordinary legislation. Any amendment or abolition would require a constitutional amendment passed by a two-thirds majority in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JUNE

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

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- ### Water Tank
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RCCI urges banks to boost MSME financing

Speaking on the occasion, Mohammad Asghar Nasar highlighted SMEDA's ongoing initiatives, including business development services, entrepreneurship support, policy advocacy, export promotion, access to finance facilitation and capacity-building programs aimed at strengthening Pakistan's MSME sect

DNA

RAWALPINDI: President of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), Usman Shaukat, has called on commercial banks to significantly increase financing for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), describing them as the backbone of Pakistan's economy and a key driver of employment, innovation and exports. Addressing the World MSME Day 2026 ceremony at Chamber House, organized jointly by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) and RCCI, he said MSMEs currently receive only 7 percent of commercial bank lending, despite their immense contribution to economic growth. "It is time for commercial banks to play a more proactive role in supporting MSMEs. Investing in small businesses is investing in Pakistan's economic future," he remarked. The event was attended by Rizwan Khaleel Shamsi, Chief Manager State Bank of Pakistan, Rawalpindi, RCCI Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi, Vice President Fahad Barlas, District Officer SMEDA Mohammad Asghar Nasar, representatives of trade associations, financial institutions, academia, women and young entrepreneurs, and members of the business community. Speaking on the occasion, Mohammad



Asghar Nasar highlighted SMEDA's ongoing initiatives, including business development services, entrepreneurship support, policy advocacy, export promotion, access to finance facilitation and capacity-building programs aimed

at strengthening Pakistan's MSME sector. Participants discussed key challenges facing MSMEs, including access to finance, business formalization, digitalization, exports and regulatory hurdles. The ceremony concluded with

a renewed commitment from all stakeholders to foster an enabling business environment, strengthen entrepreneurship and promote sustainable economic growth through a vibrant MSME ecosystem.

India can't unilaterally stop Pak's water share under IWT

ISLAMABAD: Dr Kashif Majeed Salik, Research Fellow at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and a water and agriculture policy expert, said that India cannot unilaterally stop or divert Pakistan's share of water under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), and that using water as a weapon carries serious consequences for regional peace and stability. Talking to media, he said India is pursuing hydropower projects and proposed tunnel infrastructure on the western rivers, but any diversion of Pakistan's allocated waters would not be permissible under the Indus Waters Treaty. He said that stopping or diverting another country's water is a grave violation, noting that under the Indus Waters Treaty, India is permitted limited use of the western rivers—Indus, Jhelum and Chenab—for hydropower generation and restricted irrigation. However, it cannot legally divert these rivers in a manner

that deprives Pakistan of its allocated share. He described the IWT as one of the world's most successful and legally binding water-sharing accords that cannot be revoked unilaterally. "The treaty remains legally binding. Pakistan enjoys both legal and moral standing under international law, and any unilateral violation would invite serious international scrutiny," he noted. He refused the perception that Pakistan is running out of water, saying that the country still possesses substantial glacier reserves, groundwater resources and river flows that can meet future needs if managed efficiently. Dr Salik stressed that Pakistan should prioritize reforms in the water sector by strengthening water governance, expanding storage infrastructure and improving the efficiency of its irrigation network. He called for greater investment in dams, reservoirs, canal rehabilitation and modern water

management systems to reduce losses and improve distribution. He also underscored the importance of reliable hydrological data and monitoring systems, saying evidence-based policymaking, sound research and effective international negotiations depend on accurate and transparent information. Expressing concern over excessive groundwater extraction, inefficient domestic water use and low public awareness about conservation, Dr Salik urged both governments and citizens to treat water conservation as a national responsibility. He further called for increased investment in research, climate adaptation, water storage infrastructure and institutional reforms to enhance Pakistan's long-term water resilience. "The challenge before Pakistan is not whether water exists; it is whether we can manage the water we already have," he concluded.—APP

Gilani secures approval for Multan-Lodhran dual carriageway project

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has secured approval for the dualisation of the Multan-Lodhran Road, with funds for the project also released. The approval was granted by Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan following a request from the Senate chairman. The project will be financed through the Road Maintenance Account (RMA) Fund. The 62-kilometre project is estimated to cost Rs4.6 billion and is expected to be completed within one year. Construction work is likely to begin next month. As part of the scheme, 44.8 kilometres of the existing road will be raised to match the level of both carriageways, improving road safety and traffic flow. The Multan-Lodhran Road has remained in poor condition for years, causing difficulties for commuters, transporters and residents. The project is expected to reduce travel time, improve road safety and provide better transport facilities. Expressing satisfaction over the approval, Gilani said another promise made to the people of Multan and Lodhran was being fulfilled. He said the reconstruction and dualisation of the road would provide safer, faster and better travel facilities for the public. He added that addressing the long-standing problems of South Punjab through sustainable development remained one of his priorities and expressed confidence that the project would be completed within the stipulated timeframe. The Senate chairman also reaffirmed his commitment to improving infrastructure and public services across South Punjab to support economic growth and improve the quality of life.—APP

Pak plans to deploy 1m workers to KSA by 2030

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has set a target of deploying one million workers to Saudi Arabia by 2030 under a long-term workforce development strategy aimed at strengthening labour mobility, human capital development and economic co-operation between the two countries. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the target forms part of the Human Resource Development Plan (2025-2039) developed under the Saudi-Pakistan Economic Co-operation Framework (SPECF), which institutionalizes labour cooperation between the two countries in line with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. The plan envisages increasing annual overseas deployments to 1.51 million workers by 2039 through a structured pipeline of skilled, semi-skilled and highly qualified manpower. The targeted sectors include construction, hospitality and tourism, healthcare, information technology, logistics, aviation and infrastructure

development. Saudi Arabia continues to be the leading destination for Pakistani workers. According to the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BE&OE), 762,499 Pakistani workers were registered for overseas employment during 2025, of whom 530,256, or 69.54%, moved to Saudi Arabia. More than 96% of Pakistani workers proceeding abroad through official channels were employed in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, particularly Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The documents note that Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has significantly expanded employment opportunities in the infrastructure, construction and services sectors, helping the Kingdom retain its position as the largest overseas labour market for Pakistani workers. To support the growing demand for skilled manpower, Pakistan's workforce development strategy is aligned with major Saudi mega and giga projects.

The country plans to strengthen training programmes in construction, hospitality, healthcare, ICT and engineering to ensure a steady supply of qualified workers for the Saudi market. The framework also envisages a series of policy and institutional reforms, including Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs), qualification alignment initiatives involving NAVTTC and Saudi training institutions, digital labour market integration and employer-linked recruitment models. According to the documents, Pakistan has proposed a US\$3.8 billion investment framework for Saudi participation, comprising US\$2.7 billion for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and US\$1 billion for higher education. The proposal aims to establish demand-driven training infrastructure, skill cities and joint educational institutions to prepare workers for emerging labour market requirements.—APP

Pakistan's missing leadership schools

ISLAMABAD: Every year, students across Pakistan contest elections, organize events, and represent their classmates through student councils. But these bodies are largely symbolic, lacking the authority once exercised by student unions that shaped generations of political and civic leaders. What remains is participation without power. As a result, an important pathway for democratic participation and leadership development has steadily weakened. Education experts and students say the weakening of student unions, particularly after the 1984 ban imposed during General Zia-ul-Haq's rule, has left a lasting impact on student leadership and representation in educational institutions. The student council has benefited the society primarily by outlining the structure by which the society will run, holding interviews for the heads and ensur-

ing competency and drive," said Sumayyah Raees Khan, vice-president of the Drama Society, talking to APP. "In an abstract sense, our society assists in diversifying the strengths in the student body." Beyond organizing activities, student councils teach practical leadership skills. Members learn to conduct meetings, manage projects, resolve conflicts and communicate effectively while representing their fellow students. The student council has organized events such as fundraising bake sales, school festivals, and have aided in annual events like Frolympics and FROMUN, which encourage student participation. These efforts create a more active and supportive school environment for students across all levels," said Zyna Hajra, an A-Level student, talking to this agency. Another student and Drama Society president, Dani-

yal, said the student council played a key role in establishing the Drama Society, providing students with a platform for debates and discussions. Such experiences help students understand elections, representation and democratic decision-making. However, students believe today's councils face several challenges that limit their effectiveness. Many trace these challenges to the 1984 ban on student unions introduced during General Zia-ul-Haq's regime. While the decision was taken amid concerns over campus violence and political unrest, many education observers believe it marked a turning point that weakened student representation. Over time, democratic student unions were replaced in many institutions by councils with limited authority, reducing opportunities for leadership and civic participation.—DNA

Mushaal condemns terrorist attack on Rangers

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick, Kashmiri leader and wife of imprisoned freedom fighter Yaseen Maik, has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a Sindh Rangers camp, describing it as a cowardly act aimed at undermining Pakistan's peace and security. In a statement issued here, she paid tribute to the three Rangers personnel who embraced martyrdom while fighting the terrorists, stating that the entire nation salutes their courage, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment to defending the country. She commended Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) for their swift and effective response, saying the security forces successfully eliminated the terrorists and thwarted their nefarious intentions. Mushaal emphasized that the martyrs are the pride of the nation and the true heroes of Pakistan, adding that their supreme sacrifices will always be remembered with honor and gratitude. She also prayed for the speedy and complete recovery of the injured security personnel.—APP

FIA offloads two passengers attempting to fly to Russia

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Immigration, Islamabad Zone, offloaded two passengers attempting to travel to Russia after detecting multiple identities and suspicious travel documents during immigration clearance at Islamabad International Airport. An official told APP on Sunday that the two passengers, travelling on Uzbekistan Airways flight HY466 to Russia on June 27, were stopped for secondary screening after immigration officials flagged their travel documents as suspicious. The official said a detailed examination revealed discrepancies in the passengers' identities and travel documents. According to the official, forensic examination of their mobile phones led to the recovery of multiple Afghan passports, one Afghan Tazkira, one Pakistani Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) and one Russian document.—APP

