



Islamabad POST

Saturday, July 04, 2026

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Digital tax reforms to boost revenue sans raising tax

Detailed News On Page-07

Pak, Kazakhstan agree to boost education coop

Detailed News On Page-04

US backs Pakistan's right to self-defence

Detailed News On Page-08

Yet another tragedy

At least 40 killed, as passenger bus falls into ravine

Prior to that, a jeep carrying five passengers skidded off a wet, slippery road and plunged into a deep ravine in Upper Chitral in KP on March 31

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: At least 40 people were killed and eight others injured when a Peshawar-bound passenger bus fell into a ravine just as it left the Dhanasar area of Balochistan's Sherani district and crossed the provincial border into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Dera Ismail Khan on Friday, officials said. "According to initial reports, 40 people have been killed and eight others injured in the accident," a statement issued by the Balochistan chief minister's aide for media and political affairs, Shahid Rind, said. It added that rescue efforts were initiated soon after the incident on Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti's directives.

"District administrations from both provinces, rescue and other relevant departments are providing assistance to the affected persons," the statement said, adding that the incident would be investigated to bring facts to light. Earlier, Sherani Deputy Commissioner (DC) Wali Khan Kakar confirmed the location and other details of the incident to Dawn, saying that the bus left Quetta with 36 passengers, but more people from another broken-down bus boarded it midway. Separately, a statement by KP Rescue 1122 said 48 passengers were aboard the bus when it fell into the ravine. It added that teams from Zhob emergency services and Rescue 1122 reached the site soon after receiving information about the accident. The eight injured people were taken to District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ) in Zhob while the bodies were initially taken to a nearby rural health centre. The bodies were later shifted to Zhob DHQ, the Rescue 1122 statement said. Rescue efforts were ongoing, it said.

Condolences Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari expressed grief and extended condolences to the victims' families. An X post by the Presidency said he prayed for the

24 killed in DI Khan bus accident

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: At least 24 people, including women and children, were killed while 14 others got injured after a passenger bus reportedly suffered brake failure and plunged into a deep ravine at Dana Sar, a mountainous area on the border between Dera Ismail Khan and Balochistan, on Friday. According to initial reports, the bus was travelling from Quetta to Peshawar when its brakes failed, causing the driver to lose control. The vehicle veered off the road and fell nearly 400 feet into the ravine. The rescue teams rushed to the scene immediately after the accident and launched relief operations. The injured and the bodies were shifted to nearby hospitals for medical treatment and legal formalities. Rescue 1122 Dera Ismail Khan also dispatched emergency teams to assist in the operation. The rescue personnel provided first aid to the injured before shifting them to hospitals. - APP

swift recovery of the injured and directed the relevant departments to ensure the provision of best possible medical facilities to the injured. "The entire nation shares the grief of the affected families after this tragic incident," the statement quoted him as saying. Balochistan CM Bugti also expressed grief over the incident and extended condolences to the bereaved in a post on X. He said he had directed the relevant departments to expedite rescue efforts,

Continued on Page 06



TEHRAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif along with high level Pakistani delegation offering فاتحة for the departed soul of the Iranian supreme leader. Field Marshal Asim Munir and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also present on the occasion. - DNA

India to buy military equipment worth \$5.46bn

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: India on Friday approved the purchase of a range of military equipment for its defence forces worth \$5.46 billion, including missiles, electronic warfare systems and Kamikaze drones. The acquisition was approved "in-principle" by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) comprising top military officers and headed by the defence minister, according to a government statement. The statement said the estimated cost of the deal would be about INR520 billion (\$5.46 billion). It did not specify the period over which the acquisitions would be made or whether the systems approved for purchase will be imported or domestically produced. New Delhi over the last decade has sought to reduce its dependence on Russia, its traditional main supplier of military equipment,

NHA barred from collecting extra tax

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has restrained the National Highway Authority (NHA) from collecting additional toll charges from citizens. The court suspended a notification imposing a 50% additional toll on non-M-Tag users and motorists with low balances until the next hearing. The high court also issued notices to the NHA and other parties involved in the case, directing them to submit their responses. Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir issued a stay order, preventing the collection of the additional toll charges until further proceedings in the matter. The latest development comes months

Continued on Page 06

PM Shehbaz, CDF Munir pay respects to late supreme leader

Premier leaves Tehran for Turkiye visit; CDF Munir holds meeting with Iran's FM Araghchi

DNA

TEHRAN: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir on Friday paid their respects to Iran's late supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, state TV footage showed. PM Shehbaz and Field Marshal Munir were accompanied by a high-level Pakistani delegation as they visited the coffin. The prime minister paid tribute to the invaluable services of martyred Ali Khamenei for Islam, saying the late supreme leader guided the Iranian nation for decades with extraordinary insight, wisdom, and foresight. PM Shehbaz expressed complete solidarity with Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei, President Masoud Pezeshkian, and the brotherly people of Iran in this national tragedy, and prayed for the elevation of the martyred leader's ranks and his forgiveness. A parliamentary delegation led by Senate Chairman Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani and National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, along with members of parliament and Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, also attended the funeral alongside PM Shehbaz. After participating in the funeral prayers, the premier, who had arrived in Tehran just today, departed for Istanbul for his official visit to Turkiye.

Continued on Page 06

A powerful Iranian general emerges from hiding

NEWS DESK

DUBAI: A powerful general who leads Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard emerged from hiding as Tehran prepared Friday for the dayslong funeral for the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Photos published online by Iranian state media showed Gen. Ahmad Vahidi attending a meeting about the funeral of Khamenei, 86, then sitting alongside his casket as Iran's theocracy held a smaller service for him Thursday night near the supreme leader's former home in downtown Tehran. Vahidi has become a major player in formulating Iran's tough stance in negotiating a possible permanent end to the war with the United States, experts say. He is believed to be part of a small clique in direct contact with Iran's new Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, who remains in hiding after being reportedly wounded in

Continued on Page 06

Security sources warn of possible mass killings in India

Officials say India fuelling regional instability to distract from domestic challenges

DNA

NEW DELHI: Senior security sources have warned of a possible large-scale massacre in India, saying that growing religious extremism, intolerance and internal divisions could trigger violence on a scale that should not be ignored. The remarks were made during a briefing by a senior security official with media influencers on developments related to India. According to security sources, India was attempting to divert attention from its internal challenges by creating instability across the region, particularly in Pakistan. Security sources said that the Indian leadership was unwilling to accept ground realities, describing India as a "Hindutva-driven failed state" suffering from increasing reli-

gious extremism and intolerance. They said that the ideology of Hindutva had distorted India's secular identity and that the country's military had fallen victim to the ruling BJP's religious and political agenda. The sources further claimed that the slogan of "Shining India" was misleading in a deeply divided society and said that freedom of expression and press freedom in India remained under state control. They also claimed that India's vision of "Akhand Bharat" reflected expansionist ambitions. According to the security sources, the next major massacre could take place in India and warned that its severity could surpass the violence witnessed in Gaza. They said that discrimination against minorities,

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Passport home delivery service launched

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Directorate General of Immigration and Passports (DGI&P) has launched a passport home delivery service through a private courier service to facilitate applicants across Pakistan. The initiative was introduced on the directions of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi as part of efforts to improve public convenience and streamline passport delivery. According to an official statement, the new service will enable applicants to receive their passports at their registered addresses instead of collecting them from passport offices. The development came days after Naqvi announced that cashless transactions had become operational at all passport offices across Pakistan.

South Korean president to attend NATO summit

SEOUL: South Korean President Lee Jae Myung will attend a NATO summit in Ankara, Turkiye, from July 7 to 8, Seoul's national security adviser said on Friday. Lee aims to build defense industry cooperation between South Korea and NATO member countries, Wi Sung-lac told a press briefing. In Ankara, Lee will meet NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte and take part in a group summit with leaders from Indo-Pacific countries, including Japan, New Zealand and Australia, Wi said. He will also attend the NATO defense industry forum and deliver a speech at one of its sessions. - APP

Crackdown on the corrupt Sri Lanka arrests ex-navy chief on corruption charges

Karannagoda was the navy commander when Sri Lanka's decades-long Tamil separatist war ended in 2009. He was elevated to the rank of admiral of the fleet in 2019, and currently has no active role in the navy

DNA

COLOMBO: Authorities in Sri Lanka arrested a former navy commander on Friday over allegations he illegally helped secure the recruitment and overseas training of ex-president Mahinda Rajapaksa's son. Admiral of the Fleet Wasantha Karannagoda, 73, was taken into custody by the Bribery Commission over the 2006 enlistment of Yoshitha Rajapaksa without the required qualifications. Karannagoda was the navy commander when Sri Lanka's decades-long Tamil separatist war ended in 2009. He was elevated to the rank of admiral of the fleet in 2019, and currently has no active role in the navy. Yoshitha Rajapaksa, 38, is out on bail following his arrest last month in a related case in which he is accused of using public funds for training at Britain's prestigious naval college in Dartmouth.

"The Admiral of the Fleet has committed the offence of corruption in the recruitment and training of Yoshitha Rajapaksa," the Bribery Commission said in a statement. Karannagoda also faces allegations

of war crimes and was sanctioned by Britain in March 2025 after being accused of serious human rights violations and extrajudicial killings. He faces additional conspiracy to murder charges over the killing of 11 young men between 2008 and 2009. Those charges were initially dropped in October 2021, when Mahinda Rajapaksa's younger brother Gotabaya was president, but they were later revived under the administration of President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, who came to power in September 2024 on a pledge to crack down on corruption and unsolved high-profile crimes. Cases against the Rajapaksa family and their associates have gained renewed impetus since Dissanayake's election. Several Rajapaksa family members and close associates have been charged with a range of offences over the years, all of which remain pending before the courts. Yoshitha Rajapaksa is also facing criminal prosecution after failing to explain the sources of income used to purchase a house while his father was in power from 2005 to 2015. He told investigators that

Continued on Page 06

US asks regional allies to warn Iran

The warning underscored an emerging divergence between Washington and Israel over the objectives of the Iran war. While the US prioritized securing a negotiated settlement with Iran, Israel remained focused on weakening Tehran's leadership and pursuing broader strategic goals, including regime change and curbing Iran's regional influence

DNA

DUBAI: The US asked countries in the Middle East to warn Iran that Israel could target two of Tehran's senior negotiators during sensitive ceasefire talks earlier this year, according to a report in The New York Times. Washington feared Tel Aviv might attempt to assassinate Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, derailing negotiations over an interim peace deal that began in April and potentially reigniting the conflict. The concerns became significant enough that the US asked regional intermediaries to privately warn

Tehran about the potential threat, according to the report in the Times on Thursday. The warning underscored an emerging divergence between Washington and Israel over the objectives of the Iran war. While the US prioritized securing a negotiated settlement with Iran, Israel remained focused on weakening Tehran's leadership and pursuing broader strategic goals, including regime change and curbing Iran's regional influence. During the early stages of the conflict, Israel had targeted senior Iranian officials, including Ali Larjani, Iran's senior national security official, and former Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi, both of whom had been involved in contacts with Washington. Araghchi and Ghalibaf could have

been considered legitimate military targets during the initial phase of the conflict, but once negotiations began in earnest in April, Washington concluded that any attempt to assassinate the two men would jeopardize the diplomatic track, US officials told the publication. Iran responded by tightening security around its negotiating team. Before a planned meeting in Islamabad with US Vice President JD Vance, Iranian officials sought assurances through Pakistani and Qatari intermediaries that Israel would not target their delegation. According to Iranian officials cited by the Times, Pakistani fighter jets escorted the Iranian delegation's aircraft through Pakistani airspace. On the return journey, the

plane carrying Ghalibaf was reportedly diverted after Iranian security services warned of intelligence suggesting Israeli fighter jets had entered Iranian airspace. Despite those concerns, Araghchi and Ghalibaf continued participating in talks, later traveling to Qatar and Switzerland for additional rounds of talks with US officials. The US and Iran signed a framework agreement in June, launching a new 60-day round of negotiations on Tehran's nuclear program and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. The agreement drew opposition from Israeli officials, who argued that it fell short of Israel's wartime objectives because it neither forced political change in Tehran nor weakened Iran's military capabilities.