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Briefs

GPA issues guidelines for Iran transit trade

GWADAR: The Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) has issued an informational guideline under CGO 05/2026 for transit trade with Iran, outlining the procedures and facilities for the transportation of cargo from Gwadar Port to Iran via the Gadd-Rimdan border crossing under a legal and customs-supervised framework. According to the guideline, the distance between Gwadar Port and the Gadd border is approximately 87 kilometers, making it the shortest overland route for cargo transportation to Iran. Transit trade along this corridor will be conducted in accordance with all applicable legal, documentary, and customs regulations. Chairman of Gwadar Port, Noor-ul-Haq Baloch, stated that multiple customs facilitation options will be available for cargo movement, including TIR Carnet, Transit Goods Declaration (GD) with Security, and Cross-Staff procedures. According to a Gwadar Pro's report on Sunday, the initiative is expected to provide new business opportunities for traders, importers, transporters, customs clearing agents, as well as businesses involved in warehousing and logistics services. Chairman Noor-ul-Haq Baloch said the primary objective of the initiative is to enhance commercial activity at Gwadar Port, strengthen trade connectivity between Pakistan and Iran, and further establish Gwadar as a key regional transit and logistics hub.—APP

President appoints Arshad Bhatti as VUP Rector

ISLAMABAD: Professor Dr. Arshad Saleem Bhatti (T.I.S.I) has assumed charge as the Rector of the Virtual University of Pakistan (VUP) following his appointment by the President of Pakistan for a four-year term. According to the spokesperson of VUP, Faisal Zia, the appointment has been made on the recommendations of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. Prof. Dr. Arshad Saleem Bhatti is an internationally renowned academic and educationist, holding a PhD from the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom. He brings with him more than two decades of distinguished experience in higher education, research, curriculum development, and educational reforms. Throughout his professional career, Dr. Bhatti has played a significant role in teaching, academic leadership, research initiatives, and the promotion of academic governance at both national and international institutions. He has also led several national and international initiatives aimed at advancing digital and online education in Pakistan. In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the education sector, the Government of Pakistan has conferred upon him the prestigious civil awards of Tamgha-e-Imtiaz and Sitara-e-Imtiaz.—DNA

Pak-Rwanda academic collaboration proposed for teacher exchange

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood, has said that empowering teachers with modern teaching methodologies is an investment in Pakistan's future, as educators are the architects of future generations. Addressing the concluding session of the Teachers' Training Workshop on "21st Century Teaching Skills," organized by ICCI in collaboration with SOS Foundation and EduTransform, he said that the era of Artificial Intelligence, digital transformation and global connectivity demands a modern education system aligned with emerging global trends. He emphasized that economic progress and educational excellence go hand in hand, adding that ICCI has broadened its role beyond business advocacy by promoting education, youth development, innovation, entrepreneurship, technology and academia-industry collaboration.—APP

CDA vows stronger support for women entrepreneurs

Fazil said IWCCI would continue working with public institutions to expand similar initiatives and encouraged municipal authorities and chambers of commerce across the country to support women-led enterprises through practical measures and dedicated business spaces



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Lt. (Retd.) Sohail Ashraf has reaffirmed the authority's commitment to promoting women's economic participation and announced plans for additional initiatives in collaboration with the Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI). The assurance came during a meeting with an IWCCI delegation led by President Samina Fazil, which called on the CDA chairman to discuss the successful launch of Islamabad's first dedicated marketplace for women entrepreneurs

and explore future areas of cooperation. Businesswomen attending the meeting credited the support of CDA Chairman Sohail Ashraf and Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) Director Dr. Anam Fatima for helping establish the Women Enterprise Market. They said the allocation of dedicated commercial space was instrumental in turning the project into reality. Samina Fazil thanked the CDA, MCI, the State Bank of Pakistan and JazzCash for supporting the initiative, describing the market as a significant step toward expanding economic opportunities for women. Speaking on the occasion, Sohail Ashraf praised IWCCI's efforts and assured the delegation that CDA would further strengthen its partnership

with the chamber. He said greater participation of women in business was essential for Islamabad's economic development and that more structured programmes for women entrepreneurs would be pursued in the coming months. Dr. Anam Fatima said city authorities were committed to creating safe and accessible business spaces for women and supporting low-cost enterprise models that could be replicated across the capital. Fazil termed the Women Enterprise Market in G-11 a landmark initiative, noting that Islamabad had never before offered a dedicated commercial space designed specifically for women-led businesses. Naima Ansari highlighted some of the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. Women own only

about 8 percent of the country's more than five million small and medium enterprises, while just 3.2 percent of SME financing reaches women-led businesses. Female entrepreneurship remains significantly lower than male participation, limiting women's contribution to economic growth. The delegation also discussed and explored new opportunities for collaboration between civic authorities and the private sector. Fazil said IWCCI would continue working with public institutions to expand similar initiatives and encouraged municipal authorities and chambers of commerce across the country to support women-led enterprises through practical measures and dedicated business spaces.

Pakistan will need 1.84m cataract surgeries a year

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan will need at least 1.84 million cataract surgeries annually by 2030 to meet rising demand, but the public sector currently performs fewer than one in five procedures, leaving most patients dependent on charitable organisations and private hospitals.

Prof. Dr. Sabihuddin Ahmed, Head of the Cataract Department at Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital, highlighted the challenge during a media interaction, warning that the country's cataract burden is growing faster than exist-

ing healthcare capacity. Al-Shifa Trust performs around 60,000 cataract surgeries annually through its hospitals and outreach programmes. However, demand continues to outpace service capacity, widening the gap between the number of patients requiring treatment and the surgeries available, he added. An estimated 570,000 adults in Pakistan are blind due to cataracts, while another 3.56 million live with cataract-related vision impairment. Cataracts are primarily linked to ageing, and growing life expectancy means more people are entering the age groups most at risk. The burden of treatment is unevenly distributed. Private hospitals perform 42.4 percent of cataract surgeries, NGOs

account for 39.9 percent, and public hospitals only 17.7 percent. As a result, many low-income patients depend on charitable services for treatment. A shortage of specialists is adding pressure to the system. Pakistan has only 15 ophthalmologists per million people, far below the levels seen in many developed healthcare systems. Al-Shifa Trust trains about 20 ophthalmologists annually, but far more specialists are needed. Diabetes is also accelerating demand for cataract treatment. Pakistan has 34.5 million adults living with diabetes, a figure projected to rise sharply in the coming decades. Diabetic patients often develop cataracts earlier and require surgery at younger ages.

Punjab witnesses new era of urban progress

ISLAMABAD: Under Chief Minister's directions and World Bank support, PMDFC MD Syed Zahid Aziz on Sunday noted that Punjab is seeing extensive development works on a large scale, including expansion of water and sewerage systems across districts and cities to improve infrastructure and services. During an exclusive conversation with PTV News channel, he said the Punjab Inclusive Cities Program is a landmark initiative that aims to transform urban service delivery across the province. He noted that with World Bank support and funding, the program is being implemented to significantly improve sanitation systems, strengthen municipal infrastructure and ensure better living standards for citizens under the broader vision of a modern and sustainable Punjab. He highlighted that the initiative is not limited to infrastructure upgrades alone but is also expected to deliver far-reaching social benefits. Improved sanitation services, he explained, will play a vital role in addressing serious public health challenges, including child stunting, waterborne diseases, and hygiene-related illnesses, ultimately contributing to

healthier communities and stronger human development outcomes. He further praised the Chief Minister's vision, calling it a transformative road-map for development that is bringing large-scale projects across cities and districts. MD said these initiatives reflect a strong commitment to inclusive growth, better urban governance and improved public service delivery, ensuring that no community is left behind in the development process.

He added that through coordinated efforts under the Punjab Inclusive Cities Program, World Bank partnership and CM-led development initiatives, Punjab is moving towards a new era of urban transformation focused on sustainability, health and long-term prosperity. He mentioned that around 16 cities have been selected under the Punjab Inclusive Cities Program, including Kasur and Chakwal, as part of a broader strategy to expand improved urban services across the province. He explained that the program focuses on improving water supply, sanitation, sewerage systems, urban flooding management during monsoon seasons, solid waste management, and the provision of safe and quality drinking water to ensure healthier and more sustainable urban living conditions. He further said that the broader Punjab development projects, including the Punjab Inclusive Cities Program, are designed to strengthen urban infrastructure, improve public service delivery, and ensure sustainable development across selected cities, aligning with the government's long-term vision for a modern and prosperous Punjab. He concluded by expressing gratitude to the World Bank for bringing together national and international experts to explore practical, scalable solutions to Pakistan's pressing water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) challenges.—DNA

Chinese firms showcase agri solutions for Pak at Chain expo

High-yield Chinese rice seeds are being introduced to Pakistan to boost local crop yields

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A host of top Chinese agricultural enterprises with Pakistan partnerships gathered at the 4th China International Supply Chain Expo (CISCE), running June 22-26. Their solutions covering modern farm machinery, high-yield crop seeds, water-saving irrigation systems are empowering Pakistan's agricultural upgrading, according to a report carried by China Economic Net (CEN). YTO Group under China National Machinery Industry Corporation (SINOMACH) has exported tractors to Pakistan since 2018. "Pakistan's domestic tractors max out at only 85 horsepower, lacking high-power premium models to meet growing farming demands. YTO's higher-horsepower tractors fill this market gap, featuring easy operation and superior fuel efficiency," YTO representatives told CEN. China Customs data shows that China's agricultural machinery exports hit 67.42 billion yuan (about \$9.42 billion) in 2025, up 32.3% year-on-year. Tractor exports stood at 8.98 billion yuan (roughly \$1.25 billion), rising 34.2% annually.

Dayu Irrigation Group provides smart irrigation facilities for 1,400 hectares under the "Million Acres Green Pakistan" project, bringing significant water-saving results, according to Dayu Irrigation representatives. High-yield Chinese rice seeds are being introduced to Pakistan to boost local crop yields. Leveraging cutting-edge tools including artificial intelligence, agronomists' decades of breeding expertise are converted into data models to enable precision rice breeding WINALL152 hybrid rice from Syngenta Group China's Winall Hi-tech Seed Co., Ltd. has been extensively rolled out across Pakistan since 2012. This medium-maturity rice variety delivers consistent high output, strong stress resistance and broad adaptability, outyielding local rice strains by 15 percent. During Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's May visit to China, the two countries issued a joint statement, in which they pledged to deepen cooperation in agriculture, water conservancy, AI and talent training, jointly safeguard industrial and supply chain stability, and roll out more practical livelihood projects, opening new avenues for expanded agricultural collaboration.

Police announces mobile facilitation van schedule for today

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police has announced the schedule of its Police Station on Wheel (PS on Wheel) and ITP Facilitation Vans to provide policing and traffic-related services at various locations across the federal capital from June 29 to July 5. An ITP official told APP on Sunday that the mobile facilitation units would remain available daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to provide a range of public services at designated locations. The official said the Police Station on Wheel (PS on Wheel) would offer services including missing document reports, character certificates, learner permits, driving licence renewal, and duplicate driving licences, while Van-I, Van-II, and Van-III would provide learner permits, driving licence renewal, duplicate licences, and driving test sheets. On Monday (June 29), the vans will be stationed at F-10 Markaz, UC Office Malot (Ali Pur Lehtar Road), Bahria Phase-II, and Traffic Office Faizabad. On Tuesday (June 30), they will visit G-10 Markaz, Naval Complex E-8, Airport Society Site Office, and Adventure Inn Checkpoint.

Dr. Tariq Fazal condemns terrorist attack

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Sunday condemned the terrorist attack on Rangers personnel in Karachi. In a statement posted on X, he expressed condolences to the families of the martyred personnel and prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured. He said the security personnel who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty were a source of pride for the nation and reaffirmed that terrorism would not be tolerated under any circumstances. The minister said Pakistan's security forces would continue to foil every attempt to undermine the country's peace and security with determination. He also prayed for lasting peace and stability in the country and for the protection of Pakistan's security institutions.

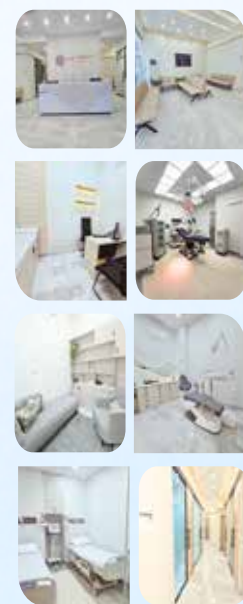
Dona Hilda Solidarity Kitchen celebrates 6th Anniversary

ISLAMABAD: The Dona Hilda Solidarity Kitchen, located at the Santa Dulce Integrated Solidarity Center (CIS), celebrated its sixth anniversary with a special "Festival of Nations," bringing together volunteers, staff, and project participants in a vibrant celebration of cultural diversity, fellowship, and solidarity. The event was organized to recognize and honor the diverse cultural backgrounds of the volunteers involved in the initiative. The Solidarity Kitchen is currently supported by volunteers from Venezuela, Haiti, Pakistan, and Cuba, who have been welcomed in Brazil and now play an active role in the mission of serving those most in need. The celebration began with a prayer led by Sister Georgette Bisimwa Nabarungu, originally from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This was followed by a discussion session in which participants shared stories about their lives, traditions, and cultural heritage from their respective countries. To highlight the diversity of the participating nations, the event concluded with the sharing of traditional dishes prepared by the volunteers themselves. The gathering provided a meaningful cultural exchange while strengthening bonds of friendship and solidarity among all those present. More than simply marking an anniversary, the Festival of Nations highlighted the mission of the Dona Hilda Solidarity Kitchen as a place of welcome, inclusion, and compassion—where people from different cultures come together to build a more humane, united, and caring society.—DNA



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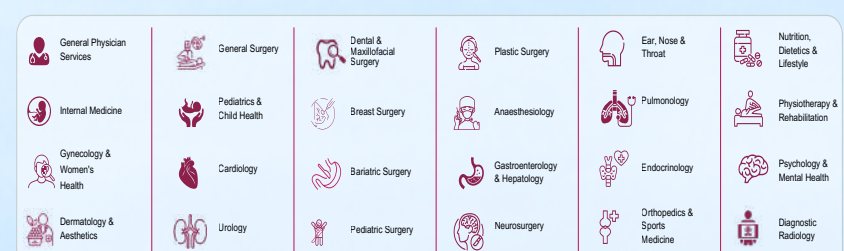
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Israel's Mission Impossible

QAMAR BASHIR

ISRAEL is discovering a hard strategic truth: the country that wants absolute freedom of military action cannot easily free itself from the very superpower that makes that military action possible. For decades, Israel has depended on the United States not only for diplomatic protection, but also for the aircraft, bombs, interceptors, missiles, spare parts, emergency resupply, and financial aid that sustain its defensive shield and offensive reach. Now, as Washington tries to restrain Israeli escalation against Lebanon in order to preserve a wider regional ceasefire and protect its own diplomatic understanding with Iran, some Israeli voices are arguing that Israel should reduce or end its military dependence on America. It is an emotionally attractive slogan, but economically and militarily it is close to a mission impossible.

The facts are stark. The United States provides Israel with about \$3.8 billion annually under the 2019–2028 military aid memorandum. But the real value of American support is much larger than that figure. It includes access to advanced aircraft, precision-guided munitions, air-defense cooperation, intelligence sharing, emergency replenishment, and direct U.S. military support during regional crises. In recent wars, American forces have helped intercept drones and missiles aimed at Israel, while U.S. political backing has shielded Israel from far greater diplomatic isolation. Israel is not a weak military power. It has one of the world's most advanced defense industries. Its cyber capabilities, drone technology, radar systems, electronic warfare, missile defense, and intelligence tools are globally respected. Israeli defense exports reached record levels in recent years, showing that the country can design and sell sophisticated military technology. But exporting advanced systems is not the same as independently sustaining a multi-front war, replacing U.S. aircraft, producing deep stocks of precision bombs, and maintaining strategic air dominance without Washington. The most important vulnerability is air power. Israel's offensive doctrine relies heavily on U.S.-made F-35s, F-15s, and F-16s. These aircraft are the backbone of Israel's ability to strike Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iran-linked targets, and other distant theatres. Israel can modify these aircraft with domestic systems, but it does not independently manufacture them. Nor does it independently control the full supply chain for engines, advanced components, spare parts, and future upgrades. If the United States stops supplying or servicing these systems, Israeli offensive capability would not collapse overnight, but it would steadily degrade. The numbers explain the dilemma. Israel's military expenditure surged to about \$46.5 billion in 2024, equal to roughly 8.8 percent of GDP. That is already one of the highest defense burdens in the world. To become meaningfully independent from the United States, Israel would likely need to spend around 12 to 15 percent of GDP on defense for many years. That means an additional annual burden



of roughly \$18 billion to \$35 billion, depending on the level of independence pursued. Such money would not come from the sky. It would come from taxes, borrowing, civilian cuts, reduced welfare, delayed infrastructure, pressure on education, and weaker investment in health, housing, and productivity. In simple terms, Israel would have to choose between becoming a more militarized economy and remaining a prosperous civilian economy. The deeper the pursuit of military independence, the greater the sacrifice imposed on ordinary citizens. Hospitals, schools, universities, transport networks, housing programs, technology investment, social services, and family support would all face pressure. Israel could build more factories, more missile plants, more ammunition lines, and more domestic systems, but every shekel moved into permanent militarization would be a shekel removed from civilian development. This is the central contradiction of Israeli strategy. Some Israeli hardliners want complete freedom to strike Lebanon, Syria, Gaza, Iran-linked groups, and other regional adversaries without American restraint. They also want to pursue a maximalist vision of regional dominance, sometimes expressed through the dangerous idea of a "Greater Israel." But such ambitions are possible only because the United States has historically supplied the military oxygen. Remove that oxygen, and the same expansionist project becomes far more costly, risky, and perhaps unsustainable. This is also why many Israeli analysts and strategic thinkers warn against alienating Washington. The United States is not merely a donor; it is the main strategic pillar of Israel's military architecture. American support gives Israel technological superiority, financial relief, diplomatic cover, and crisis-time backup. Without that support, Israel would remain powerful, but it would be a more vulnerable, more expensive, more isolated, and more constrained military power. The recent U.S. attempt to restrain Israeli action against Lebanon shows that Washington still has leverage. Israel may resent that leverage, but it cannot easily escape it. If the price of independence is the weakening of its air force, the squeezing of its economy, the reduction of civilian prosperity, and the erosion of its ability to sustain long occupations, then independence becomes less a strategy and more a self-inflicted wound. Israel therefore faces a choice. It can continue chasing permanent military dominance at the cost of economic balance, regional stability, and moral legitimacy. Or it can accept the limits of force, respect international boundaries, reduce occupation, and become a responsible member of the international community. The wiser path is not to militarize the economy further, but to demilitarize national thinking. The lesson is clear: Israel cannot bomb its way into permanent security, nor can it easily break away from the country that underwrites its military power. Military independence from the United States may sound like strategic courage, but in reality it would expose Israel's deepest dependency. For Israel, the path to security does not lie in endless expansion or in defying its principal ally. It lies in restraint, diplomacy, lawful borders, and recognition that no state can build lasting security by living permanently at war with its neighborhood. Israel's mission impossible is not merely military independence from America. Its real mission impossible is trying to remain economically prosperous, militarily dominant, politically unrestrained, and regionally expansionist all at the same time. That equation cannot hold forever.

- Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)

Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former Press Attaché to Malaysia
Former MD, SRBC | Michigan, USA

Kant and the Crisis of the Global Order

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



At first glance, Kant's ideas may appear idealistic in a world driven by military alliances, nuclear deterrence and economic rivalry. Yet many of the central features of contemporary international politics bear the imprint of his thinking. The spread of democratic governance, the rise of international law, and the establishment of organisations such as the United Nations all reflect, in varying degrees, the Kantian belief that cooperation among states is both possible and necessary. Kant believed that republics what would today broadly be called constitutional democracies were less likely to wage aggressive wars

THE modern international order often appears trapped between power and principle. Wars continue to erupt despite the presence of global institutions, while states invoke morality even as they pursue strategic interests. In this uneasy landscape, the ideas of Immanuel Kant remain remarkably relevant. More than two centuries after his death, Kant's reflections on peace, republican government, law and international cooperation continue to shape debates in global politics. Kant wrote during a turbulent period in European history. Monarchies competed endlessly for territory and influence, and war was considered a normal instrument of statecraft. Yet Kant challenged the assumption that conflict between nations was inevitable. In his celebrated essay Perpetual Peace, published in 1795, he argued that peace could emerge not through conquest but through reason, institutions and political reform. At first glance, Kant's ideas may appear idealistic in a world driven by military alliances, nuclear deterrence and economic rivalry. Yet many of the central features of contemporary international politics bear the imprint of his thinking. The spread of democratic governance, the rise of international law, and the establishment of organisations such as the United Nations all reflect, in varying degrees, the Kantian belief that cooperation among states is both possible and necessary. Kant believed that republics what would today broadly be called constitutional democracies were less likely to wage aggressive wars. His argument was simple but powerful. In monarchies, rulers could initiate wars for prestige or ambition while ordinary citizens bore the costs in blood and taxation. In representative systems, however, citizens would think carefully before supporting military adventures whose consequences they themselves would suffer. This idea later evolved into what scholars now call the "democratic peace theory", one of the most influential concepts in international relations. While democracies have certainly fought wars, proponents of the theory argue that mature democratic states rarely fight one another directly. The experience of post-war Western Europe is often cited as evidence. Countries that once devastated the continent through centuries of warfare gradually moved towards economic integration and political cooperation under institutions that eventually developed into the European Union. Kant's significance, however, extends beyond democracy alone.

He believed that international politics should not remain trapped in anarchy. States, in his view, required laws and institutions capable of regulating their conduct. This conviction anticipated the later development of international legal frameworks and multilateral diplomacy. The horrors of the two World Wars strengthened the appeal of such thinking. After 1945, the international community attempted to construct a rules-based order aimed at preventing another global catastrophe. Institutions such as the United Nations, the International Court of Justice and numerous arms-control agreements reflected the belief that dialogue and law could moderate the destructive impulses of power politics. Yet Kant never imagined a world government exercising authority over all nations. He feared that concentrated global power could itself become tyrannical. Instead, he proposed a federation of free states cooperating voluntarily under shared legal principles. In many respects, this remains the foundation of modern multilateralism. The contemporary world, however, also exposes the limitations of Kantian optimism. The post-Cold War era initially encouraged hopes that economic interdependence and liberal democracy would reduce geopolitical conflict. Instead, the twenty-first century has witnessed renewed rivalry among major powers, regional wars and the weakening of international consensus. The conflict in Ukraine, tensions between the United States and China, and instability across the Middle East suggest that national interests and strategic competition remain dominant forces in international affairs. Critics of Kant argue that states ultimately prioritise survival and power over moral ideals. Realist thinkers such as Hans Morgenthau insisted that international politics is governed less by ethics than by calculations of national interest. There is considerable evidence supporting this criticism. International law is often applied selectively, while powerful states frequently bypass global institutions when their strategic objectives are at stake. Military interventions carried out in the name of democracy or humanitarianism have at times produced prolonged instability rather than peace. The Iraq War remains one of the clearest examples of how the language of moral purpose can coexist with geopolitical ambition. Even so, dismissing Kant would be premature. His ideas endure not because they perfectly describe the world, but because they offer a framework for improving

International politics cannot function on power alone. Even the strongest states seek legitimacy, alliances and legal justification for their actions. Diplomacy itself assumes that dialogue is preferable to permanent conflict. Kant also recognised the growing interconnectedness of humanity. He spoke of a form of "cosmopolitan right" grounded in the idea that individuals, not merely states, possess universal moral worth. In today's world, this principle resonates strongly in debates over refugees, climate change, global inequality and human rights. These challenges transcend national borders and cannot be addressed solely through traditional notions of sovereignty. Climate change, in particular, demonstrates the continuing relevance of Kantian thinking. Environmental crises cannot be resolved through unilateral action. They require sustained international cooperation, mutual restraint and long-term collective responsibility. The same applies to pandemics, cyber security and global economic instability. In each case, the logic of shared vulnerability pushes states towards forms of collaboration that Kant anticipated centuries ago. For countries such as Pakistan, Kant's ideas carry additional significance. Pakistan exists in a region shaped by strategic competition, unresolved disputes and shifting alliances. The pressures of security often dominate policymaking. Yet long-term regional stability will depend not only on military deterrence but also on economic cooperation, institutional dialogue and political moderation. South Asia's future cannot rest indefinitely on confrontation. Kant understood that peace is not merely the absence of war. It is the product of political maturity, accountable governance and international engagement. His vision may never be fully realised, but neither can it be ignored. In a fragmented global order marked by nationalism and mistrust, his philosophy remains a reminder that international politics need not be reduced entirely to force and fear. The enduring tension between realism and idealism continues to define world affairs. Kant belongs firmly to the latter tradition, yet history suggests that even the harshest systems of power eventually require rules, norms and cooperation to survive. The modern international order, despite all its failures, still carries traces of the world Kant imagined imperfect, fragile, but unwilling to abandon the pursuit of peace. The writer is Assistant Professor Pakistan Studies Imperial College of business Studies Lahore akramzaheer86@yahoo.com

Water Aggression Against Pakistan

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



India, however, has pressed against these boundaries. It has constructed and advanced projects such as the Kishanganga hydroelectric plant on the Jhelum River system—which diverts waters through tunnels, reducing flows into Pakistani territory and affecting downstream power generation and irrigation. Similarly, the Ratle project on the Chenab has raised...

IN the shifting currents of international affairs, Pakistan has emerged as a beacon of mediation and restraint, a metaphor for peace in a world often fractured by discord. Where once global perceptions painted the nation in hues of suspicion and instability, today a profound transformation commands respect from capitals across continents. The United States, the nations of Europe, the Gulf states, Russia, and China alike now regard Pakistan as a trusted partner, their interests converging in recognition of its diplomatic maturity and strategic significance. This elevated standing found vivid expression when Pakistan stepped forward to mediate between the United States and Iran, demonstrating a capacity for bridge-building that few could have anticipated. The achievement was not merely tactical but symbolic, affirming Pakistan's evolution into a responsible actor on the global stage. Allies that once viewed the country with guarded caution now extend cooperation, drawn by its stability, its growing influence, and its willingness to foster dialogue amid tension. Yet this era of heightened esteem has not shielded Pakistan from persistent challenges closer to home. In May 2025, the nation delivered a measured yet resolute response to Indian aggression, a necessary assertion of sovereignty that restored balance along a historically volatile frontier. Rather than accept the verdict of that encounter, India has since pursued a campaign of indirect hostilities, orchestrating proxy disturbances in various parts of Pakistan. Pakistani authorities have monitored these machinations with vigilance and replied with proportionate firmness, preserving internal security without descending into needless escalation. More insidious still has been India's campaign of water aggression, a systematic violation of the Indus Waters Treaty that threatens the very lifeblood of Pakistan's agriculture and the sustenance of its people. Signed in 1960 under the good offices of the World Bank, the treaty stands as a landmark of reasoned compromise. It allocates the three western rivers—the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab—to Pakistan for unrestricted use, while permitting India limited non-consumptive rights, chiefly for run-of-the-river

hydroelectric projects that must not materially alter the natural flow or timing of waters reaching downstream. The eastern rivers, by contrast, fall to India. This division was intended to secure Pakistan's agricultural heartland, which depends profoundly on the western rivers for irrigation across vast tracts of Punjab and Sindh. India, however, has pressed against these boundaries. It has constructed and advanced projects such as the Kishanganga hydroelectric plant on the Jhelum River system—which diverts waters through tunnels, reducing flows into Pakistani territory and affecting downstream power generation and irrigation. Similarly, the Ratle project on the Chenab has raised grave concerns over pondage levels, sediment management, and design features that Pakistan maintains could enable greater storage and control than the treaty permits. Other initiatives, including expansions at Baglihar and the revival of the Tubul Navigation Project (or Wullar Barrage) on the Jhelum, compound these anxieties. Through such works, India has effectively sought to impound and divert waters rightfully destined for Pakistan, building dams and infrastructure that risk altering seasonal flows, diminishing supplies during critical sowing periods, and even unleashing sudden releases that threaten flooding. These actions strike at the core of the treaty's spirit and letter. Pakistan has secured favourable judgments in international arbitration and courts, rulings that underscore the legal merit of its objections and affirm the need for India to adhere strictly to design limitations and notification requirements. Yet Indian obduracy persists, a stubborn refusal to honour obligations that not only imperils Pakistan's agriculture—potentially paralysing fertile lands that feed millions—but also erodes the foundations of regional stability and international law. By weaponising water in this manner, India pursues a form of coercion more silent than artillery yet no less devastating in its long-term consequences. Parallely achievements of Pakistan regarding mediation between US and Iran have not gone unnoticed by the enemies of concord. Israel, long a foe of regional tranquility, has been deeply offended by these developments, in which Pakistan's hard work played a visible part. In

this regard, the US President and Vice President have roundly criticised and humiliated Netanyahu, exposing the fault lines within old alliances. It is therefore scarcely surprising that Israel should seek to incite India, urging it to intensify its campaign of water terrorism as a means of avenging Pakistan's earlier victories and undermining the hard-won momentum toward stability. In light of its strengthened diplomatic posture, Pakistan now possesses the means and the platform to bring this grave matter before the conscience of the world. With measured eloquence and persistent advocacy, it must illuminate India's transgressions in every relevant forum, from the chambers of the United Nations to the corridors of power in Washington, Moscow, Beijing, Brussels, and the Gulf. Lobbying rooted not in rancour but in justice and self-preservation should urge these influential partners to press India toward compliance. The message must be clear: continued violations not only undermine regional stability but erode the foundations of international law itself. Pakistan's friends abroad have every reason to support such efforts. A prosperous and secure Pakistan serves broader interests, from trade routes to counter-terrorism cooperation and the delicate balance of power in South Asia. Should diplomatic avenues prove insufficient, however, and should India remain intransigent in its attempt to weaponise water, Pakistan would retain the sovereign right to defend its people and its future. No nation can be expected to watch passively as its agricultural heartland is deliberately starved. The path ahead calls for wisdom as much as resolve. Pakistan must continue to project the same composure that earned it global respect, transforming legitimate grievances into a compelling international narrative. By leveraging its alliances without compromising its independence, it can uphold the sanctity of treaties and the imperatives of peace. In doing so, the nation not only safeguards its own vital interests but reinforces the principle that even in an age of power politics, law and equity must ultimately prevail. The world, which has begun to see Pakistan anew, will be watching closely to see whether that respect continues to deepen through principled conduct in the face of adversity.