Policy presented to expand EV network

LAHORE: New policy recommendations have been submitted to the government to promote electric vehicles and expand charging infrastructure in Punjab, including proposals to increase private investment and provide financial incentives. According to sources, the Punjab Public Private Partnership Authority has submitted its recommendations to the government, which aim to rapidly expand the charging network of electric vehicles (EV) in the province and promote private sector investment. The recommendations have proposed paving the way for private investment for the establishment of electric vehicle charging stations, while providing financial incentives to those who establish charging stations in rural areas. According to the document, it has also been recommended to use public and private land for EV charging networks, provide revenue guarantees and grants to investors building charging stations. The recommendations also include proposals to establish a Punjab EV Transition Fund for electric vehicle projects, and seek funding from green bonds and international financial institutions. Furthermore, it has been recommended to relax rules and regulations to attract private investors in electric vehicle projects, while operating the EV charging, battery swapping and recycling system under public-private partnerships. The document also proposes to establish a special unit to increase investment in the electric vehicle sector to ensure effective implementation of the projects.—APP

Punjab formally launches 'Rising Star Portal'

LAHORE: Secretary Youth Affairs and Sports Punjab Fazalur Rehman on Friday inaugurated the Punjab Rising Star Portal, a digital platform aimed at identifying, registering and nurturing talented athletes and young achievers from across the province. The portal was launched at a ceremony held at Punjab Stadium, attended by students from various colleges and universities. Addressing the event, Fazalur Rehman said the platform would enable young people to register their achievements and receive professional training and support from the Youth Affairs and Sports Department. He urged talented youth, particularly from remote areas of Punjab, to register on the portal so their abilities could be recognized and promoted. The secretary also held an interactive "Meet with GenZ" session with students from several educational institutions, during which participants discussed youth development, innovation and the responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI). He said regular engagement with young people was essential for formulating policies that address their needs. Officials of the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) briefed participants on the portal's features and objectives. Additional Secretary Shabbir Hussain Cheema, Director Admin Abid Shaukat and Director Youth Affairs M Fahad also attended the ceremony, while certificates were distributed among participating students at the conclusion of the event.—APP

ICCI, CDA pledge steady ties for business-friendly federal capital

ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood emphasized that the business community is a major stakeholder in Islamabad and contributes significantly to the national economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and the CDA Officers Association have agreed to formulate a joint liaison committee aimed at ensuring the timely resolution of issues confronting the business community, strengthening institutional coordination and promoting sustained engagement between stakeholders for a more business-friendly and better-managed federal capital. The decision was taken during a meeting held at ICCI in which it was agreed that the proposed committee would comprise representatives from ICCI and the CDA Officers Association and would meet regularly to deliberate upon issues relating to trade, taxation, urban management, regulatory affairs and civic services. The forum would serve as a mechanism for identifying challenges, evolving consensus-based solutions and ensuring prompt follow-up on matters affecting businesses and traders. Speaking on the occasion, ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood emphasized that the business community is a major stakeholder in Islamabad and contributes significantly to the national economy. He said that stronger coordination between the Chamber and CDA Officers Association would help improve governance, ensure continuity in policies and facilitate the resolution of longstanding issues faced by traders, industrialists and investors. He stressed the need for institutionalized dialogue and regular interaction to promote a conducive business environment in the capital. President CDA Officers Association Amir Shehzad said that both organizations had earlier discussed the idea of strengthening mutual engagement and now there was a need to institutionalize this cooperation through a formal coordination mechanism. He highlighted that Islamabad had faced increasing administrative and regulatory challenges over the past several years due to frequent changes in management and policy directions. He underlined the importance of stakeholder consultation, policy consistency and stronger representation of local voices in decision-making forums. He appreciated the role played by ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood in taking up business-related concerns and said that the proposed liaison committee would become an effective platform for addressing issues through mutual consultation. General Secretary CDA Officers Association Kamran Bakht reiterated that close cooperation between the business community and regulatory institutions was essential for sustainable urban development.



He observed that many issues relating to encroachments, enforcement, parking management and civic amenities could be addressed more effectively through structured engagement and regular consultations. He expressed confidence that the liaison committee would help bridge communication gaps and facilitate timely resolution of concerns raised by traders and entrepreneurs. Chairman CDA Officers Association Riaz Khan emphasized that greater involvement of local stakeholders in policymaking would contribute to better governance, improved service delivery and a more responsive regulatory framework for Islamabad. Speaking on the occasion, Senior Vice President ICCI Tahir Ayub said that ICCI has consistently advocated for reforms aimed at promoting ease of doing business and reducing procedural bottlenecks. He stated that the proposed liaison mechanism would provide an effective platform for constructive engagement between regulators and the private sector, enabling both sides to work collectively towards practical

and long-term solutions. In his remarks, Vice President ICCI Irfan Chaudhry appreciated the initiative to establish a liaison committee and termed it a significant step towards fostering public-private partnership. He expressed hope that regular interaction and coordination would not only strengthen trust between institutions but would also enhance transparency, accountability and investor confidence in the federal capital. Earlier, former President ICCI Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi also addressed the gathering and highlighted the importance of sustained engagement between regulatory authorities and the business community. The event was conducted by former Senior Vice President Khalid Chaudhry and was also attended by ICCI Executive Members Rohail Anwar Butt, Ishaq Sial and Malik Aqeel Ahmed, senior members Israr Mishwani and Tehmas Butt, along with office-bearers of various Traders Welfare Associations including President TWA Blue Area Yousuf Rajput.

OGRA announces RLNG prices with significant increases

OGRA clarified that the June 2026 RLNG prices have been determined on the basis of three (3) cargoes from Pakistan State Oil (PSO) and one (1) spot cargo from Pakistan LNG Limited (PLL)

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has issued the official notification for Re-gasified Liquefied Natural Gas (RLNG) prices for June 2026, effective from June 1, 2026, in line with the policy guidelines set by the federal government. The new prices reflect a substantial upward adjustment compared to May 2026, with increases ranging from 14.82%

to 16.17% across all consumer categories and regions. According to the notification, for the SNGPL network, the transmission price has been set at \$17.9394 per MMBtu, while the distribution price stands at \$19.5228 per MMBtu. On the SSG-CL network, transmission is priced at \$16.3679 per MMBtu and distribution at \$18.6360 per MMBtu. Compared to May 2026, the transmission price for SNGPL rose by \$2.3157 per MMBtu

(14.82%), while the distribution price increased by \$2.5381 per MMBtu (14.94%). For SSGCL, the transmission price saw an increase of \$2.2748 per MMBtu (16.14%), and the distribution price jumped by \$2.5934 per MMBtu (16.17%). OGRA clarified that the June 2026 RLNG prices have been determined on the basis of three (3) cargoes from Pakistan State Oil (PSO) and one (1) spot cargo from Pakistan LNG Limited (PLL).

Civic/social amenities top priority: Mayor Karachi

KARACHI: Mayor Karachi, Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Thursday said that providing citizens with essential civic and social amenities remained the top priority of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), and that public welfare projects were being completed in various parts of the city to improve the quality of life of its residents. He expressed these views while speaking to media representatives during the inauguration of a modern Community Center in Baldia Town. Member of the Sindh Assembly Asif Musa, Baldia Town Chairman Kareem Askani, elected local government representatives, concerned officials, party workers, and a large number of local dignitaries were also present on the occasion.—APP

KP CM for enhanced monsoon preparedness in Hazara Division

DNA

PESHAWAR, Jul 03 (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Muhammad Sohail Afridi on Friday directed the authorities to accelerate tourism development, improve public service delivery, strengthen law and order, and ensure full preparedness for the monsoon season during a meeting on development projects and security in Hazara Division. The CM instructed officials to identify new tourist destinations in Kolai-Palaspas and Allai and said Rs500 million had been allocated under the Hazara Package for tourism-related projects. He added that the allocation would be further enhanced to promote the tourism sector, said a press release. He also directed the appointment of a commission to permanently resolve the boundary dis-

pute between Chaur Mali Valley and Balej Valley located between Kolai-Palaspas and Battagram. Muhammad Sohail Afridi instructed district administrations to remain on high alert during the monsoon season and ensure the immediate implementation of contingency plans. He also directed authorities to provide the best possible facilities and hospitality to domestic and foreign tourists, saying visitors play the role of ambassadors in promoting the province's positive image. The CM ordered the preparation of special traffic management plans for tourist destinations and urged district administrations to strengthen public engagement through open forums and by involving elected public representatives in public outreach activities. He said the current financial year would be a year of peace, development and prosperity,

adding that the provincial government had increased the police budget to further strengthen law and order. During the meeting, officials informed the CM that work was underway on 139 development projects in Hazara Division under the Provincial Annual Development Programme. The meeting was also told that 1,879 out of 2,111 complaints received through the Pakistan Citizen Portal had been resolved, more than 100 open public forums had been held under the government's open-door policy, land records had been fully digitised in Abbottabad and Battagram, while digitisation had reached 97 percent in Haripur and 90 percent in Mansehra. Officials further said that 20 police facilitation centres were operational across the division, with six more under construction.



ISLAMABAD: Following the devastating fire at Islamabad's H-9 Sunday Bazaar in the Federal Capital, Stall holders taking matters into their own hands to clean and restore their livelihoods without official assistance is a testament to incredible resilience.

Punjab's jails be converted into reformatories: CM

The chief minister directed that free legal aid should be provided to the poor and deserving prisoners through a regular legal aid agency, regular inspection of prison hospitals should be ensured and 30 jail vans used for the transfer of prisoners should be equipped with modern facilities including AC, washroom, cameras and better seats

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that Punjab's jails will be converted into reformatories. An important meeting on prisons reforms was held under the chairmanship of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, in which a detailed review was taken of the capacity crisis in prisons, the welfare of prisoners, security, health, education and ongoing measures for the promotion of skills. In the meeting, the CM

was briefed on the progress made on prison reforms and a comprehensive plan to solve the problem of overcrowding. Funds of Rs 1.3 billion were approved for the completion of Nankana Sahib Jail, while the target was set to complete Nankana Sahib and Samundri jails by September this year. Construction of new jails in Chiniot and Murree and construction of 27 additional barracks is also in progress. The chief minister directed that free

legal aid should be provided to the poor and deserving prisoners through a regular legal aid agency, regular inspection of prison hospitals should be ensured and 30 jail vans used for the transfer of prisoners should be equipped with modern facilities including AC, washroom, cameras and better seats. It was informed in the meeting that quality food, special diet plan, mental health facilities, hygiene kits, welfare stores and special nutrition programs for

mothers residing in prisons and children up to the age of six have been started. Modern women's jails are also being established in Lahore, Faisalabad and Rawalpindi. According to the prison administration is working successfully in 15 jails of Punjab, where prisoners are manufacturing various products and are also receiving technical training in mobile phones, computers, welding, motorcycle and tractor repair and other

skills. Under the literacy program, 4,141 prisoners are studying while several prisoners have completed matriculation, intermediate and graduation. The meeting was informed that the current capacity of Punjab's jails is 39,000 prisoners, while there are currently 68 to 79,000 prisoners, of which 73 percent are undertrial prisoners. The government has set a target of increasing the capacity of jails to 43,718 by 2027.

The Smooth Moving Connection

freeline MOVERS

PACKING, SHIPPING & FREIGHT FORWARDING








Our Services

- Packing
- Shipping
- Freight Forwarding
- Land, Sea & Air Freight
- Custom Clearance
- Relocations
- Office Removals
- Fine Art Handling
- Project Management
- Pet Relocation
- Warehousing
- Storage



Head Office
3rd Floor, Yasin Plaza, 74-West, Blue Area, Islamabad.
Tel: (+92 51) 2822471, 2274221, 2878029, 2272273, 2822111, 2874289 - Fax: (+92 51) 2825132, 2274227.
E-mail: moving@freelinemovers.com - Website: www.freelinemovers.com