Briefs

Iran, US trade fresh strikes, accuse...

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the Guards said. Air raid sirens rang out twice in Bahrain on Sunday, according to the Gulf nation's interior ministry. A memorandum of understanding was reached in mid-June under Pakistan's mediation, aimed at putting a lasting end to the war. The text signed by the United States and Iran said both countries, and their respective allies, were "not to initiate any war or any military operation against each other and to refrain from the threat or use of force against each other". US President Donald Trump said Saturday that Iran would "no longer exist" if the United States is "forced" to resume the war. The threat came after US forces said they struck "multiple" Iranian targets Saturday in another tit-for-tat response to attacks on shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. "United States aircraft just struck Iranian missile and drone storage locations, and coastal radar sites, for violating the Cease Fire Agreement, AGAIN!" Trump wrote on Truth Social.

Trump threatens to annihilate...

FROM PAGE 01
Port Salman in Bahrain". "Any enemy aggression, whatever the pretext, even against insignificant targets... will have a crushing response," the IRGC said. Air raid sirens rang out twice in Bahrain on Sunday, according to the Gulf nation's interior ministry. The Guards said in a statement that the US strikes had violated the ceasefire and "will result in the complete halt of all diplomatic processes", according to state-run Press TV. The IRGC navy command said American bases in the region "will experience hell in the coming days".

FM Dar, EU HRVP Kaja Kallas...

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ceasefire violations and stressed that communication channels between all parties must remain open to prevent escalation. Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar apprised the EU representative of Pakistan's continued diplomatic initiatives aimed at establishing a comprehensive framework for peace and stability in the Middle East. He emphasized the necessity for all parties to strictly abide by the ceasefire agreement to ensure progress towards lasting peace. Both sides agreed to maintain close contact and continue consultations on regional developments. The conversation reflects Pakistan's ongoing engagement with international partners to promote dialogue and prevent further deterioration of the security environment.

Dar talks to Saudi, Bahrain FMs

FROM PAGE 01
The DPM/FM held a telephone conversation with the Bahraini foreign minister. Foreign Minister Al Zayani congratulated the DPM/FM on the signing of the Islamabad MoU and appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in facilitating the understanding, expressing hope that it would contribute to lasting peace and stability in the region, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. "He indicated that he would visit Pakistan in the near future in order to personally thank Prime Minister, DPM/FM, and CDF for their great efforts to achieve the ceasefire," it was added. Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar @MishaqDar50 held a telephonic conversation today with His Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Scaloni running out of superlatives as Messi continues to break records

Argentine becomes first player to score in seven consecutive World Cup matches, surpassing Just Fontaine and Jairzinho

DALLAS: Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni said he is running out of ways to describe the performances of Lionel Messi after seeing his captain become the first player to score in seven consecutive World Cup matches in their 3-1 win over Jordan on Saturday. Messi was introduced from the bench on the hour mark at Dallas Stadium and netted an 80th-minute free kick to continue a scoring run that saw him surpass the mark he shared with France's Just Fontaine and Brazilian Jairzinho. "It's a little bit of an uncomfortable situation when people ask me that and I don't know what to say," Scaloni said when quizzed once again about Messi's performance. "Today he could've played 90 minutes and, without undermining our opponent, he wanted his team mates to have time on the pitch and to save himself for what's coming up. "He doesn't think so much about the numbers that people are talking about. The only word that comes to mind is that I'm surprised."



Messi's strike put the seal on a largely comfortable win for the champions, who took a two-goal lead into the interval following a Giovanni Lo Celso free kick and a penalty from Lautaro Martinez. Those

goals were the first not scored by Messi for Argentina at the current World Cup, before the 39-year-old took his total to a tournament-leading six. Scaloni had made nine changes to his starting line-

up and he was pleased with the performances of those who had featured little in the tournament so far. "It's a very positive opinion that I have, especially as I was able to include all the players, this was a goal we always set for ourselves," he said. "I believe all of them deserve to enjoy coming to a World Cup and playing at a World Cup and we were able to give them minutes. I think they played quite well in a difficult match. "They showed me today that I can count on them." Argentina next take on Cape Verde in the round of 32 in Miami and Scaloni said he would not underestimate the debutants. "Based on what I've seen, I'm not surprised," he said of their progress to the knockout rounds. "They're a good team, they have made it very difficult for the three opponents they have played. "Spain couldn't beat them, Uruguay couldn't either. They're a fast team, they play well with a high calibre of play. I can guarantee you they're a team that's going to make it difficult for us." - APP

Austria draw with Algeria in World Cup thriller to progress and send Iran home

Argentina topped group, while Austria finished second and will face Spain in the knockout stage

KANSAS CITY: Austria and Algeria played out a thrilling 3-3 draw on Saturday after two stoppage-time goals, a result that sent both sides into the World Cup last 32 and ended Iran's hopes of reaching the knockout stage as one of the best third-placed sides. The drama reached its peak deep in added time when Algeria captain Riyad Mahrez sparked wild celebrations with what he thought was the winning goal, only for Austria to launch one final attack and snatch an equaliser through Sasa Kalajdzic's header in the 96th minute, seconds after he entered the game. Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'" fittingly blared over the Kansas City Stadium's loudspeakers after the final whistle in the Group J final,

as both sides celebrated. Argentina topped the group, while Austria finished second and will face Spain in the knockout stage. Algeria advanced as one of the best third-placed sides and will meet Switzerland. The two teams kicked off level on three points, with a draw enough to send Austria and Algeria into the Round of 32. The prospect of a mutually beneficial result dominated the build-up, prompting irritated responses from both coaches when the subject was raised at Friday's pre-game press conferences. The match also carried echoes of one of the World Cup's most notorious controversies, coming 44 years after the "Disgrace of Gijon", when Austria's 1-0 win over West Germany in 1982 eliminated Algeria and

changed the tournament forever. However, few could argue that the two teams were playing for a draw in Saturday's back-and-forth thriller. Austria opened the scoring through Marko Arnautovic in the 28th minute with the game's first shot on target. The 37-year-old timed his run perfectly to meet a pinpoint long pass from David Alaba and, although his first touch was sloppy, Algeria goalkeeper Oussama Benbot was hesitant off his line, allowing Arnautovic to steer the ball home. Algeria's Fares Chaibi clattered a shot off the post late in the first half before the North Africans finally equalised in spectacular fashion through Rafik Belghali just before halftime. After Mahrez kept the ball alive near the byline, Bel-

England top group to set up DR Congo World Cup clash, Portugal held

After 0-0 draw in Miami against Colombia, Portugal will now face Croatia in the last 32

LOS ANGELES: England defeated Panama 2-0 on Saturday to clinch top spot in their World Cup group and set up a last-32 clash with the Democratic Republic of Congo as the African underdogs reached the knockout rounds for the first time. Jude Bellingham and Harry Kane scored the goals in a laboured victory for England at the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey that clinched first place in Group L – and a date with the DR Congo in Atlanta on Wednesday. DR Congo advanced after a 3-1 win over Uzbekistan in Atlanta – their first ever victory in a World Cup match – that saw them finish third in Group K as one of the best third-placed teams. Colombia topped Group K after holding Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal to a 0-0 draw in Miami – a result that means the Portuguese will now face Croatia in last 32. England were made to work hard by a well-organised Panama team and looked to be heading for a repeat of their lacklustre 0-0 draw with Ghana until Bellingham opened the scoring on 62 minutes before providing an assist for Kane five minutes later. "It was what we expected: a tough match against a physical opponent," England manager Thomas Tuchel said. "They are a difficult team to score against and we were the only team to create this amount of chances and score twice." Tuchel added, before confidently predicting England would improve during the knockout phase. "We will step up," the German said. "The bigger the games get, the bigger we will get." Croatia meanwhile made sure of claiming second place in the group behind England with a 2-1 victory over Ghana in Philadelphia. Petar Susic and Nikola Vlasic scored the goals for Croatia, as Ghana were forced to settle for third. Croatia's win extinguished Scotland's hopes of squeezing into the last 32 as one of the best third-placed teams, sealing their elimination from the tournament. Scotland manager Steve Clarke promptly resigned. - APP

Azerbaijani Fighters Abdullayev, Hasanov win preliminary bouts

Australia's Turkish-born Kaan Ofli submitted Colombia's Javier Reyes with a choke in the opening round, while Uzbekistan's Nursulton Ruziboev defeated Russia's Andrey Pulyaev via first-round submission

BAKU: Azerbaijani fighters Tahir Abdullayev and Farman Hasanov secured victories in the preliminary card of the UFC tournament held in Baku on Saturday. Abdullayev defeated Brazil's Jefferson Nascimento, while Hasanov earned a unanimous decision victory over American welterweight Eric Nolan after three rounds. In other bouts, Brazil's Jean Matsumoto defeated Kazakhstan's Bekzat Almkhambayev by unanimous decision. Ukraine's Daniil Donchenko stopped Sweden's Theodor Berggren in the second round. Australia's Turkish-born Kaan Ofli submitted Colombia's Javier Reyes with a choke in the opening round, while Uzbekistan's Nursulton Ruziboev defeated Russia's Andrey Pulyaev via first-round submission. In the light heavyweight division, Turkey's Abdul Rahman Yahyaev knocked out American Julius Walker in the opening seconds of the first round, recording one of the fastest victories of the night. The main card was set to feature Azerbaijani fighters Nazim Sadykhov against Brazil's Mateus Camilo and Rafael Fiziev against Mexico's Manuel Torres in the evening's headline bout. - APP

Pakistan hockey team captain UK visa rejected due to previous dubious record

Butt's absence means Pakistan will play crucial fixtures against India and England without their regular leader. The matches, scheduled between June 23 and 27, are part of the final leg of the FIH Pro League

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's hockey team suffered a major blow ahead of the FIH Pro League matches in London after captain Ammad Shakil Butt was denied a UK visa. The refusal sparked controversy and raised questions about the Pakistan Hockey Federation's (PHF) handling of player documentation and international commitments. According to sources, Butt's visa application was rejected due to his previous immigration record in the United Kingdom. Reports suggest that during his stint with a local club in England in 2022-23, he overstayed his permitted duration of stay. Later, he allegedly applied for asylum, which was turned down by British authorities. These violations flagged his record, leading to the refusal of his latest visa request. The PHF confirmed that it had made efforts to secure clearance for Butt, but UK authorities remained firm in their decision. Officials expressed disappointment, noting that the captain's absence would hurt team morale and performance. Senior player Abu Bakr has been named stand in captain for the England leg of the tournament. Butt's absence means Pakistan will play crucial fixtures against India and England without their regular leader.