Branch Offices

<p>Karachi Room No. 14 & 15, 3rd Floor, Kalkhathar Mall, Main Tang Road, 17D-1 Block-2, P.E.C.I.S. Karachi. Tel: (+92 21) 3403068, 3401949 Fax: (+92 21) 3403167 E-mail: karachi@freelinemovers.com</p>	<p>Lahore F-4, Gulberg Centre, Main Boulevard, Lahore. Tel: (+92 42) 3579891, 3579105 Fax: (+92 42) 3579123 E-mail: lahore@freelinemovers.com</p>	<p>Peshawar Office No. C-18, 2nd Floor, Zafar Plaza, Left Road, Ring Road, Peshawar. Tel: (+92 91) 2502778 Fax: (+92 91) 2502099 E-mail: peshawar@freelinemovers.com</p>	<p>Kolai House #4, Street #4, Chaman Anwar Road, Shahr-e-Nau, Kohat - Afghanistan. Tel: (+92 93) 775321, 775322, 775323, 775324, 775325, 775326, 775327, 775328, 775329, 775330, 775331, 775332, 775333, 775334, 775335, 775336, 775337, 775338, 775339, 775340, 775341, 775342, 775343, 775344, 775345, 775346, 775347, 775348, 775349, 775350, 775351, 775352, 775353, 775354, 775355, 775356, 775357, 775358, 775359, 775360, 775361, 775362, 775363, 775364, 775365, 775366, 775367, 775368, 775369, 775370, 775371, 775372, 775373, 775374, 775375, 775376, 775377, 775378, 775379, 775380, 775381, 775382, 775383, 775384, 775385, 775386, 775387, 775388, 775389, 775390, 775391, 775392, 775393, 775394, 775395, 775396, 775397, 775398, 775399, 775400, 775401, 775402, 775403, 775404, 775405, 775406, 775407, 775408, 775409, 775410, 775411, 775412, 775413, 775414, 775415, 775416, 775417, 775418, 775419, 775420, 775421, 775422, 775423, 775424, 775425, 775426, 775427, 775428, 775429, 775430, 775431, 775432, 775433, 775434, 775435, 775436, 775437, 775438, 775439, 775440, 775441, 775442, 775443, 775444, 775445, 775446, 775447, 775448, 775449, 775450, 775451, 775452, 775453, 775454, 775455, 775456, 775457, 775458, 775459, 775460, 775461, 775462, 775463, 775464, 775465, 775466, 775467, 775468, 775469, 775470, 775471, 775472, 775473, 775474, 775475, 775476, 775477, 775478, 775479, 775480, 775481, 775482, 775483, 775484, 775485, 775486, 775487, 775488, 775489, 775490, 775491, 775492, 775493, 775494, 775495, 775496, 775497, 775498, 775499, 775500, 775501, 775502, 775503, 775504, 775505, 775506, 775507, 775508, 775509, 775510, 775511, 775512, 775513, 775514, 775515, 775516, 775517, 775518, 775519, 775520, 775521, 775522, 775523, 775524, 775525, 775526, 775527, 775528, 775529, 775530, 775531, 775532, 775533, 775534, 775535, 775536, 775537, 775538, 775539, 775540, 775541, 775542, 775543, 775544, 775545, 775546, 775547, 775548, 775549, 775550, 775551, 775552, 775553, 775554, 775555, 775556, 775557, 775558, 775559, 775560, 775561, 775562, 775563, 775564, 775565, 775566, 775567, 775568, 775569, 775570, 775571, 775572, 775573, 775574, 775575, 775576, 775577, 775578, 775579, 775580, 775581, 775582, 775583, 775584, 775585, 775586, 775587, 775588, 775589, 775590, 775591, 775592, 775593, 775594, 775595, 775596, 775597, 775598, 775599, 775600, 775601, 775602, 775603, 775604, 775605, 775606, 775607, 775608, 775609, 775610, 775611, 775612, 775613, 775614, 775615, 775616, 775617, 775618, 775619, 775620, 775621, 775622, 775623, 775624, 775625, 775626, 775627, 775628, 775629, 775630, 775631, 775632, 775633, 775634, 775635, 775636, 775637, 775638, 775639, 775640, 775641, 775642, 775643, 775644, 775645, 775646, 775647, 775648, 775649, 775650, 775651, 775652, 775653, 775654, 775655, 775656, 775657, 775658, 775659, 775660, 775661, 775662, 775663, 775664, 775665, 775666, 775667, 775668, 775669, 775670, 775671, 775672, 775673, 775674, 775675, 775676, 775677, 775678, 775679, 775680, 775681, 775682, 775683, 775684, 775685, 775686, 775687, 775688, 775689, 775690, 775691, 775692, 775693, 775694, 775695, 775696, 775697, 775698, 775699, 775700, 775701, 775702, 775703, 775704, 775705, 775706, 775707, 775708, 775709, 775710, 775711, 775712, 775713, 775714, 775715, 775716, 775717, 775718, 775719, 775720, 775721, 775722, 775723, 775724, 775725, 775726, 775727, 775728, 775729, 775730, 775731, 775732, 775733, 775734, 775735, 775736, 775737, 775738, 775739, 775740, 775741, 775742, 775743, 775744, 775745, 775746, 775747, 775748, 775749, 775750, 775751, 775752, 775753, 775754, 775755, 775756, 775757, 775758, 775759, 775760, 775761, 775762, 775763, 775764, 775765, 775766, 775767, 775768, 775769, 775770, 775771, 775772, 775773, 775774, 775775, 775776, 775777, 775778, 775779, 775780, 775781, 775782, 775783, 775784, 775785, 775786, 775787, 775788, 775789, 775790, 775791, 775792, 775793, 775794, 775795, 775796, 775797, 775798, 775799, 775800, 775801, 775802, 775803, 775804, 775805, 775806, 775807, 775808, 775809, 775810, 775811, 775812, 775813, 775814, 775815, 775816, 775817, 775818, 775819, 775820, 775821, 775822, 775823, 775824, 775825, 775826, 775827, 775828, 775829, 775830, 775831, 775832, 775833, 775834, 775835, 775836, 775837, 775838, 775839, 775840, 775841, 775842, 775843, 775844, 775845, 775846, 775847, 775848, 775849, 775850, 775851, 775852, 775853, 775854, 775855, 775856, 775857, 775858, 775859, 775860, 775861, 775862, 775863, 775864, 775865, 775866, 775867, 775868, 775869, 775870, 775871, 775872, 775873, 775874, 775875, 775876, 775877, 775878, 775879, 775880, 775881, 775882, 775883, 775884, 775885, 775886, 775887, 775888, 775889, 775890, 775891, 775892, 775893, 775894, 775895, 775896, 775897, 775898, 775899, 775900, 775901, 775902, 775903, 775904, 775905, 775906, 775907, 775908, 775909, 775910, 775911, 775912, 775913, 775914, 775915, 775916, 775917, 775918, 775919, 775920, 775921, 775922, 775923, 775924, 775925, 775926, 775927, 775928, 775929, 775930, 775931, 775932, 775933, 775934, 775935, 775936, 775937, 775938, 775939, 775940, 775941, 775942, 775943, 775944, 775945, 775946, 775947, 775948, 775949, 775950, 775951, 775952, 775953, 775954, 775955, 775956, 775957, 775958, 775959, 775960, 775961, 775962, 775963, 775964, 775965, 775966, 775967, 775968, 775969, 775970, 775971, 775972, 775973, 775974, 775975, 775976, 775977, 775978, 775979, 775980, 775981, 775982, 775983, 775984, 775985, 775986, 775987, 775988, 775989, 775990, 775991, 775992, 775993, 775994, 775995, 775996, 775997, 775998, 775999, 776000, 776001, 776002, 776003, 776004, 776005, 776006, 776007, 776008, 776009, 776010, 776011, 776012, 776013, 776014, 776015, 776016, 776017, 776018, 776019, 776020, 776021, 776022, 776023, 776024, 776025, 776026, 776027, 776028, 776029, 776030, 776031, 776032, 776033, 776034, 776035, 776036, 776037, 776038, 776039, 776040, 776041, 776042, 776043, 776044, 776045, 776046, 776047, 776048, 776049, 776050, 776051, 776052, 776053, 776054, 776055, 776056, 776057, 776058, 776059, 776060, 776061, 776062, 776063, 776064, 776065, 776066, 776067, 776068, 776069, 776070, 776071, 776072, 776073, 776074, 776075, 776076, 776077, 776078, 776079, 776080, 776081, 776082, 776083, 776084, 776085, 776086, 776087, 776088, 776089, 776090, 776091, 776092, 776093, 776094, 776095, 776096, 776097, 776098, 776099, 776100, 776101, 776102, 776103, 776104, 776105, 776106, 776107, 776108, 776109, 776110, 776111, 776112, 776113, 776114, 776115, 776116, 776117, 776118, 776119, 776120, 776121, 776122, 776123, 776124, 776125, 776126, 776127, 776128, 776129, 776130, 776131, 776132, 776133, 776134, 776135, 776136, 776137, 776138, 776139, 776140, 776141, 776142, 776143, 776144, 776145, 776146, 776147, 776148, 776149, 776150, 776151, 776152, 776153, 776154, 776155, 776156, 776157, 776158, 776159, 776160, 776161, 776162, 776163, 776164, 776165, 776166, 776167, 776168, 776169, 776170, 776171, 776172, 776173, 776174, 776175, 776176, 776177, 776178, 776179, 776180, 776181, 776182, 776183, 776184, 776185, 776186, 776187, 776188, 776189, 776190, 776191, 776192, 776193, 776194, 776195, 776196, 776197, 776198, 776199, 776200, 776201, 77</p>
--	---	--	--

National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY

July 01/Japan Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada National Day

July 01/Somalia Independence Day

July 04/USA Independence Day

July 05/Algeria Independence Day

July 09/Argentine Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium National Day

July 20/TRNC Independence Day

July 23/Egypt National Day

July 26/Cuba National Day

July 26/Liberia National Day

July 30/Morocco National Day

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16

Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police.....9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114

PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange.9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489

CAA.....9281092

Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....5611116

Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

National exchange training program concludes at FJWU

The National Exchange Training Program stands as a significant initiative aimed at empowering educators, strengthening institutional linkages, and cultivating future educational leaders capable of driving positive change in Pakistan's education system



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Exchange Training Program, organized by The Signature Impact Pvt. Ltd alongside with School Education & Literacy Department & ECC Directorate, Government of Sindh concluded successfully with a prestigious closing ceremony hosted by Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU), Rawalpindi. The ten-day national-level training program, held from 23rd June to 2nd July 2026, brought together 15-20 teachers and education professionals from across Pakistan to enhance their professional capacities and enhance inter-provincial collaboration in the education sector. This Resident Teacher's trainings program was fully funded by The Signature Impact Pvt Ltd along with our Sponsoring Partners i.e. Cheezious & Savour Foods. The delegation primarily comprised teachers nominated by the School

Education & Literacy Department, Government of Sindh, along with representatives from leading private educational institutions from different regions of Pakistan. The program was designed to promote professional development, educational leadership, institutional collaboration, digital learning, curriculum innovation, and the exchange of best practices among educators. The Closing Ceremony was graced by distinguished academicians, educationists, and industry leaders. The event was attended by Engineer Dr. Muhammad Afzal, HI (M), Lt. Gen. (R), CEO of The Signature Impact Pvt. Ltd., along with Mr. Muhammad Adnan Mukhtar, Chairman, HEC Standing Committee, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) / COO (Chief Operating Officer) - The Signature Impact Pvt Ltd. The ceremony was graciously hosted by Prof. Dr. Bushra Mirza, Vice Chancellor, Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU). Also presence of Prof. Dr. Malik Ghulam Behlol, Professor/In charge, Department

of Education, Dr. Hashaam Akhtar Director, Office of Research, Innovation & Commercialization (ORIC) and Dr. Sidra Salam (Assistant Director ORIC) (FJWU) - ORIC & BIC who welcomed the participants and highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts between academia, government institutions, and the private sector to improve educational standards in Pakistan. Addressing the participants, the distinguished speakers emphasized the importance of innovation in education, digital transformation, curriculum enhancement, research-driven teaching practices, and leadership development. They encouraged educators to become change-makers within their institutions by adopting modern pedagogical approaches and fostering a culture of continuous learning. Speaking on the occasion, Engineer Dr. Muhammad Afzal, HI (M), Lt. Gen. (R) appreciated the dedication of the participating educators and reaffirmed The Signature Impact Pvt. Ltd.'s commitment to strengthening Pakistan's

education sector through capacity-building initiatives, national collaboration, and professional development programs. Mr. Muhammad Adnan Mukhtar highlighted the significance of building strong partnerships between educational institutions and industry, emphasizing that sustainable national development requires meaningful collaboration between academia, government, and the private sector. During the ceremony, Certificates of Participation were awarded to all participants in recognition of their successful completion of the intensive training program. The event concluded with a renewed commitment from all stakeholders to continue promoting educational excellence, innovation, and collaborative learning opportunities across Pakistan. The National Exchange Training Program stands as a significant initiative aimed at empowering educators, strengthening institutional linkages, and cultivating future educational leaders capable of driving positive change in Pakistan's education system.

Pak's solar demand surges after budget relief

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chairman Pakistan Solar Association (PSA) Aafaq Ali Khan on Friday hailed the government's decision of no additional tax on solar in this year's budget, saying it will boost demand, promote locally produced solar equipment, increase exports and accelerate Pakistan's renewable energy transition. Vice Chairman PSA Aafaq Ali Khan, while speaking to a local media outlet, lauded the government and the budget's decision of no additional tax on solar equipment, calling it a positive step toward strengthening the country's renewable energy sector. He said the policy would significantly boost demand for solar energy across Pakistan as prices continue to fall, making clean energy more accessible for households and businesses, adding that the decision reflects a forward-looking approach that supports sustainable development. Aafaq Ali Khan expressed confidence that Pakistan is moving towards a "solar revolution," driven by increasing public adoption and supportive government policies, adding that the growing shift toward solar energy would reduce reliance on conventional power sources and help address long-standing energy challenges. He further stated that in the coming years, local companies and brands would play a key role in manufacturing solar products within the country. This, he said, would not only strengthen domestic industry but also open new avenues for exports, contributing positively to the national economy.—APP

FUUAAT holds Pak-Russia int'l student research moot

ISLAMABAD: The Department of International Relations, Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAAT), Islamabad, the Faculty of Social Sciences, Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation and the Consortium of Asia Pacific and Eurasian Studies (CAPES) will jointly organize the Pakistan-Russia International Student Research Conference 2025-2026 on 6 July as an online conference. The conference is the final event of a six-month joint research project that brought together students and faculty members from Pakistan and Russia. It is the first conference of its kind jointly organized by Pakistan and Russia under this initiative. During the conference, nine international student research teams will present the results of their joint research under the supervision of their faculty mentors from both universities. The presentations will cover topics including Pakistan-Russia relations, media, artificial intelligence, climate security, culture, trade and socio-economic development. The research papers presented at the conference will be reviewed and later published in an edited book as an outcome of this collaborative research initiative. Speaking ahead of the conference, Dr Faisal Javaid, Head of the Department of IR, FUUAAT Islamabad, said that international academic collaboration is one of the department's key priorities. He said such initiatives provide students and faculty with valuable opportunities to work with international research partners, exchange ideas and contribute to the global academic community. Dr Daria Osinina, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Financial University, said the conference reflects the growing academic partnership between Pakistan and Russia and provides students with a valuable platform for international research collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Pak, Indonesia agree to deepen health coop in vaccine production

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Mustafa Kamal, held a meeting with Indonesia's health minister in Geneva, where both sides agreed to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in the health sector, with a special focus on vaccine production, support in technology and capacity building. According to the Ministry here on Friday, during the meeting, the two ministers reaffirmed the longstanding brotherly ties between Pakistan and Indonesia and discussed ways to expand collaboration in healthcare. Mustafa Kamal highlighted Pakistan's ongoing efforts to develop local vaccine manufacturing capacity, stressing that expanding

domestic vaccine production was vital for strengthening the country's healthcare system and enhancing preparedness for future public health emergencies. The minister noted that Indonesia remains Pakistan's leading partner in developing local vaccine manufacturing and expressed Islamabad's keen interest in benefiting from Indonesia's advanced technology and expertise in the sector. The Indonesian health minister assured Pakistan of full cooperation in vaccine production, technical cooperation and capacity building, reaffirming Indonesia's commitment to supporting Pakistan's efforts to strengthen its vaccine manufacturing capabilities.—APP

Monsoon emergency committee begins national response drive

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Friday formally activated its high-level Emergency Response Committee on Monsoon Preparedness, constituted on the directives of the prime minister, to strengthen nationwide disaster readiness and inter agency coordination for the 2026 monsoon season. The committee, chaired by Planning Minister, Professor Ahsan Iqbal in its inaugural meeting via video link from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Headquarters, reviewed the country's preparedness, emergency response framework and future climate risks, while approving the inclusion of all provincial chief secretaries as co-opted members. The meeting was attended by Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Minister Musadik Malik, NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik, HI(M), along with representatives of key federal ministries, divisions and departments, said a news release issued here. Opening the meeting,

Prof Ahsan Iqbal underscored the committee's role in ensuring effective national coordination and strengthening preparedness to deal with the ongoing monsoon season. Established following the prime minister's meeting on Early Warning Systems and Monsoon Preparedness on July 1, the committee has been tasked with overseeing national preparedness and emergency response coordination throughout the monsoon season. The committee comprised the federal ministers for Planning, Climate Change, Communications, Power, Water Resources, National Food Security and Research, Information, and Information Technology and Telecommunication, along with the secretaries of the respective ministries, the NDMA chairman and the WAPDA chairman. The Prime Minister's Office has designated NDMA as the committee's secretariat. During the briefing, NDMA presented seasonal forecasts, the current national preparedness status and major

incidents reported so far during the monsoon. The participants reviewed the national coordination framework and discussed the implementation of responsibilities assigned under the Terms of Reference (TORs) issued by the Prime Minister's Office. The committee unanimously approved the inclusion of the chief secretaries of all provinces as co-opted members to strengthen coordination. The meeting also highlighted emerging climate-related challenges beyond the current monsoon season, warning that shrinking glaciers, prolonged droughts and below normal rainfall in many parts of the country could place severe stress on agriculture and pose serious food security risks. Prof Ahsan Iqbal directed the Ministry of National Food Security and Research to work jointly with the National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC) to prepare long range projections extending to 2027 for better national planning and response.—DNA

Key policy reforms reviewed to strengthen higher educ

ISLAMABAD: The 47th meeting of the Commission, the apex governing body of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), was held at the HEC Secretariat. The meeting, chaired by Prof. Dr Niaz Ahmad Akhtar, Chairman HEC, deliberated on a wide range of strategic policy matters aimed at strengthening the quality, relevance, governance, and future-readiness of Pakistan's higher education sector. The Commission held wide-ranging discussions on a number of strategic policy matters concerning the future direction of Pakistan's higher education sector. Deliberations covered initiatives aimed at strengthening quality assurance frameworks, enhancing graduate competencies, modernizing academic standards, and promoting institutional effectiveness through evidence-based policy interventions. Among other matters, the Commission deliberated on issues relating to the implementation of Outcome Based Education across Higher Education Institutions, development of standardized Programme Learning Outcomes, and measures for strengthening quality enhancement and graduate competency assessment. Members also considered proposals relating to the modernization of the regulatory framework governing the establishment of new higher education institutions, with a view to aligning institutional development with evolving national priorities and international best practices. The Commission further discussed initiatives intended to promote academic innovation and internationalization of undergraduate education, including a structured approach for recognition of liberal arts programmes within the existing regulatory framework while ensuring consistency with national quality standards.—DNA

DNA
DIPLOMATIC NEWS AGENCY
Connecting Pakistan to the World

Credible News. Global Reach. Trusted by All.

DNA delivers fast, accurate and balanced news from Pakistan and around the globe. Your trusted source for real-time updates on diplomacy, politics, economy and more.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
Fast and timely news from around the world.

CREDIBLE & DEPENDABLE
Committed to accuracy, fairness and integrity.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE
In-depth coverage with a diplomatic lens.

WIDEST NETWORK
Connecting sources, stories and societies.

DIVERSE COVERAGE
Politics, diplomacy, economy, culture and beyond.

FOLLOW DNA
Stay informed. Stay connected. Stay ahead.

www.dnanews.com.pk
A M Bhatti
@EditorDnanews

DNA
DIPLOMATIC NEWS AGENCY
Connecting Pakistan to the World

Briefs

IRSA
releases
305,100
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 305,100 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 432,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbella Dam stood at 1465.35 feet, which was 63.35 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 263,000 cusecs and 152,000 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1163.85 feet, which was 113.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 41,300 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 210,100, 173,900, 103,400, and 40,500 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 55,000 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 45,200 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala—APP

PMYP, UN
Women join
hands for
youth women
empowerment

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan met with Mr Jamshed Kazi, Country Representative of UN Women Pakistan, at the Prime Minister's Office to discuss opportunities for collaboration aimed at advancing youth development and women's empowerment in Pakistan. The meeting was chaired by Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan. It was attended by Mr Jamshed Kazi, Country Representative of UN Women Pakistan; Ms. Fahmida Iqbal Khan, Deputy Country Representative, UN Women Pakistan; Ms. Saman Ahsan, Programme Manager, UN Women Pakistan; and Mr. Zeeshan Hussain, Programme Officer, UN Women Pakistan, along with senior officials and representatives from the Prime Minister's Youth Programme. During the meeting, Chairman PMYP welcomed the UN Women delegation and appreciated the organization's continued efforts in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.—APP

Pak, Kazakhstan reaffirm
commitment to education coop

Addressing the ceremony, Ambassador Yerzhan Kistafin reaffirmed Kazakhstan's commitment to expanding cooperation with Pakistan in education, scholarships and people-to-people exchanges



MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Ms Wajiha Qamar, on Friday said Pakistan and Kazakhstan were further strengthening their strategic partnership through enhanced cooperation in education, human capital development and youth empowerment. She said these remarks while addressing a ceremony of gratitude organized by the Pakistan Education Endowment Fund (PAK-EEF) to acknowledge the US\$1 million in humanitarian assistance extended by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the people of Pakistan. The ceremony was attended by Yerzhan Kistafin,

Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, PAK-EEF Chief Executive Officer Ms. Hajra Suhail, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and senior officials of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training and PAK-EEF. Speaking on the occasion, the minister expressed profound gratitude to the Government and people of Kazakhstan for their generous support, describing it as a reflection of the enduring friendship, mutual trust and growing strategic partnership between the two countries. She said the humanitarian assistance complemented the Education Emergency initiative launched by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to ensuring that every child has access to quality education and mar-

ket-driven skills for a brighter future. She said the recent elevation of Pakistan-Kazakhstan relations to a Strategic Partnership had opened new avenues for collaboration in education, scholarships, technical and vocational training, and human capital development. She added that partnerships with friendly countries such as Kazakhstan complemented Pakistan's national efforts to strengthen its education system and invest in its greatest asset, its youth. Earlier, PAK-EEF Chief Executive Officer Ms. Hajra Suhail said Kazakhstan's humanitarian contribution reflected the strong friendship and mutual confidence between the two countries. She reaffirmed PAK-EEF's commitment to managing educational initiatives with transparency, merit and accountability,

adding that the partnership would create meaningful opportunities for deserving students while further strengthening bilateral cooperation. Addressing the ceremony, Ambassador Yerzhan Kistafin reaffirmed Kazakhstan's commitment to expanding cooperation with Pakistan in education, scholarships and people-to-people exchanges. He emphasized that investing in education was an investment in a shared, peaceful and prosperous future for both nations. The ceremony concluded with a renewed commitment by Pakistan and Kazakhstan to further deepen cooperation in education, scholarships and human capital development, reinforcing the longstanding friendship and strategic partnership between the two brotherly countries.

IT director
briefs police
station
officers

ISLAMABAD: Director Information Technology (IT) Atif Abbas briefed front desk officers from Islamabad Police stations on the effective use of policing software and measures to further improve timely public service delivery. An official told APP on Friday that the session focused on the efficient use of software applications being used at police stations to enhance operational efficiency and ensure prompt redressal of public complaints. Participants were given a detailed briefing on newly introduced software upgrades and improvements aimed at strengthening digital policing and streamlining police services. The officers were instructed to make optimum use of the updated systems to improve service delivery, maintain accurate records and facilitate complainants in a professional and timely manner. The briefing also emphasized the importance of adopting modern technology to improve policing standards and enhance public confidence in police services. Islamabad Police continues to strengthen technology-driven policing by equipping officers with modern digital tools to provide efficient, transparent and citizen-centric services, the official added.—APP

Pakistan team
wins top hon-
ors

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani delegation claimed championship in the high-voltage cable intelligent operation and inspection category at the inaugural CICA International Skills Competition held in Guangzhou from June 30 to July 4 and also received the Outstanding Organization Award for their rigorous conduct, orderly coordination and active engagement in the exchange. The Pakistan delegation was led by Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, Chairperson of Pakistan's National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), with Wang Chungping, President of Heroboss Technology, serving as team leader. China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday. Competitors include Waqas Rasool from Huaneng Group and Saeed Azhar from Heroboss Technology. Waqas Rasool clinched first place in the high-voltage cable intelligent operation and inspection category, demonstrating near-zero error accuracy, efficient fault diagnosis capabilities and skilled use of smart test equipment. The event consists of two modules: high voltage plastic cable preprocessing.

HEC commission reviews
numerous policy reforms

The Commission held wide-ranging discussions on a number of strategic policy matters concerning the future direction of Pakistan's higher education sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 47th meeting of the Commission, the apex governing body of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), was held at the HEC Secretariat, Islamabad on Thursday. The meeting, chaired by Prof. Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar, Chairman HEC, deliberated on a wide range of strategic policy matters aimed at strengthening the quality, relevance, governance, and future-readiness of Pakistan's higher education sector. The Commission held wide-ranging discussions on a number of strategic policy matters concerning the future direction of Pakistan's higher education sector. Deliberations covered initiatives aimed at strengthening quality assurance frameworks, enhancing

graduate competencies, modernizing academic standards, and promoting institutional effectiveness through evidence-based policy interventions. Among other matters, the Commission deliberated on issues relating to the implementation of Outcome Based Education across Higher Education Institutions, development of standardized Programme Learning Outcomes, and measures for strengthening quality enhancement and graduate competency assessment. Members also considered proposals relating to the modernization of the regulatory framework governing the establishment of new higher education institutions, with a view to aligning institutional development with evolving national priorities and international best practices. The Commission further discussed initiatives intended to promote

academic innovation and internationalization of undergraduate education, including a structured approach for recognition of liberal arts programmes within the existing regulatory framework while ensuring consistency with national quality standards. Members reaffirmed the importance of maintaining a balanced regulatory environment that encourages academic diversity, institutional excellence, and continuous improvement across the higher education sector. Reaffirming its commitment to excellence, innovation, and good governance, the Commission underscored the importance of evidence-based policymaking, robust quality assurance mechanisms, and forward-looking reforms to ensure that Pakistan's higher education system remains responsive to emerging national needs.

OGRA continues
nationwide
enforcement

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Taking notice of public complaints and reports published in various newspapers, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has intensified nationwide enforcement actions against those involved in selling Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) above the notified price and engaging in profiteering. City & Local Guides in coordination with the district administration, OGRA is conducting enforcement operations in various cities across the country. As part of these efforts, six LPG plants in Rawalpindi have so far been sealed for violating the notified LPG price. OGRA remains fully committed to protecting consumers rights and ensuring the availability of LPG at the notified price. To achieve this objective, monitoring and enforcement activities will continue uninterrupted across the country. OGRA will also initiate strict legal action, in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations, against individuals and entities found involved in overcharging, profiteering, or violating any regulatory requirements. OGRA has directed LPG marketing companies, LPG plants, distributors, and dealers to strictly comply with the notified prices and all applicable rules and regulations. Failure to do so will result in strict legal action.

Pakistani football
manufacturing highlighted

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's world-class football manufacturing industry was prominently showcased during the live screening of the FIFA World Cup 2026 match between Uzbekistan and Portugal in Tashkent. Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan appreciated the proactive efforts of Pakistan's Trade Mission in Tashkent for successfully promoting the country's manufacturing excellence at a major international sporting platform, said a release issued here on Friday. He said the initiative reflected an effective use of public diplomacy to project Pakistan's industrial strength, export potential and soft image before thousands of international football fans. The Minister said Pakistan takes pride in its globally recognized football manufacturing industry, particularly the craftsmanship of Sialkot, which continues to supply premium-quality footballs for major international competitions. He emphasized that such initiatives help position Pakistan as a reliable, competitive and quality-driven manufacturing hub in the global market. He further noted that showcasing Pakistani products at high-visibility international events can play an important role in enhancing exports, building business confidence and strengthening Pakistan's trade and eco-

economic engagement with partner countries, including Uzbekistan. In collaboration with local Uzbek authorities, the Trade Mission of Pakistan in Tashkent arranged the promotional activity at Bunyodkor Stadium and Humo Arena, where thousands of Uzbek football fans gathered to watch the match. The Mission highlighted the "Trionda," the official match ball of the FIFA World Cup 2026, proudly manufactured in Sialkot, Pakistan, by Forward Sports, one of the country's leading football manufacturers. To maximize outreach among local audiences, the Mission had Forward Sports' promotional documentary translated into Uzbek language. The documentary was screened before the match at both venues and showcased Pakistan's internationally recognized expertise in producing premium-quality footballs used in major international competitions around the world. Representatives of the Embassy also presented a Pakistan-made "Trionda" football to Mr. Shavkat Umurzakov, Governor of Tashkent City, as a symbol of the enduring friendship and expanding partnership between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. The Trade Mission plans to organize further promotional events in the coming weeks to highlight Pakistan's world-class manufacturing capabilities and create greater awareness of the country's export potential among the people and business community of Uzbekistan.

Pakistani mangoes in the spotlight at
Beijing event as new trade deals signed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The aroma of Sindhri and Chaunsa mangoes filled Pakistan House as the Embassy of Pakistan in China hosted the Pakistan-China Silk Road Mango Festival 2026, celebrating the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Co-hosted with the Asia-Africa Trade Promotion Office, the festival drew more than 400 guests, including Chinese officials, diplomatic envoys, business

leaders, media representatives, artists and members of cultural and trade organizations, according to China Economic Net (CEN). The event showcased Pakistan's world-famous mangoes alongside a curated range of mango-based products, highlighting Pakistan's rich agricultural resources and its long-standing reputation as a producer of premium-quality mangoes. Addressing the gathering, Ambassador of Pakistan to China Khalil Hashmi described the mango as the

"King of Fruits" and a symbol of Pakistan's cultural heritage. He said sharing Pakistani mangoes with Chinese friends reflects the spirit of goodwill and the deepening friendship between the two countries and their peoples. He added that the festival brought together Pakistani culture, commerce and cuisine on a single platform. A key highlight of the evening was the signing of two memorandums of understanding (MoUs) aimed at strengthening cooperation in man-

go trade and logistics. One agreement was signed between China Ole High End Super Market and Tianjin Midtrans Int Co., while the other brought together Hainan Jiao Long Technology Co. and RIC Nexus. Adding a festive cultural flavor to the evening, the renowned Pakistani music band "Kaltor" and students of the Pakistan Embassy College Beijing performed a repertoire of traditional Pakistani and Chinese songs, drawing warm applause from the audience.