The matches, scheduled between June 23 and 27, are part of the final leg of the FIH Pro League. Pakistan has already struggled in earlier rounds, losing most of its matches against top European teams. Analysts warn that the loss of the captain could further weaken the side. The incident has damaged Pakistan hockey's international image. Visa refusals for key players and coaches highlight administrative lapses and raise concerns about the federation's ability to manage overseas commitments. Head coach Manzoor ul Hasan Senior's visa was also pending at the time, adding to uncertainty over the team's preparation. Observers argue that repeated visa issues could undermine Pakistan's credibility in global hockey. Critics within the sport have called for stronger administrative oversight, proper documentation, and legal support for players traveling abroad. The refusal of Ammad Butt's UK visa was not just a personal setback but a reflection of deeper challenges facing Pakistan hockey. With leadership gaps, administrative disputes, and poor performances already haunting the team, the latest development underscores the urgent need for reforms if Pakistan hopes to regain its lost glory in world hockey. - DNA

Pakistan end FIH Pro League campaign winless with heavy England defeat

Green Shirts bow out of tournament with zero points and minus-57 goal difference

LONDON: Bottom-placed Pakistan suffered a heavy 7-0 loss against hosts England in their final FIH Pro League 2026 fixture at the Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre, London, on Saturday. The home side got off to a flamboyant start to the fixture as Sam Ward opened the scoring for them in just the ninth minute by successfully converting a penalty corner, while Nicholas Bandurak doubled their lead in the dying minutes of the first quarter through a field goal. Pakistan's defence offered notable resistance in the subsequent quarter, but England converted the second penalty corner awarded to them through Samuel Taylor and further bolstered their lead to 3-0 just before halftime. The penultimate quarter followed the same pattern as England struck late, courtesy of a penalty corner, converted by Samuel Hooper



in the 38th minute. Heading into the final quarter with a 4-0 advantage, England launched an all-out attack on the bottom-placed Pakistan, inspired by Bandurak, who struck his second through a penalty corner in the 48th minute, while Zachary Wallace scored from the spot the following minute. Henry Croft then rounded up a comprehensive 7-0 victory for the home side by scoring a field goal in the 52nd minute. Resounding 7-0 victory, which was England's eighth, consolidated their second position in the FIH Pro League standings with 34 points, four ahead of third-placed Australia. Meanwhile, the outcome of the recently concluded fixture meant Pakistan remained winless at nine-team tournament as they lost all of their 16 matches – two each against the other eight participating sides – and finished at bottom with a negative goal difference of 57. - DNA

Iran-Pak trade to be boosted...

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processing of imported and exported goods. The geographical boundaries of the customs facility have also been defined, officially integrating the Taftan rail terminal into Pakistan's customs network. Taftan is Pakistan's main land crossing with Iran and has long held strategic importance but has operated below its full capacity due to infrastructure limitations and the lack of comprehensive customs facilities. Experts believe the establishment of a railway customs station will facilitate the movement of goods by rail, reduce transportation costs, speed up customs clearance and improve the organisation of cross-border trade.

Iran FM for a security framework...

FROM PAGE 01
Fadlallah has warned of "internal conflict" in Lebanon over the country's agreement with Israel, which the group rejects, predicting that the deal would not be implemented, AFP reports. Fadlallah spoke a day after Lebanese President Joseph Aoun told US President Donald Trump in a phone call that the Lebanese state "will assume its responsibilities" in implementing the framework agreement. Speaking at a memorial ceremony, Fadlallah said: "The agreement of humiliation and disgrace signed by the authorities will never see the light of day and will not be implemented."

Extensive pre-monsoon rainfall...

FROM PAGE 01
According to National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) officials talking to media channels, a dangerous combination of intense heat and expected pre-monsoon rainfall is likely to accelerate glacier melting, triggering a sharp rise in water levels in rivers and streams across Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The authority warned that vulnerable mountainous regions face heightened risks of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), flash floods, and landslides during the forecast period due to rapidly changing and unstable weather conditions.

Taliban involved in Karachi...

FROM PAGE 01
about the attack and his network during interrogation. Key Confessions by the Arrested Terrorist, Usman Ali: Identity and Origin: "My name is Usman Ali, and I came from Jalalabad, Afghanistan." Accomplices: "I had three other accomplices with me named Abdul Hadi, Janan, and Umar Farooq." Casualties: "Abdul Hadi, who came with me, has been killed." The Attack: "Janan threw the bomb at the Pakistan Rangers camp." Entry into Pakistan: "We came to Pakistan seven days ago. Abdul Hadi, who was a resident of Bajaur, was our guide." Planning and Logistics: "We were kept in an under-construction building. The weapons used in the attack were brought by Abdul Hadi from Waziristan."

President, PM slam...

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designs of externally backed terrorist elements would never succeed, adding that the people of Pakistan stood shoulder to shoulder with the country's security forces and law enforcement agencies in the fight against terrorism. He said the sacrifices of the martyrs further strengthened the nation's resolve to completely eradicate terrorism. The president also expressed heartfelt condolences and sympathies with the families of the martyrs and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured personnel. The prime minister commended the security forces for successfully foiling a cowardly terrorist attack by Fitna al-Hindustan terrorists on a Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) camp in Karachi.

Briefs

KSA leads Gulf, Arab condemnation of newest Iranian attacks

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia has condemned, in the strongest terms, Iran's latest attacks Kuwait and Bahrain as well as on "the security and freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz."

In statement issued by the Saudi foreign affairs ministry, the Kingdom categorically rejected the attacks and described them as a violation of international law and the United Nations Charter. "The Kingdom reiterates that these violations undermine international efforts aimed at restoring security and stability in the region," the foreign affairs ministry statement said. Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, also condemned the "terrorist Iranian attacks" against Bahrain and Kuwait. In a statement, he emphasized that these "treacherous attacks constitute a direct threat to the security, stability and safety of citizens and residents on the territories" of the two countries. He added that the "continuation of these Iranian attacks actively undermines ongoing regional and international efforts aimed at consolidating peace and security and resolving the crisis." The UAE also condemned the "renewed aggressive Iranian attacks" against Kuwait and Bahrain, which its foreign affairs ministry said were a flagrant violation of the countries' sovereignty and a threat to their security and stability.—APP

From rubble to music: Gaza's Oud repairman

NUSEIRAT: In a modest makeshift workshop tucked inside the crowded Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, the soft sound of an oud echoes through the ruins of war. Surrounded by wooden pallets, fragments of crates that held humanitarian aid, and the pieces of damaged instruments, Palestinian craftsman Suhail Abu Shawish bends carefully over a battered oud, tuning its strings after days of painstaking repair. The treasured instrument — scarred by shelling and destruction during the war in Gaza — is one of many that have found their way to his workshop. "Young people have started sending their instruments to me for repair," Abu Shawish told AFP, as a customer walked into his workshop carrying damaged instruments wrapped in black plastic bags. Several restored instruments, bright and shining, hang on the workshop walls — symbols of resilience, music and craftsmanship in the shadow of war. For the 60-year-old Abu Shawish, repairing ouds is far more than a profession. His repairs are a mission to preserve a cherished part of Palestinian cultural identity at a time when so much else has been lost. A father of five, Abu Shawish learnt to play the oud in the 1980s. He later worked with several institutions, where he became an expert in the conservation and restoration of musical instruments. With no proper workshop, scarce materials and frequent power shortages, the craftsman relies almost entirely on hand tools. During the war, he was displaced to the southern city of Rafah before eventually returning to his home in Nuseirat camp. Working in his workshop, he cuts wood manually with a saw, smooths surfaces with a file.—APP



ISLAMABAD: A youngster jumps in to Angoori Waterfall to cool-off him-self during a hot and humid day in the Federal Capital.

D-8 Secy-General hails MSMEs as engines of growth on UN day

Green MSMEs: Focused on sustainability, exploring how small enterprises can adopt circular economy principles, access green financing, and reduce their carbon footprint while maintaining profitability

DNA

ISTANBUL: The Secretary-General of the Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8) issued a powerful call to action today on Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) Day, recognizing the sector as the "backbone of sustainable growth" and unveiling a new Secretariat initiative to pivot the bloc toward high-value, sustainable services. In a statement commemorating #MSME-Day, the Secretary-General highlighted the staggering global footprint of MSMEs, which account for nearly 90% of businesses and 70% of global employment. Within the D-8's vast demographic landscape—home

to 1.28 billion people—these enterprises are positioned as critical drivers of regional value chains and inclusive development.

"Entrepreneurs are the true architects of our economies," the Secretary-General stated. "Across the D-8 geography, from Nigeria to Indonesia, MSMEs are not just surviving; they are transforming local communities. They are the conduits through which we will achieve inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economic integration." The Secretariat reiterated its commitment to the 2015 D-8 SME cooperation framework, emphasizing the operational role of the D-8 SME Centre located in Abuja, Nigeria. The Centre remains a focal point for facilitating South-South partnerships and enhancing technical collaboration with relevant

United Nations bodies to provide entrepreneurs with the tools needed to scale and compete globally.