**MOST EXPERIENCED
MANUFACTURERS &
EXPORTERS OF
MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS
IN
PAKISTAN**

WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED

JUDO
KARATE
KUNG-FU
JU-JITSU
TAEKWONDO
UNIFORMS AND
COLOURED BELTS

ASHRAF INDUSTRIES (PVT) LTD
127 C, Industrial Estate
Sialkot-51340, Pakistan
Phones: +92-52-3256000 / 3255768
E-mail: info@ashraf.net.pk

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 06 Issue: 225

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad

Israel destroying the past to dominate the future

HANI HAZAIMEH

HERE is an old saying that states it is the victors that write history. But in Gaza and parts of Lebanon, Israel appears determined to do something even more sinister: destroy history before anyone can write it. For nearly three years, the world has watched the systematic devastation of Gaza. Entire neighborhoods have vanished beneath mountains of concrete. Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed or displaced. Hospitals, schools, universities, places of worship and essential infrastructure have been reduced to rubble. Yet, amid this human catastrophe, another crime has received far less attention – the destruction of a people's cultural and archaeological heritage. When ancient mosques collapse under bombardment, when centuries-old churches are damaged, when museums are emptied, when archaeological sites disappear and when historic marketplaces are erased, the destruction cannot simply be viewed through the narrow lens of military necessity. It raises profound moral, legal and historical questions. A nation is not defined solely by its borders. It is defined by its memory. That memory lives in ancient stones, sacred buildings, manuscripts, monuments, archaeological sites and places that connect one generation to another. Destroy them and you do more than demolish buildings – you attempt to sever a people's connection to their own past. As of March, UNESCO had verified damage to 164 cultural properties in Gaza since October 2023. The list is staggering: historic mosques, churches, archaeological sites, museums, cemeteries and centuries-old buildings that formed part of one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited regions. These are not simply Palestinian treasures. They are part of humanity's shared heritage. Their destruction impoverishes the entire world. Israel insists that it targets military infrastructure and that any damage to cultural sites is incidental to operations against armed groups. That claim deserves legal scrutiny and independent investigation wherever cultural heritage has been damaged. But regardless of intent, the cumulative destruction is impossible to ignore. When the scale of devastation reaches this magnitude, the international community cannot simply dismiss it as unfortunate collateral damage. The same disturbing pattern has emerged in Lebanon. Historic neighborhoods, archaeological sites, religious landmarks and ancient structures in the south of the country have also suffered significant damage during Israeli military operations. Lebanese authorities have accused Israel of



targeting elements of the country's cultural heritage, while UNESCO has expressed concern over damage affecting historically significant sites. This is about more than military campaigns. It is about identity. History has always been central to the conflict in the Middle East. Competing narratives about who belongs, who came first and who possesses historical legitimacy have shaped politics for generations. That is precisely why cultural heritage deserves extraordinary protection. It should never become another casualty of geopolitical ambition. When archaeological sites disappear, future generations lose the physical evidence of civilizations that existed long before modern borders were drawn. Every destroyed monument narrows humanity's understanding of its own history. The international legal framework is unambiguous. The 1954 Hague Convention obliges parties to armed conflict to protect cultural property whenever possible. These protections exist because the world learned, through the devastation of previous wars, that attacking history is an attack on civilization itself. Yet outrage has often been selective. The destruction of cultural heritage elsewhere has prompted immediate international condemnation, emergency preservation missions and urgent diplomatic action. In Gaza, however, many governments have limited themselves to expressions of concern while one of the richest historical landscapes in the Eastern Mediterranean continues to disappear. That inconsistency undermines the principles the international community claims to defend. No country should be granted immunity from international humanitarian law simply because it has powerful allies. If cultural heritage deserves protection in Europe, Asia or Africa, it deserves the same in Palestine and Lebanon. International law either applies equally or it loses much of its moral authority. The tragedy extends beyond the present conflict. After the bombs stop dropping, Palestinians and Lebanese will attempt to rebuild their homes, schools and hospitals. They can, with time and resources, be reconstructed. Cultural heritage deserves protection. It should never become another casualty of geopolitical ambition. But no engineer can recreate an authentic Byzantine mosaic shattered by an airstrike. No architect can reproduce centuries of accumulated history embedded in medieval stone walls. No reconstruction project can restore the original character of an archaeological site once it has been obliterated. Perhaps that is why the destruction of cultural heritage should alarm us as much as the destruction of physical infrastructure. Roads can be rebuilt. Power stations repaired. Buildings reconstructed. History cannot. The international community must stop treating attacks on cultural heritage as secondary to the broader conflict. They are not. They strike at the heart of a people's identity and erase chapters of human civilization that belong to us all. If the world is serious about preserving humanity's common heritage, it must demand independent investigations into damage to cultural sites, accountability where international law has been violated and meaningful protection for what remains. Because when history is buried beneath rubble, the loss is not only Palestinian or Lebanese. It is humanity's.

The Yemenite Children Abduction: A Stain on Humanity's Conscience

Qamar Bashir



The release of documents represented an important step toward transparency, but it did not end the controversy. Instead, it reinforced the determination of many families to continue searching for answers. In 2021, the Israeli government approved approximately NIS 162 million in compensation for eligible families affected by the affair. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu acknowledged the suffering endured by the families and expressed hope that the compensation would provide at least some measure of recognition

FOR decades, a dark cloud has hung over the founding of the State of Israel—one that involves the systematic disappearance of thousands of children from immigrant families, primarily of Yemenite descent. This is the Yemenite Children Affair, a chapter of history so painful that its official records were sealed for seventy years, until 2071. The wound has been reopened by recent remarks attributed to Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who has reportedly admitted that these children were abducted and sold to the United States for medical experimentation. His heartless statement has once again forced the world to revisit a humanitarian tragedy that has haunted thousands of families for more than seven decades. This renewed attention comes at a time when Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir has repeatedly drawn worldwide criticism for inflammatory public rhetoric. His verified statements calling for “all of Lebanon to burn,” declaring that “for every teardrop of an Israeli mother, a thousand Lebanese mothers need to cry,” and advocating overwhelming military force against Israel's enemies have been condemned by governments, international organizations, and even political figures within Israel. Reuters, The Times of Israel, the BBC, CNN, and other international media have extensively reported these remarks. Critics argue that such rhetoric reflects a broader political mindset that has increasingly alarmed much of the international community. Whether one agrees with that assessment or not, the renewed debate surrounding the Yemenite Children Affair has inevitably become part of that larger discussion. The Yemenite Children Affair is not merely an Israeli controversy. It is a humanitarian tragedy whose consequences continue to devastate families to this day. Between 1948 and 1954, shortly after the establishment of the State of Israel, tens of thousands of Jewish immigrants from Yemen, along with immigrants from Iraq, Morocco, Libya, Tunisia and other Middle Eastern and North African countries, arrived in the new state under extremely difficult conditions. During those years, hundreds—and according to many families and researchers, possibly more than a thousand—babies and toddlers disappeared after being admitted to hospitals or immigration camps. Parents consistently recounted strikingly similar experiences. They were told that their child had suddenly died, often without ever seeing the body. Many said they received no death certificate, no burial location, and no convincing explanation. Instead of closure, they were left with uncertainty that lasted not months or years, but generations. Israeli governments established three major commissions of inquiry to investigate the affair. Those commissions generally concluded that the majority of the missing children had died from disease during the difficult conditions prevailing in the early years of the state. They also acknowledged that some cases could not be conclusively resolved because records were incomplete or missing. Many families, however, rejected those conclusions, arguing that the

investigations failed to answer fundamental questions and left significant contradictions unresolved. One of the most controversial aspects of the affair was the decision by the 2001 Kedmi Commission to seal large portions of its evidence until 2071. That extraordinary decision itself became a source of public suspicion. Many asked a simple question: if there was nothing to hide, why should crucial evidence remain inaccessible for seventy years? Growing public pressure eventually led the Israeli government to reconsider. In 2016, the Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee unanimously approved the release of hundreds of thousands of classified documents relating to the affair. Minister Tzachi Hanegbi, appointed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to examine whether the archives should be opened, concluded that the authorities' handling of the affair “did not reflect the values of the Jewish state.” He also acknowledged that he found it difficult to accept the bureaucratic explanations that had long been offered for many of the disappearances. The release of documents represented an important step toward transparency, but it did not end the controversy. Instead, it reinforced the determination of many families to continue searching for answers. In 2021, the Israeli government approved approximately NIS 162 million in compensation for eligible families affected by the affair. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu acknowledged the suffering endured by the families and expressed hope that the compensation would provide at least some measure of recognition. Yet many recipients responded that they had never sought money. What they wanted was truth. Some family representatives described the compensation as an attempt to close the chapter without fully addressing it. They insisted that financial payments could never replace knowledge of what happened to their children. They demanded access to every remaining document, every available DNA record, every adoption file permitted by law, and every piece of evidence capable of revealing the fate of their loved ones. That demand is neither political nor ideological. It is profoundly human. Every parent possesses an inalienable right to know what happened to a missing child. If a child died, where is the grave? If a child was adopted, who authorized it? If records exist, why were they hidden? If mistakes were made, why were they never fully acknowledged? These questions transcend nationality, religion and politics. The recent circulation of the video has once again intensified public debate. Supporters of the video's interpretation argue that it confirms long-standing allegations surrounding the affair. The renewed attention demonstrates that the issue remains unresolved in the minds of countless families and observers around the world. Meanwhile, Ben-Gvir's own recent conduct has further fueled international concern. His call for Lebanon to “burn,” his celebration of controversial legislation introducing the death penalty for certain terrorism offenses tried in military courts—a law widely criticized by opponents as dis-

criminatory because of its practical application—and his repeated inflammatory language toward Palestinians have generated condemnation from governments, human rights organizations and international media. His rhetoric has become, for many critics, symbolic of a political climate that warrants closer scrutiny of unresolved historical controversies. History teaches an important lesson: societies become stronger, not weaker, when they confront difficult truths honestly. The Yemenite Children Affair deserves precisely such an approach. No democratic society should fear opening archives, encouraging independent historical research, facilitating DNA identification, or allowing families to learn the fate of their loved ones. Transparency strengthens public confidence; secrecy erodes it. For this reason, the time has come for the international community to assist—not to pre-empt, but to establish the fullest possible historical record. An independent commission under United Nations auspices, composed of internationally respected historians, forensic specialists, archivists, legal experts, and human rights professionals, should be invited to examine all available evidence, including previously classified records, adoption files where legally accessible, DNA evidence, and testimony from surviving families and witnesses. Its mandate should not be political. Its mandate should be truth. If that independent inquiry establishes that individuals or institutions unlawfully removed children from their families or committed other crimes, those findings should also be made public, and accountability should follow in accordance with applicable law. Justice cannot be selective. It must be guided by evidence rather than ideology. The greatest injustice is not merely that children disappeared. The greatest injustice is that so many parents died never knowing whether their sons or daughters lived or died. Some spent their entire lives waiting for a knock at the door that never came. Others carried photographs of missing children to their graves. Their suffering cannot be measured in financial compensation. This is why the Yemenite Children Affair remains a burden on the conscience of humanity. Regardless of nationality, religion or political belief, every civilized society should stand with families seeking truth about missing children. That principle is universal. Only when every available archive has been opened, every credible lead investigated, every possible DNA match pursued, and every family given the fullest answers that history can provide, will this painful chapter begin to close. Until then, the Yemenite Children Affair will remain not merely a historical controversy, but an unfinished moral obligation owed to every parent who never stopped asking one simple question: What happened to my child?

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

Every university should solve own problems

Dr. Muhammad Bilal Tahir

Germany's Universities of Applied Sciences have long partnered with regional industries to drive manufacturing excellence. South Korea's remarkable industrial transformation was built upon strong collaboration among universities, industry, and government. China has strategically aligned universities with regional industrial clusters to accelerate technological innovation and economic development. Their experience demonstrates a simple lesson: universities become most valuable when they solve the problems...

IMAGINE if every public university in Pakistan became responsible for solving the biggest economic and social challenges within a 100-kilometre radius of its campus. Faisalabad's universities would become global centers for textile innovation. Sialkot would lead research in sports engineering and surgical technologies. Rahim Yar Khan would pioneer precision agriculture, fertilizer efficiency and food processing. Gwadar would emerge as Pakistan's hub for the blue economy and maritime logistics. Within a decade, universities would no longer be viewed merely as degree-awarding institutions—they would become engines of regional prosperity. This is not an idealistic vision; it is an economic necessity. Pakistan's higher education system has expanded significantly over the past two decades, yet one fundamental disconnect persists: universities and regional economies often operate in parallel rather than in partnership. Industries struggle to find graduates with relevant skills, while thousands of young graduates struggle to find meaningful employment. Research is too often driven by publication targets instead of local challenges. As a result, innovation remains disconnected from economic growth. The solution lies in adopting a simple but transformative national principle: One University, One Regional Mission. Every university should have a clearly defined Regional Development Charter that aligns its teaching, research, innovation, and community engagement with the economic strengths and development needs of its own region. Success should not be measured only by rankings or publications, but also by the number of local problems solved, industries supported, startups created, patents commercialized, and communities empowered. Pakistan's regional diversity offers enormous opportunities for such specialization. In Punjab, universities in Rahim Yar Khan should lead research in smart agriculture, fertilizer technologies, seed biotechnology, food processing, irrigation efficiency, and sustainable water management by working closely with fertilizer manufacturers, sugar mills, seed companies, and agro-industries. Faisalabad should strengthen its global reputation

through advanced textiles, industrial automation, artificial intelligence for manufacturing, and sustainable production. Sialkot should become a centre of excellence for sports engineering, surgical instruments, biomedical technologies, and export-oriented product innovation. Lahore should continue leading in artificial intelligence, software engineering, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, digital health, and entrepreneurship. In Sindh, Karachi should focus on maritime logistics, port management, fintech, manufacturing, and international trade, while Hyderabad and Sukkur should advance agricultural engineering, irrigation technologies, food processing, and water resource management. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, universities should specialize in tourism, gemstones, mining, forestry, renewable energy, and cross-border trade. In Balochistan, Quetta and Gwadar should become national leaders in mining technologies, livestock sciences, fruit processing, fisheries, port logistics, and the blue economy. This approach is neither experimental nor unprecedented. Germany's Universities of Applied Sciences have long partnered with regional industries to drive manufacturing excellence. South Korea's remarkable industrial transformation was built upon strong collaboration among universities, industry, and government. China has strategically aligned universities with regional industrial clusters to accelerate technological innovation and economic development. Their experience demonstrates a simple lesson: universities become most valuable when they solve the problems closest to them. Pakistan has already established important foundations through Offices of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORICs), business incubation centers, and academia-industry collaboration initiatives. The next step is not creating new institutions but giving existing universities a sharper regional purpose. This transformation must also reshape what happens inside the classroom. Curricula should be designed with industry participation rather than academic isolation. Every student should graduate with meaningful industrial experience through internships, appren-

ticeships, field projects, or capstone assignments that address real-world challenges. A PhD thesis should not merely satisfy academic requirements; wherever possible, it should contribute practical solutions for farmers, manufacturers, hospitals, municipalities, or public institutions. Equally important is community engagement. Universities should become problem-solving partners for the communities around them. Engineering students can improve drinking water systems. Agriculture departments can help farmers adopt climate-smart practices. Business schools can strengthen small enterprises and rural entrepreneurs. Computer science departments can accelerate the digital transformation of local industries. When universities engage directly with society, learning becomes more relevant and research becomes more impactful. The Higher Education Commission should now institutionalize this vision through a national “One University, One Regional Mission” policy. Every public university should prepare a five-year Regional Development Plan in consultation with industry, chambers of commerce, provincial governments, and local communities. Institutional funding and performance evaluations should gradually recognize measurable regional impact alongside research output and academic excellence. Pakistan does not need universities that all look alike. It needs universities that reflect the strengths, aspirations, and economic realities of the regions they serve. The universities that helped transform Germany, South Korea, and China did not succeed because they produced the largest number of graduates; they succeeded because they became indispensable partners in regional development. Pakistan can achieve the same transformation if it redefines the purpose of higher education. A university should ultimately be remembered not for the size of its campus or the number of its degrees, but for the industries it strengthened, the communities it uplifted, the innovations it created, and the future it built for its own region. That is how universities become not only centers of learning, but also architects of national prosperity.

Briefs

At least 40 killed, as passenger bus falls into ravine

FROM PAGE 01
provide the best medical facilities to the injured and ensure all possible assistance for the affected families. "The Balochistan government is standing with the affected families at this difficult time," he said. Today's incident comes around two-and-a-half months after a vehicle plunged into a deep ravine in the Nawagai Asban area of KP's Lower Dir area, leaving three women dead and two people injured. Prior to that, a jeep carrying five passengers skidded off a wet, slippery road and plunged into a deep ravine in Upper Chitral in KP on March 31. As a result, three people, including a child, were killed and two others were injured. This is a developing story that is being updated as the situation evolves. Initial reports in the media can sometimes be inaccurate. We will strive to ensure timeliness and accuracy by relying on credible sources, such as concerned, qualified authorities and our staff reporters.

PM Shehbaz, CDF Munir pay respects to late supreme leader

FROM PAGE 01
Separately, Field Marshal Munir and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and paid rich tribute to the services of the late supreme leader. PM Shehbaz and Field Marshal Munir reached Tehran earlier today to attend the funeral prayers of late Ali Khamenei, and convey Pakistan's condolences to the Iranian leadership. Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni received PM Shehbaz upon arrival at the Mehrabad Airport. Senior Pakistani and Iranian diplomatic officials were also present to welcome the prime minister, according to a statement issued by the PM Office. During the one-day visit, PM Shehbaz will also reaffirm Pakistan's complete solidarity with the brotherly people of Iran during their time of grief, it said. The prime minister is leading a high-level delegation comprising National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, and others. Khamenei was martyred on February 28 this year, the first day of Israeli and US strikes on Iran. His funeral began in Tehran on Friday, with burial scheduled for July 9 in his hometown of Mashhad, according to Iranian state media.

NHA barred from collecting extra tax

FROM PAGE 01
after the government suspended a proposed quarterly increase in toll plaza fees at the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, citing the need to provide relief to the public amid prevailing economic challenges. In April, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan directed the NHA to withdraw a notification issued on April 1 and halt the increase scheduled to take effect from April 5. A fresh notification was subsequently issued formally cancelling the earlier decision.

Serena Hotels Concludes Golf Training Camp for Young Girls

Through its Sports Diplomacy Initiative, Serena Hotels has continued to champion programmes that encourage youth engagement, promote women's participation in sports, and contribute to the growth of a more inclusive sporting culture across Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels, in collaboration with Margalla Greens Golf Club, successfully concluded the 4th edition of the Tee to Triumph Golf Training Camp for Young Girls under its Sports Diplomacy Initiative, reaffirming its commitment to empowering young women through sports and promoting greater female participation in golf. Now in its fourth consecutive year, Tee to Triumph continued to provide a platform for aspiring young golfers to develop their skills through structured training and professional guidance. The camp brought together over 48 young girls, who underwent comprehensive coaching under the expert supervision of the qualified coaches at Margalla Greens Golf Club. Designed to introduce young girls to the game while building confidence, discipline, teamwork, and resilience, the initiative reflected the shared commitment of Serena Hotels and Margalla Greens Golf Club to creating meaningful opportunities for youth development through sport. Over the years, Tee to Triumph has become a significant programme that encourages young girls to pursue golf and realize their potential both on and off the course. Speaking on the occasion, Commodore (Retired) Majid Satti, Secretary, Margalla Greens Golf Club, said: "Tee to Triumph has continued to grow into an impactful platform for introducing young girls to the sport of golf and helping them develop their skills under professional guidance. We are delighted to have partnered with Serena Hotels once again to deliver another successful edition of this initiative, which reflects our shared commitment to supporting youth and expanding opportunities for women in sports."



Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels said, "At Serena Hotels, we believe that sport is a powerful tool for empowerment, inclusion, and personal development. Through our Sports Diplomacy Initiative, Tee to Triumph has continued to inspire young girls to pursue excellence, build confidence, and embrace the values of discipline, perseverance, and teamwork. We are proud to have completed the fourth edition of this programme

in partnership with Margalla Greens Golf Club and remain committed to supporting initiatives that create lasting impact within our communities." Through its Sports Diplomacy Initiative, Serena Hotels has continued to champion programmes that encourage youth engagement, promote women's participation in sports, and contribute to the growth of a more inclusive sporting culture across Pakistan.

Portugal, Spain set for Round of 16 clash after contrasting victories

Ronaldo's side beat Croatia 2-1 while Spain ease past Austria 3-0 to seal place in pre-quarter-final

HOUSTEN: Portugal and Spain booked their places in the Fifa World Cup last 16 with contrasting victories on Thursday, as Cristiano Ronaldo's side survived late VAR drama to edge Croatia 2-1 while the European champions cruised to a commanding 3-0 win over Austria. In another nerve-shredding World Cup classic, Goncalo Ramos headed Portugal into the lead in the fourth minute of stoppage time before Croatia saw a last-gasp equaliser agonisingly ruled out for offside in Toronto. Portugal's 41-year-old superstar captain Cristiano Ronaldo had helped haul his team back into the contest, burying a 68th-minute penalty to cancel out Croatia's 53rd-minute opener from Ivan Perisic. Ronaldo became the oldest scorer in a World Cup knockout match. Ronaldo later joined frenzied celebrations after Ramos glanced home a sensational header deep into injury time to give Portugal the lead. But Ronaldo and his Portugal team-mates were left stunned when Josko Gvardiol prodded home an apparent equaliser in stoppage time. Yet there was one final twist when the goal was chalked off for offside after a lengthy VAR review to the disbelief of Croatia's players and their large contingent of fans at Toronto's BMO Field. After the final whistle, an emotional Ronaldo held up and pulled on a Portugal shirt bearing the number 21, a tribute to late team-mate Diogo Jota, the Liverpool star who tragically died in a car crash almost a year to the day from Thursday's win, on July 3 last year. "We knew it before the game. It was a so special moment. We speak today, our group, about that, the coincidence of life, it's unbelievable," Ronaldo said afterwards of the tribute to Jota.

"I was amazed because the situation of today. It means a lot to us, not only because we won the game, but also the way we won the game. It was a difficult game, we knew it." The result ensures that Ronaldo's incredible World Cup career will be extended for at least one more match when the Portuguese face Iberian rivals Spain in the last 16 in Dallas on Monday. Ronaldo's second-half penalty made him the oldest man to score in a World Cup knockout match. Spain romp past Austria Spain had advanced to that meeting with a scintillating 3-0 win over Austria in Los Angeles earlier Friday that confirmed their status as one of the favourites for the title. Two goals from Mikel Oyarzabal and a Pedro Porro header sealed victory for the Spaniards, who produced their most complete performance of the tournament to advance to the next round. Spain opened their World Cup campaign with a faltering 0-0 draw against Cape Verde, but have subsequently built momentum with each match. With Spanish movie stars Penelope Cruz and Javier Bar em in the 70,492 crowd at Los Angeles' SoFi Stadium, Spain were always in control against a limited Austrian side who failed to register a shot on goal. Oyarzabal fired Spain into the lead in the 36th minute, swooping in a low finish to crown a slick passing move, and more deft inter-play set up Porro to head home the second in the 66th minute. Real Sociedad striker Oyarzabal grabbed his second as he coolly tucked away a low finish from Marc Cucurella's pinpoint cross. "We played a magnificent match. - APP



Slick Switzerland sweep past Algeria into World Cup last 16

Swiss claim 2-0 win with goals from Embolo and Ndoye, set to face Colombia or Ghana in pre-quarter-final

DNA

NEW YORK: Switzerland's Brel Embolo struck early and Dan Ndoye added a second after the break as they cruised to a 2-0 win over Algeria and into the last 16 at the World Cup, where they will meet Colombia or Ghana back in Vancouver next week. The victory was Switzerland's first in the knockout stage since 1938, and they will fancy their chances in the next round after a tactical masterclass orchestrated by coach Murat Yakin. They shifted formations and laid traps for Algeria before hitting them with two sucker-punch goals that decided a contest short on excitement, but full of intrigue and nuance. Pitted against a familiar foe in Algeria coach Vladimir Petkovic, who had seven years at the helm of Switzerland between 2014 and 2021, Yakin set his team up to absorb early pressure and strike on the break, and that is exactly what they did. "We couldn't underestimate Algeria and we had to be clin-

ical, that clinical finishing made the difference today," striker Embolo said. "It gave us the energy we needed in the first half. We could have been even more ruthless in the second half. We played with great maturity. We have to stay humble and keep working." Switzerland's opener was as simple as it was effective. They won the ball in their own half and sent 20-year-old Johan Manzambi off down the left on the counter, and he squared for Embolo to steer the ball into the net from close range in the 10th minute. The lead secured, Switzerland shifted to a five-man midfield out of possession, snuffing out the space and challenging the Algerians to play through them, but Petkovic's charges struggled to break their opponents down. Algeria's best chance came in first-half stoppage time when Ibrahim Maza dragged a snap shot wide of the near post, one of few efforts on goal they managed in the game. The Swiss struck again almost immediately after the break, attacking down the right before a half-hearted

clearance from Rafik Belghali ended up at the feet of Ndoye and the winger placed his shot beyond the dive of goalkeeper Luca Zidane. Algeria captain Riyad Mahrez could have pulled a goal back moments later but he fired straight at a defender from a central position, summing up a frustrating evening for the Algerians. With Granit Khaka steering Switzerland's defensive shape, they went back to their original game-plan of ceding possession and launching lightning-fast counter-attacks, but the Algerians were wary of committing players forward lest they concede again. Despite the sell-out crowd at BC Place, the last 15 minutes were played in virtual silence, only broken by cheers and then groans as Swiss substitute Fabian Rieder somehow contrived to miss with the goal at his mercy, scuffing his shot back across goal where a grateful Zidane was able to avert the danger. Fortunately for Switzerland it had no bearing on the outcome as they celebrated

moving into a last-16 clash on Tuesday. Ndoye capped a superb performance with his well-taken goal, revealing he had waited a long time for it. "Before the World Cup, I hadn't played for a long time, so I had to get back into the swing of things. I was really looking for that goal, and sometimes when you look for it too much, it doesn't come," the Nottingham Forest said. "Today, I started playing by telling myself, 'Just play the way you know how, don't over-think it,' and it came naturally. Our strength is knowing how to play as a team." Algeria captain Riyad Mahrez announced that the game was his last for the national team. "The goal was to progress, and I think it was a game that was within our reach. We conceded two goals on mistakes, and at this level, we pay dearly for that," he said. Asked if Thursday's defeat would be his last match at the World Cup, the 35-year-old went one step further. "It's my last appearance even with the national team. It was my last game," he said.