In a significant move to modernize the bloc's economic agenda, the D-8 Secretariat is marking this year's observance by convening a special dual-themed webinar. The virtual event features senior experts from Malaysia and is split into two critical tracks: Green MSMEs: Focused on sustainability, exploring how small enterprises can adopt circular economy principles, access green financing, and reduce their carbon footprint while maintaining profitability. Medical Tourism: A new frontier for the bloc, aiming to unlock the potential of high-value health services. The session will explore how MSMEs can integrate into the

global healthcare value chain, positioning D-8 nations as competitive destinations for medical travel.

The Secretary-General urged member states and private sector stakeholders to leverage these initiatives to build MSMEs that are "greener, smarter, more resilient, and globally competitive." The webinar aims to produce actionable insights that will feed into the D-8's broader strategic roadmap, ensuring that the sector remains at the forefront of economic recovery and long-term development. The event is expected to draw participants from across the D-8 membership, which includes Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey.—DNA

UFSC hosts seminar on migration, refuge and human displacement

FLORIANÓPOLIS: The extension project UFSC Without Borders, in partnership with PROGRAD, SINTER and Federal University of Santa Catarina's Sérgio Vieira de Melo Chair, presents the seminar on migration, refuge and human displacement regarding Brazil's Week of Migrants and Refugees to the entire academic community and the general public. This week was instituted in Brazil by law 14.678/2023 and is celebrated annually on 19th to 23rd, June. The objectives are to discuss the humanised migrational phenomenon through diverse perspectives, with an emphasis on the participation of migrants and refugees on the making of the Brazilian state; to promote and disseminate migrants and refugees' rights, freedoms, obligations and guarantees; to foment the debate on human rights in the academic community; to incentivise members of the civil society to know the institutional initiatives within the university; to contribute for the cultural integration of migrants and refugees; to value the cultural diversity that exists within the university; among others. The event's first edition happened on 13th June, 2025, and it was an afternoon presenting UFSC's institutional resources and projects that are auxiliary to aiding students who are also refugees in our country, among academic work on migration within Brazil and Portuguese teaching for foreigners, and cultural interventions performed by immigrants themselves. The second edition happened on 22nd June, 2026, an all-day seminar presenting UFSC's projects that work with international students, civil society's organisations that work with immigrants, cultural interventions performed by migrants and one workshop that targeted people's self-care while working with refugees. During the afternoon, there were academic presentations targeting psychological assistance to migrants, Portuguese teaching for foreigners, social assistance for refugees, concentration camps, gender violence among.—DNA

Israel govt recognizes Armenian genocide in rebuke to Turkiye

JERUSALEM: The Israeli government on Sunday unanimously recognized the massacres of Armenians during World War I as genocide, a move widely seen as a rebuke to Turkey and a stark signal of the deepening rift between the two countries. Relations between Israel and Turkey have sharply deteriorated since the war in Gaza erupted after Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas's attacks on Israel in October 2023. "A historic decision: the Israeli government has unanimously approved Foreign Minister Gideon Saar's proposal to recognize the Armenian genocide," the foreign ministry said. The cabinet's decision must still be ratified by parliament. "The Armenian genocide remains to this day the subject of an institutionalized campaign of denial and minimization, including a manipulative rewriting of history, mainly by the Turkish government," Saar said at a cabinet meeting, according to a statement issued by his office.—APP

Iraq arrests 47 officials in anti-corruption campaign

BAGHDAD: Iraqi authorities arrested 47 officials, including members of parliament, on Sunday as part of an anti-graft campaign in the corruption-plagued country, state media reported. Iraq's new prime minister, Ali Al-Zaidi, who recently took office with the blessing of the United States, has made two main vows: to fight corruption and to ensure a state monopoly on weapons. His anti-graft raids come before an expected visit next month to Washington, where he hopes to attract US investment and is expected to renew his promise to ensure pro-Iran armed groups hand over their weapons. Iraq's news agency INA quoted senior officials as saying that 47 suspects were "arrested on corruption charges," including members of parliament and other officials, with at least one from the oil ministry. The round-up began early Sunday when Iraqi security forces, primarily from anti-terrorism units, raided Baghdad's fortified Green Zone and another neighborhood in the capital. The Green Zone houses the US embassy and other diplomatic missions, as well as international institutions and government offices. High-ranking officials and politicians also live there. Video footage shared on local Telegram channels showed security forces in heavy armored vehicles in the Green Zone, including a clip of them inside a compound and, in one instance, inside a house. A diplomat in Baghdad told AFP that Zaidi's anti-corruption operation "is part of the Washington visit preparations" and designed to show his commitment to his promise. The raids also coincided with a visit to Baghdad by Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who promised to expand Tehran's cooperation with the new Iraqi government in all sectors, "as we did with previous governments." Iraq has long walked a tightrope between the competing influences of its allies, neighboring Iran and the United States. A security official told AFP the raids were carried out over corruption, but they are also part of "a larger campaign" against "funding factions and the smuggling of dollars and Iranian oil," referring to Tehran-backed armed groups, which Washington designates as terrorist organizations. The security official added that the US pressure is key in the matter, adding that "what has happened today is only the simple beginning." During the recent Middle East war, pro-Iran groups intervened in support of Tehran and hit US facilities in Iraq, including an ambush on US diplomats in Baghdad. They also hit targets in Gulf countries. Recently, at least two armed groups have said they will cooperate to hand over weapons to the state. Zaidi, who came to power after the US had vetoed another candidate, hopes to attract more US investment to Iraq, which urgently needs to revive its economy, especially after significant revenue losses caused by the halt in oil exports during the Middle East war. The anti-corruption campaign is ongoing in Baghdad and other provinces, INA said. Iraq anti-graft body, the Commission of Integrity, said that authorities are implementing judicial arrest warrants against suspects "accused of misappropriating public funds." Earlier, INA reported that the suspects were arrested based on confessions made by oil ministry official Adnan Al-Jumaili, who was arrested last month. In a move to demonstrate commitment to fighting corruption, authorities seized more than \$85 million earlier this month in the graft case against Jumaili.—Agencies

Israel damaged heritage sites across south Lebanon

TYRE/BEIRUT: A crown was blown off an ancient column in a UNESCO-listed site in Lebanon's port city of Tyre. A pilgrimage site for Muslims and Christians alike was destroyed in another southern town. Israeli strikes pummeled the Mamluk-era market in the city of Nabatieh and troops razed centuries-old Lebanese border towns. Israel's nearly four-month air and ground campaign that it says was targeting Iran-backed armed group Hezbollah has damaged or destroyed revered heritage sites across southern Lebanon, Lebanese Culture Minister Ghassan Salame told Reuters. Despite a ceasefire that took hold a week ago, authorities have yet to build a full picture of the damage as Israeli troops still occupy a zone about 10 km (6.2 miles) deep into Lebanon that is off-limits to Lebanese, Salame said. "We cannot work under the shadow of occupation," he said. That occupation zone includes the medieval Beaufort Castle as well as centuries-old villages that were home to Christians, Shiite Muslims and Sunni Muslims and their places of worship. "There are villages that have been completely bulldozed," Salame said.—APP

Bangladesh's fugitive ex-PM says will return to Dhaka 'this year'

NEW DELHI: Bangladesh's fugitive former leader Sheikh Hasina has vowed to return to her country "this year," according to an interview published on Sunday, months after she was sentenced to death in absentia for crimes against humanity. Hasina, 78, fled to neighboring India in August 2024 after a student-led uprising ended her 15-year, iron-fisted rule. She has not been seen in public since, except for a rare speech broadcast to a packed press club in New Delhi in January. In an interview with Indian broadcaster NDTV, Hasina said she was not afraid of death and that the verdict against her was "part of an illegal, unconstitutional and politically motivated process." "Many conspiracies have been hatched against me. But breaking through every web of conspiracy ... I was elected prime minister five times by the people's vote and worked for the country's unprecedented development," Hasina said. "I want to say clearly: overcoming every obstacle and every conspiracy, I will return to my country this year," she added in response to a question on whether she would return despite the death penalty verdict. Last November, Hasina was found guilty by a Dhaka court of incitement, order to kill and inaction to prevent atrocities, and sentenced to be hanged. The activities of her former ruling Awami League, once one of the country's most popular, have been outlawed. Ties between India and Bangladesh have improved since Prime Minister Tarique Rahman won a landslide election victory in the South Asian nation of 170 million people in February. But frictions remain, with Bangladesh repeatedly demanding the extradition of Hasina.—APP



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Briefs

Ukrainian strike sets fire to an oil refinery in southern Russia

KYIV: Ukraine kept up its heavy drone assault on Russia, setting fire to a major oil refinery in the south and killing at least two people, Russian authorities said Sunday. Kyiv's campaign of massive long-range strikes has choked Russian fuel supplies and military deliveries, in what authorities call an attempt to bring the Kremlin to the negotiating table. Debris from downed Ukrainian drones sparked a blaze at the refinery in Slavyansk-na-Kubani, a town in Russia's Krasnodar region, east of occupied Crimea, according to Gov. Veniamin Kondratyev. The falling debris killed one person in Slavyansk and injured another in a nearby village, according to regional authorities. Photos and videos circulating on Russian social media showed a thick cloud of smoke over what users said was the Slavyansk refinery. The Associated Press was not immediately able to verify the images. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky confirmed that Ukraine was behind the strike on Slavyansk. He also claimed that a second Russian refinery, in the Yaroslavl region around 700 kilometers (435 miles) from the Ukrainian border, was hit during the nighttime strikes. "Tonight, our 'long-range sanctions' reached two oil refineries in Russia," Zelensky wrote on the Telegram messaging app. "Each (strike) means a reduction in the resources that fuel the Russian war machine, and another step toward peace." - APP

Israeli soldier killed

JERUSALEM: The Israeli military said a soldier was killed on Sunday in fighting in southern Lebanon, two days after Israel and Lebanon signed an agreement aimed at ending hostilities. Captain David Hazutt, 21, a platoon commander "fell in combat" in southern Lebanon, the military said. His death brings Israel's military losses to 38 soldiers and one civilian contractor since the war between Israel and Hezbollah erupted in early March. - APP