Security sources warn of possible mass killings in India

FROM PAGE 01
particularly Muslims, could further deepen divisions within India. The sources also claimed that residents of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir were living in what they described as "the world's largest military garrison", saying that there was one soldier for every seven to eight civilians. They further said that India staged false-flag operations by blaming Pakistan in an attempt to divert international attention from indigenous freedom movements. The security sources said that India viewed a stable, prosperous and moderate Pakistan as a threat and claimed that sections of the Indian media and political leadership remained focused on shaping narratives against Pakistan and its armed forces. They also said that the banned Joint Awami Action Committee's senior leadership was pursuing an Indian agenda. The briefing concluded with the assertion that Pakistan and its people had never been intimidated by India and would not be intimidated in the future.

India to buy military equipment worth \$5.46bn

FROM PAGE 01
turning to other countries like the United States and France, as well as boosting domestic production. The deal included the purchase of anti-drone and electronic warfare systems, medium range surface-to-air and portable anti-tank missiles and a "Jet Based Kamikaze Drone System" for the Indian army, the government said. The DAC also approved the procurement of new naval mines, shipborne drones and a testing facility for strengthening maritime defence and boosting surveillance capabilities. India also planned to purchase a high-altitude unmanned aircraft platform for the air force, to be used for intelligence gathering and remote sensing. New Delhi's current defence budget is \$85 billion. Meanwhile, India is also pushing to rapidly modernise its navy. In December, New Delhi began ordering at least 75 ships and submarines, most of them built domestically. Top officials earlier this year approved the purchase of \$39 billion worth of defence equipment, including Rafale jets from France.

A powerful Iranian general emerges from hiding

FROM PAGE 01
the Feb. 28 Israeli strikes that killed his father, the elder Khamenei. Vahidi himself hasn't been seen publicly since Feb. 8, weeks before the Iran war began. Video published by Iranian state media showed the mourning ceremony for Khamenei near the husseiniyah at his compound in Tehran. An Israeli airstrike in the war's first moments killed Khamenei and some of his family members. State media said Khamenei's body sat within a coffin on a stage, with red tulips lined up in front of it. What appeared to be paper butterflies hung from the ceiling in front of it. The black-clad mourners, whom state media identified as coming from families of those who lost loved ones in the 12-day war in 2025 and the recent Iran war, threw scarves and other items for attendants to brush against the coffin, a common practice in Iran.

Sri Lanka arrests ex-navy...

FROM PAGE 01
he raised money by selling gems given to him by his grandaunt, who could not recall how she had obtained the precious stones. His uncle Gotabaya Rajapaksa was handed a foreign travel ban last month over his alleged links to the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings that killed 279 people.

Briefs

Call for
modernisation
of wheat storage
facilities

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Food, Muhammad Israr Khan on Friday directed the Food Department to modernise government wheat storage facilities and strengthen monitoring mechanisms to safeguard public wheat reserves. The directives were issued during his visit to the government wheat warehouse in Mardan, where he reviewed the quality and quantity of stored wheat, warehouse capacity, storage systems, and safety arrangements. He instructed officials to adopt efficient and transparent storage practices, ensure regular monitoring of wheat quality, and further improve security measures at government warehouses to protect public assets. Israr Khan said effective management of wheat stocks was essential to preserving national resources and ensuring the uninterrupted availability of quality wheat and affordable flour to the public. He added that the provincial government was committed to enhancing the operational capacity of the Food Department in line with the directives of Muhammad Sohail Afridi. The special assistant stressed that strict oversight of government wheat reserves would remain a priority to protect public interests and maintain transparency in the province's food supply system.—APP

Gold prices up
by Rs12,200
per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold witnessed a sharp increase in the local market on Friday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola surging by Rs12,200 to settle at Rs 440,936, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold increased by Rs10,459 to Rs378,031, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold climbed by Rs 9,588 to Rs 346,541. In the international market, the price of gold gained \$122 to reach \$ 4,185 per ounce. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola increased by Rs 319 to Rs 6,764, while the price of 10 grams of silver rose by Rs 274 to Rs 5,799. The price of silver in the international market also advanced by \$ 3.19 to \$ 62.85 per ounce, the association reported.—APP

PSX extends
rally, gains
over 851
points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) extended its bullish momentum on Friday, gaining 851.25 points, a positive change of 0.46 percent, closing at 185,372.21 points against 184,520.96 points on the last trading day. During the session, the ready market recorded a trading volume of 815.651 million shares with a traded value of Rs42.634 billion, compared to 994.752 million shares valuing Rs55.794 billion in the previous session. The market capitalization increased to Rs20.763 trillion from Rs20.631 trillion a day earlier. Out of 494 active companies in the ready market, 256 advanced, 211 declined, and 27 remained unchanged. TPL REIT Fund I topped the volume chart with 72.949 million shares, followed by TPL Corp Limited with 48.406 million shares and TPL Properties with 34.286 million shares. The top gainers included PIA Holding Company LimitedB, which increased by Rs309.14 to close at Rs18,603.14, and The Thal Industries Corporation Limited, which gained Rs105.38 to settle at Rs1,162.45. On the losing side, Khairpur Sugar Mills Limited declined by Rs77.10 to close at Rs2,227.84, while Service Industries Limited fell by Rs65.87 to close at Rs2,221.61. In the futures (DFC) market, turnover stood at 133.076 million shares with a traded value of Rs7.377 billion, compared to 197.021 million shares worth Rs9.641 billion in the previous session.—APP

Digital tax reforms to boost
revenue sans raising tax rates

He appreciated the performance of nestling IT sector and said that it has made exports up to 4.5 billion and now government is trying to provide them an efficient eco system. He further said that government is encouraging construction sector but the system for the sale and purchase of files would not be allowed

FAISALABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Friday that fully digitalised taxation system is imperative to eliminate leakage in addition to enhancing collection without creating any hassle among taxpayers. Addressing the business community at Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he said that it is not a post-budget conference but actually it is the beginning of preparation for the budget for FY2027-2028. He said that finance division is responsible for budget preparation while Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) would look after the matters of tax administration and tax collection only. He underlined the importance of private sector and said that it has to lead the economy to put Pakistan on growth trajectory. About financing, he said that interest rate has been trimmed from 22 per cent to 11.5 per cent. "It could be further brought down if Iran conflict is resolved immediately", he opined. About funds allocated for exporters in budget, he said that it is the only incremental amount while more concessions would be doled out to them in the next budget. Quoting electricity tariff, he said that all cross subsidies have been eliminated which would further bring down the rate of electricity. He said that discussion was continuing on taxation and as its result, advance and super taxes have been eliminated. He appreciated the performance of nestling IT sector and said that it has made exports up to 4.5 billion and now government is trying to provide them an efficient eco system. He further said that government is encouraging construction sector but the system for the sale and purchase of files would not be allowed. About automation, the federal minister said



that record of every individual is available with NADRA and FBR which would be integrated to eliminate leakage of taxes. He said that the process of digitalization has been started from sugar sector through which government collected an additional 60 billion sales tax. He said that new medium term tax strategy would be introduced for the SME sector which would give substantial relief in tariff regime to this segment. He further said that regulatory duty and advance tax have been eliminated on import of agricultural machinery. He underlined the disastrous impact of population explosion and urged upon the

business community and chambers to play their role in controlling unbridled population. He further said that no compromise would be allowed on national security. However, regional trade may witness a positive trend after the resolution of Iran conflict. Similarly, he was trying to get maximum tariff relief from America which would help Pakistan to enhance its exports to this country, he added. He directed his staff to negotiate with MD National Tariff Commission to impose anti dumping duty on imports which were hampering domestic production. He said that all concerned stakeholders and FCCI representative

would be taken into the loop to resolve the issue amicably. He further said that he would talk to the Governor State Bank of Pakistan to allocate a separate and dedicated amount for the SME sector to cater to its financial needs. Earlier, President FCCI Mr. Farooq Yousef Sheikh in his address of welcome said that most of our recommendations have been accepted while negotiations are still continuing on the pending issues. He clarified that chambers and government are two wheels of the same car as their interests are identical and hence there should be no conflict between them.—DNA

SBP injects
over Rs 13.85t
in the market

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Friday, injected Rs 13,851 billion through Reverse Repo Purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operations (OMO) to maintain liquidity in the market. The central bank conducted the Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) for 7 and 14-day tenors on July 03, 2026, and injected Rs 13,429 billion against 40 bids while other Rs 422 billion were injected through Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based OMO. The central bank, for the Reverse Repo Purchase of 14-day tenor, received 35 bids cumulatively offering Rs 12,740.2 billion at the rate of return ranging between 11.51 to 11.57%. The SBP accepted Rs 12,240 billion against 35 quotes at 11.51% rate of return. The total amount offered at 11.51% was Rs 5,979 billion, out of which SBP accepted Rs 5,478.8 billion on a pro-rata basis. Moreover, the SBP also received 5 bids for the 7-day tenor, cumulatively offering Rs 1,189 billion at the rate of return ranging between 11.54% to 11.55%.—APP

Air India's
budget airline
restores all
flights to Gulf
region

NEW DELHI: Air India's low-cost carrier will restore all its flights to the Gulf region by the end of this week, the company has announced, months after the US-Israeli war on Iran triggered major disruptions to the global aviation industry.

Tens of thousands of flights in and out of the Middle East were forced to cancel or re-route following the US-Israeli attacks on Iran on Feb. 28, as countries in the region closed their airports and airspaces due to continued strikes. On top of the flight disruptions, airlines faced rising fuel costs and weakening demand for months, as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz caused oil prices to soar. But as US-Iran talks aimed at reaching a peace agreement are underway, Indian airlines are joining the global race to resume flights to the Gulf, one of their top international markets. Air India Express, a budget airline owned by the Air India Group, said it has "restored connectivity to all destinations across its West Asia network," with flights from the southern Indian cities Kozhikode and Bengaluru to Kuwait resuming on Friday and Saturday, respectively. "With flights to 13 destinations across Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, Air India Express continues to strengthen its position as one of the leading carriers connecting India with the region," the company said in a statement. Gulf countries consistently rank among the top 10 destinations for Indians traveling abroad every year, with the UAE and Saudi Arabia topping the list. In 2024, more than 14 million Indian travelers visited the region, official data showed.—APP

Omani sultan
and British
PM discuss
navigation
in Gulf's
waterways

LONDON: Sultan Haitham bin Tarik of Oman and British Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer met in London on Thursday to discuss developments in the Middle East and to affirm their countries' historical ties.

The meeting focused on ways to support negotiations and diplomatic efforts to ensure safe and secure maritime navigation through the Gulf's strategic waterways, according to Oman News Agency. The two leaders also discussed outstanding issues in the region, foremost among them the Iranian nuclear file. They agreed that a lasting agreement should uphold regional stability and promote peaceful coexistence among neighboring countries. Last month, the US and Iran signed a memorandum of understanding to end the clashes and to start negotiation rounds on critical issues, including Iran's nuclear program and the freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. The US-Iran conflict began on Feb. 28 and has escalated across the region for more than 100 days. Oman was one of 10 countries.—APP

Australian PM condemns delay of
changes to child social media ban

MELBOURNE: Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Friday condemned senators who blocked changes to a world-first social media ban for children, saying tech giants would use the delay to destroy incriminating documents that could be used as evidence against them. The government this week introduced to Parliament amendments aimed at increasing powers of the eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant, Australia's online safety watchdog, to enforce the ban on Australian children younger than 16 from holding accounts on platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube that has been in place since December. The amendments would have given Inman Grant power to demand documents as well as information from platforms about their efforts to exclude young children. She can currently only demand information. But the conservative opposition Liberal Party and minor Australian Greens party referred the draft legislation Thursday to an eight-week Senate inquiry. The center-left Labour Party government does not hold a majority in the Senate. "It is outrageous the delay because what the eSafety Commissioner has said very clearly is that that will allow the platforms to go and just delete a whole lot of material," Albanese told Australian Broadcasting Corp. "Whereas if it was passed yesterday, that would have been the date from which these demands could be made by the commissioner. So then fines can be issued," he added. The amendments would also give the commissioner power to demand information from third parties, including age assurance technology providers, to test claims made by platforms about how children continued to circumvent the ban. The bill would double the maximum fine to 99 million Australian dollars (\$68 million) for platforms that fail to take reasonable steps to exclude children. Greens Sen. David Shoebridge, who has always opposed the social media ban, questioned why a fine that had never been issued needed to be doubled. "Doubling penalties that they've never used doesn't seem to me to be a meaningful measure," Shoebridge told Sky News Australia. "Is that really going to be the thing that keeps kids safe online?" Opposition communications spokesperson Sen. Sarah Henderson said the amendments needed to be tougher. "This is a social media ban which is failing; a half-baked law which is poorly designed, which is rushed, which is badly implemented and which is not working," Henderson said. "We will interrogate this bill properly and, frankly, I think the amendments before the Parliament need to be tougher," she added. Parliament passed the initial legislation with overwhelming support in 2024. The 10 targeted platforms were given more than a year to implement the ban.—Agencies