Pakistan sounds alarm over atrocities in Sudanese city

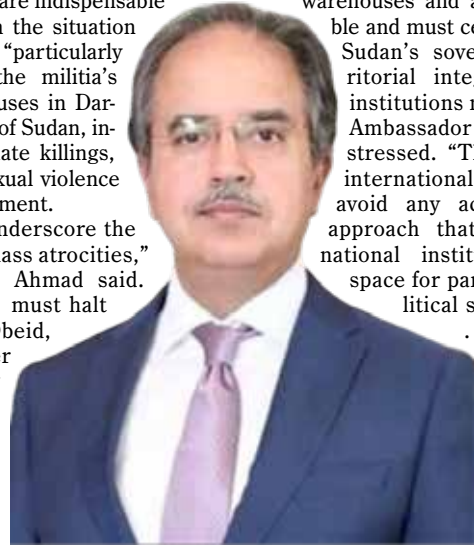
The current escalation in El Obeid is characterized by increased deployment of substantial military reinforcements around the city by RSF, who began warring with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in April 2023

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: As military pressure builds in and around the Sudanese city of El Obeid, Pakistan has called for a global action to prevent atrocities, given the paramilitary group, Rapid Support Forces' record of grave abuses in Darfur in 2004 as also in other parts of Sudan. "Peace and stability of Sudan and the wider region are intertwined- that is why bringing stability to (it) should be taken as a collective responsibility," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, told the UN Security Council, which debated the situation in Sudan on Friday. The current escalation in El Obeid is characterized by increased deployment of substantial military reinforcements around the city by RSF, who began warring with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in April 2023. Concerns of a civil war were expressed to the Council several months later, and the war has now entered its fourth year. More recently, the International Criminal Court has warned of an ongoing pattern of large-scale crimes against humanity across the Darfur region. The Council

itself has issued two press statements in 2026 concerning continued violence in Sudan - the first focusing on the Kordofan region and the second, issued just six days ago, on the situation in El Obeid. In his remarks, the Pakistani envoy strongly condemned attacks by the RSF against civilians and civilian objects, including schools, hospitals, markets, places of worship and other facilities that are indispensable to civilian life, with the situation around El Obeid "particularly alarming". given the militia's record of grave abuses in Darfur and other parts of Sudan, including indiscriminate killings, ethnic violence, sexual violence and forced displacement. "These patterns underscore the imminent risk of mass atrocities," Ambassador Asim Ahmad said. The RSF, he said, must halt its assault on El Obeid, refrain from further escalation, comply fully with international humanitarian law, and ensure the protection of civilians. "The growing use

of drones and advanced weaponry is another matter of great concern as this is increasing civilian casualties, disrupting humanitarian operations and risking a wider escalation," the Pakistani envoy told the 15-member Council. "We call for safe, rapid, sustained and unhindered humanitarian access to those in need, and stress that attacks on humanitarian personnel, convoys, warehouses and assets are indefensible and must cease." Sudan's sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and national institutions must be preserved," Ambassador Asim Ahmad stressed. "The Council and the international community should avoid any action, language or approach that weakens Sudan's national institutions or creates space for parallel military or political structures," he said. Pakistan, he said, welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy and encourages continued engagement to reduce tensions, facilitate humanitarian arrangements, and support an inclusive Sudanese-owned and Sudanese-led political process. "There is obviously no military solution," Ambassador Asim Ahmad added. Earlier, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacekeeping Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo briefed the Security Council on latest developments in the ongoing war between the SAF and former allies the RSF. Over the past two weeks, drone attacks by the parties have increased significantly in El Obeid, while the RSF have expanded their presence in and around the city. She recalled that UN human rights chief Volker Turk issued a stark warning that an offensive would lead to "impending human rights disaster". Escalation would put hundreds of thousands of civilians at immediate risk of large-scale violence, she said, adding that a full-scale battle would trigger new displacement to areas that were already overstretched. "Once again, we call for restraint from all parties and urge them to take all necessary measures to respect and protect civilians," she said. "The window to avert a wider escalation in El Obeid is rapidly narrowing." Beyond El Obeid, the conflict continues across multiple fronts, Ms. DiCarlo said.



Pakistan 'considers' buying cheap oil and gas from Iran

Govt remains active on further reductions in petroleum prices as global markets normalised, says minister

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervez Malik said on Sunday that Pakistan was considering purchasing cheap oil and gas from Iran following the end of the Iran-US war and the end of restrictions on Tehran. Speaking to the media in Lahore, the minister said that petroleum product prices had touched Rs460 per litre in April at the height of the Iran-US conflict, but global prices had since come down significantly. Washington and Tehran signed the "Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding" in Switzerland's Burgenstock on June 17, largely mediated by Pakistan. Under the deal, the United States undertook to immediately issue sanctions waivers through the Treasury Department for the export of Iranian crude oil, petroleum products and derivatives, along with all related services, including banking transactions, insurance and transportation, until sanctions are terminated. Malik said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had immediately passed on the benefit to the public, adding that the relief provided to consumers was even greater than the reduction seen in global markets. "We gave the people more benefits than what the international market offered," he said. The minister said the government had made significant reductions in petrol and diesel prices, adding that every single Pakistani had gone through a difficult period. "Difficult times last only for a little while - thank God, that time has passed and better days are coming," he said.



He said the government remained active on further reductions in petroleum prices and would bring them down further as global markets normalised, while staying within the framework of existing international agreements. He dismissed reports of misleading information being spread about petroleum prices, saying certain elements were trying to confuse the public on the matter. On oil companies, he said no formal letter had been received from them but that their representatives had met him and shared their concerns, which he said he had listened to. Malik said he had installed cameras at his own textile mills with the aim of bringing transparency and addressing concerns of the Federal Board of Revenue. He called for cameras to be installed at spinning factories as well on the same grounds.

Trump unveils new US passport with his image

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump has unveiled a rendering of a new limited-edition US passport to mark the country's 250th anniversary of independence - featuring his stern-faced likeness. "The USA's New Passport, which says, 'Welcome, but be good!'" Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform featuring the passport mock-up. The image features a glowering Trump leaning on his desk and his signature, with the text of the Declaration of Independence in the background. It appears to be based on a portrait taken by White House photographer Daniel Torok. The opposite page shows a painting depicting the declaration's signing in 1776, with the words "United States of America 250." The White House posted the same passport rendering, with the words "PATRIOT PASSPORT". The State Department, which had previously announced that a commemorative passport with "custom artwork" would be available from July 6, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In April, a department official said the Trump-themed passports would only be available at in-person appointments in Washington "for as long as there is availability." Trump has aggressively put his personal stamp on government institutions, with banners of the president flying outside several government buildings, and the Treasury Department saying his signature will soon appear on the one-dollar bill. He also added his name to the John F. Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts - until a court recently ruled that it should be removed. He will be the first sitting US president featured in Americans' travel documents. - APP

Trump asks Syria to take on Hezbollah

DNA

BEIRUT: As the White House has soured on Israel's war with Hezbollah in Lebanon, US President Donald Trump has shocked many in the region by pushing an alternative: Let Syria fight the Iran-backed militant group instead. He has suggested that the battle-hardened and Islamist-led insurgents who overthrew Syria's autocratic President Bashar Assad a year and a half ago and formed a new government would do a better job of rooting out Hezbollah than the Israeli army. Syrian President Ahmad Al-Sharaa has said he has no interest in doing so, and has asserted that Trump's comments were misconstrued. But Trump has doubled down on the idea. Although it remains unclear how serious the White House is about the proposal, the prospect of a Syrian invasion has raised alarms in Lebanon - and also in Israel, which regards Al-Sharaa's Islamist-led government with suspicion and has seized control of a strip of southern Syria since he took power. Syria has also become the site of rising tensions between Israel and Turkey - a main backer of Al-Sharaa's government - with each seeking to limit the other's influence in the neighboring country. Top Israeli security officials convened a meeting on the subject on Wednesday, according to an official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

EU condemns Tunisia

DNA

BRUSSELS: The European Union on Saturday condemned the sentencing of Sihem Bensedrine, one of Tunisia's best-known opposition figures, and urged the authorities to restore pluralism in the country where the Arab Spring began. The 75-year-old activist was sentenced to 25 years in prison on charges of abuse of office and forgery, which NGOs have condemned as politically motivated. "We urge the Tunisian authorities to restore an environment conducive to pluralism and the expression of independent voices, which are essential to the country's development," EU spokesperson Anouar El Anoumi said in a statement, hailing Bensedrine as an "iconic human rights defender."

Any challenge to Hormuz routes will 'increase tensions'

DNA

BAGHDAD: Iran's top diplomat warned Sunday that any attempt to bypass the Strait of Hormuz routes agreed with the United States would "increase tensions" in the Middle East, as the countries traded attacks and accusations of violating a fragile ceasefire in the region. During a visit to Iraqi capital Baghdad, Abbas Araghchi also called for the establishment of a security framework with Gulf countries, with Tehran and Washington accusing each other of violating the fragile truce that was meant to end the Middle East war. "Any attempt to adopt new or separate arrangements compared to what is underway by the Islamic Republic of Iran, will only lead to more complicated situations and delays in the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, and will increase the tensions, as we witnessed in the past two nights," Araghchi told a press conference. Vessels have continued to use a non-Iranian-approved passage in the strategic waterway, tracking platforms showed Friday. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said a day earlier that Oman and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) announced the new corridor without consulting Tehran, and warned vessels against using it. Araghchi's warning came after the US military said it carried out new strikes Saturday on multiple targets in Iran, in response to a fresh attack on a ship transiting the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran responded with launching strikes against US bases in the Gulf. The recent clashes have tested the negotiating process meant to end a war launched by the United States and Israel against Iran on February 28. Araghchi called on all parties to "adhere to the memorandum of understanding and not to allow this MoU to deviate from its course." Iran's top diplomat said that "we should reach a new framework that includes all countries in the region and without the presence or interference of any country from outside the region."

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