Hunt for Ukraine
woman after Monaco
bomb attack

MONACO: Authorities on Friday were on the hunt for a Ukrainian woman suspected of planting a bomb in Monaco that injured three people, including a Ukrainian-born tycoon, according to an Interpol Red Notice Identified as Anastasiia Berezovska, 39, the suspect is wanted in Monaco for attempted murder, placing an explosive device on a public road with criminal intent, and criminal conspiracy, according to the notice. The bombing has sent shockwaves through Monaco, an ultra-secure microstate near Nice in southern France that is a playground of the world's ultra-rich. On Monday evening, an individual left a package in the entrance hall of a small apartment building near the French border. Shortly afterwards, an explosive device went off in the hall just as three residents — a couple and a 13-year-old — were entering. The suspect, who was captured on CCTV wearing a black fisherman's hat, was initially believed to be a man. The Monaco authorities have not confirmed the victims' identities, but according to consistent sources, the attack targeted Vadym Yermolaiev, 58, a wealthy businessman originally from Ukraine and now a Cypriot national, as well as his partner and his son. The couple were seriously wounded. The suspect, a woman with dark shoulder-length hair, appears in two photographs released by Interpol. The notice says the woman has a tattoo on her right arm, "possibly" depicting a snake, and that she speaks German. The Monaco prosecutor's office said late Thursday a suspect in the attack had been identified, without providing further details.—APP

Bahrain FM demands
Security Council action
after Iranian attacks

NEW YORK: Bahrain's foreign minister flew to New York on Thursday to demand action from the UN Security Council after what he described as a "renewed and treacherous" Iranian attack on his country this week, as the US and Russia clashed sharply over responsibility for the escalation. Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani told the emergency session, called at Bahrain's request, that his country had endured 808 attacks since Feb. 28, including 203 ballistic missiles and 605 armed drones, killing three civilians and wounding 465 others, including women and children. He said the latest strikes came despite Bahrain signing a memorandum of understanding with Washington on June 17. "Bahrain requested this emergency meeting confident that this council will not remain a bystander in the face of such a blatant challenge to its authority," Al-Zayani said, adding that the aggression extended beyond his country, with coinciding attacks on Kuwait International Airport and a drone strike on the UAE's Barakah nuclear power plant that he said brought the region "to the brink of a nuclear safety disaster." He said the attacks violated the UN Charter and Security Council Resolution 2817, which was backed by 136 member states. US Ambassador Mike Waltz delivered one of the sharpest rebukes of Iran, saying he had personally visited strike sites in Bahrain, including the Bahrain Petroleum Company, where he said Iranian forces deliberately targeted fire suppression lines and first responders before hitting fuel tanks and chemical storage areas in a manner designed to maximize casualties. He said a drone that failed to explode near a residential neighborhood could have killed two to three thousand people. Waltz said Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz had inflicted lasting damage on 61 developing economies, according to a UN Trade and Development report issued this week, and accused Tehran of using the waterway to "hold the world's economy hostage" regardless of who signs onto its conflict with Israel and the US. He said that 136 countries co-sponsored Resolution 2817 and that Gulf states had rallied a further 143 co-sponsors on a separate draft resolution circulated in May condemning Iranian mining of the strait. Waltz also raised the case of two young men, Javad Zamani and Abolfazl Saedi, whom he said were executed in Iran 10 days ago on charges of "waging war against God," and cited Amnesty International reporting on the detention and alleged torture of protesters. He warned that US President Donald Trump's "patience is not unlimited" and that Iran must abide by its obligations under Resolution 2817. Asked by Arab News what he believes should be the Security Council's next step, Waltz pointed to the draft resolution condemning Iran over recent sea mine deployments and attacks on commercial shipping in the strait.—APP

Abbasi vows to strengthen cargo
services, trade connectivity

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Friday met with a delegation of the Gujrat Chamber of Commerce and Industry and discussed measures for promoting trade through Pakistan Railways, with a particular focus on enhancing cargo services and strengthening logistics infrastructure. The delegation was led by Gujrat Chamber President Ahmed Hassan Mattu, said a news release. During the meeting, both sides held detailed discussions on improving the efficiency of railway-based cargo transportation to facilitate industrial and commercial activities across the country. The minister stressed the need to modernise cargo services, improve logistics facilities for industrialists and strengthen rail connectivity with major industrial hubs, including Gujrat, to ensure faster and more cost-effective transportation of goods. Representatives of the business community presented their concerns and proposals regarding freight operations and called for greater collaboration between Pakistan Railways and the private sector to ensure timely delivery of cargo. Speaking on the occasion, Hanif Abbasi said the government was committed to transforming Pakistan Railways into a strong pillar of the national economy. He said expanding the capacity of cargo operations and introducing modern facilities remained a top priority. The minister reiterated that Pakistan Railways would be developed into a fast, reliable and low-cost mode of commercial transportation, adding that practical recommendations put forward by the business community would be given due consideration and implemented where feasible. The delegation appreciated

the minister's assurance of resolving the issues raised by the business community and welcomed his commitment to

maintaining effective coordination with the private sector to promote trade and economic growth.—DNA



Briefs

FIA handcuffs travel agent in Rs2.35m Czech visa fraud

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Anti Human Trafficking Circle (AHTC) Islamabad has arrested a travel agent accused of defrauding a citizen of Rs2.35 million by promising to arrange employment and travel to the Czech Republic. An official told APP on Friday that the suspect was arrested in connection with Case No. 131/25 registered under Sections 17, 18/22 of the Emigration Ordinance, 1979, read with Sections 420, 468, and 471 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). The official said the accused had fraudulently obtained Rs2.35 million from the complainant on the pretext of sending him to the Czech Republic for employment, but failed to fulfill the promise. According to the official, the suspect was taken into custody during a raid conducted by an FIA team led by Inspector Muhammad Azeem, assisted by FC Inzamam-ul-Haq. The official said further investigation was underway to determine whether the accused was involved in other immigration fraud cases or had additional accomplices. - APP

FIA offloads two passengers

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Immigration, Islamabad International Airport, offloaded two passengers travelling on Azerbaijan visit visas after uncovering evidence suggesting they were part of an organized attempt at illegal immigration to Italy. An official told APP on Friday that the passengers were referred for secondary profiling by the immigration counter officer during routine immigration clearance. The official said both passengers were travelling together and, during questioning, it emerged that one of them had contacted a human smuggling agent to facilitate illegal entry into Italy in exchange for Rs3.5 million. According to the official, further inquiry and available evidence indicated that the travel arrangements of both passengers were part of an organized illegal immigration plan. The official said the two passengers were offloaded and taken into custody on suspicion of human smuggling before being handed over to the FIA Anti Human Trafficking Circle (AHTC), Islamabad, for further investigation and legal action. The FIA is also investigating the role of facilitators and other individuals involved in arranging the attempted illegal migration, the official added. - APP

Culprits 5-day physical remand given

Five held over alleged kidnap, sexual assault of foreign women

The case was officially registered following a swift emergency rescue operation. According to the FIR, the two victims, one from the Netherlands and the other from Venezuela, were invited to Pakistan by Raza Dar who is grandson of DPM Ishaq Dar

DNA

LAHORE: A First Information Report (FIR) has been registered at the Defence C Police Station against five suspects, including Muhammad Raza Dar, identified as the grandson of a high-profile political bigwig, for the alleged kidnapping, extortion, and sexual assault of two foreign nationals. The local court has given 5-day remand of the culprits. The case was officially registered following a swift emergency rescue operation. According to the FIR, the two victims, one from the Netherlands and the other from Venezuela, were invited to Pakistan

by Raza Dar, who had previously entered into a business partnership with them in Singapore in October 2025.

The victims arrived in Lahore on June 29, 2026, after Dar arranged their travel visas. The complainants stated that upon their arrival, they were forcibly taken to a residential location in Y-Block, Defence, where they were held at gunpoint. The suspects aggressively assaulted the women, subjected them to severe physical abuse involving weapons, and demanded a hefty ransom of \$1.5 million. The perpetrators allegedly threatened to take their lives and sell their body parts if the demands were not met. The ordeal ended after one of the victims managed to

contact her father in the Netherlands, who immediately alerted the Lahore Police via the 15 emergency helpline, leading to a rescue operation within two hours.

Following the high-profile arrests, a senior police source confirmed that the investigation is being conducted with complete transparency and entirely on merit.

"There is absolutely zero political interference in this case," a Lahore police official stated. "Clear directives were issued by the Chief Minister of Punjab to ensure that the police act solely in accordance with the law and do not come under any pressure from political high-ups. Furthermore, much to the credit of the deputy prime minister, he

did not interfere in the matter at all."

The official highlighted that the police action was exceptionally prompt, resulting in the successful recovery of the victims and the immediate arrest of Raza Dar and his co-accused.

"The police fully facilitated both victims in recording their legal statements before the magistrate. Although their return flights were already booked, the police requested them to extend their stay for another day to properly facilitate the ongoing investigation. The expenses for this extension were fully paid out of the police budget to ensure the victims faced no further inconvenience," the source added.

President Zardari felicitates Belarusian leadership

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday extended felicitations to the President of the Republic of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko and the people of Belarus on their Independence Day. The president, in a message, said that the historic day, commemorating the liberation of Minsk from Nazi occupation, symbolised the courage, resilience, and steadfast determination of the Belarusian people in their quest for freedom and sovereignty. He noted that the Day served as a proud reminder of the remarkable journey of Belarus towards peace, stability, and national unity. President Zardari said that Pakistan deeply valued the cordial, cooperative relations between the two countries, which were rooted in mutual trust and shared aspirations for progress. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further enhancing bilateral ties across various fields for the mutual benefit of both nations. - APP

Hurman rights crisis in Sudan

GENEVA: The United Nations human rights chief on Friday said another human rights catastrophe was unfolding in Sudan, in the city of AlObeid, in North Kordofan, and urged the world to act. "The signs from AlObeid are clear and unmistakable: Another human rights catastrophe is unfolding in Sudan, this time in the capital of the strategic state of North Kordofan," the UN high commissioner for human rights Volker Turk. - APP

Gaza death toll rises to 73,074, health authorities say

Authorities said further that a number of victims remain trapped beneath the rubble and on roads, as ambulance and civil defense crews are still unable to reach them

GAZA: Medical sources in the Gaza Strip said that the death toll from Israel's ongoing military aggression has risen to 73,074 Palestinians, with 173,537 others injured since October 7, 2023. According to local health authorities, hospitals across the enclave received four fatalities, including two recovered from beneath the rubble, and 12 injured people over the past 24 hours. The sources added that since the ceasefire started on October 11 last year, 1,059 Palestinians have been killed and 3,429 injured, while 788 bodies have been recovered. Authorities said further that a number of victims remain trapped beneath the rubble and on roads, as ambulance and civil defense crews are still unable to reach them.



TEHRAN: Field Marshal Asim Munir in a meeting with Iranian foreign minister during his recent visit to Iran. - DNA

US backs Pakistan's right to self-defence

DNA

WASHINGTON/UNITED NATIONS: The United States has reiterated its support for Pakistan's right to defend itself against terrorist attacks, while the United Nations struggles to maintain consensus on its core global counterterrorism framework. "The Pakistani people have suffered greatly at the hands of terrorists," the US State Department said, according to a statement reported by Reuters. Washington "supports Pakistan's right to defend itself against terrorist attacks" as an intermittent conflict between Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan continues, the State Department added. The remarks come after Pakistan on Sunday night acted against terrorist infrastructure along the Afghan border, in response to a terrorist attack on a local headquarter of the Pakistan Rangers Sindh in Karachi's Gulistan-Jauhar area.

In February, US Under Secretary of



State for Political Affairs Allison Hooker had expressed similar support for Islamabad, saying Washington "continues to monitor the situation closely" and backs Pakistan's right to defend itself against Taliban attacks. The brief note by the US State Department comes amid the ninth review of the United Nations Global Counterterrorism Strategy (GCTS), a global framework adopted in 2006 and periodically reviewed to guide international cooperation against terrorism. At the United Nations General Assembly, the US voted against the resolution and pushed for a recorded vote, breaking with the traditional consensus-based adoption of the strategy. Despite US objections, the General Assembly adopted the ninth review of the GCTS by 140 votes, including Pakistan, in favour on July 1. It adopted the ninth review by a recorded vote after consensus could not be reached. The US, Israel and Argentina voted against the resolution. Japan abstained but its delegate later stated that the abstention was the result of a technical error and his delegation intended to vote in favour. Washington described the draft as "bloated, outdated, and lacking focus," arguing that the 170-plus paragraph text diluted core counterterrorism priorities with excessive and non-operational language. It also said that the draft "ignores numerous US redlines and policy concerns". Israel said the draft was "outdated, long and repetitive, and does not embrace institutional modernisation", while Argentina's delegate said it voted against the text to draw attention to the importance of reviewing the strategy.

Maryam tells parents to ensure children safety

ABID RAZA



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Friday urged parents not to leave their children unattended and to ensure their safety when sending them out of the house. The statement comes after the rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl in Sargodha and a roof collapse incident at a private tuition centre in Lahore, which claimed the lives of 14 children. The chief minister spoke about both incidents in a televised address to the National Paigham-i-Aman Committee on Friday. Citing the Sargodha incident, CM Maryam recalled that the child had gone to a shop alone, after which the shopkeeper murdered her and hid her body. "It was a spot of blood on the foot of her slipper which led to the identification of the murderer," she recalled, adding that she had taken notice of the incident immediately and directed authorities to apprehend the suspect. "I can provide transport, health and other facilities; however, if you are not safe within your houses, then I believe I have not succeeded in my position as the chief minister," she said.

Thousands in New York City without power

The NWS warned that "prolonged periods of extreme heat are among the deadliest weather hazards" in the US, because impacts build over time

NEW YORK: A "prolonged, dangerous heatwave" was sweeping across parts of the central and eastern United States on Thursday, with forecasters warning that extreme record-breaking temperatures are expected to continue into the July Fourth holiday weekend for millions of Americans. The National Weather Service (NWS) warned on Thursday that temperatures between 95F (35C) and 105F (40.5C), combined with high humidity, will push heat index values across parts of the region to between 100F and 115F. "This will lead to widespread areas of major to extreme heat risk from the Midwest to the East Coast," the NWS said. "Numerous daily temperature records are expected today, Friday, and Independence Day, with some consecutive-day, monthly, and all-time records possible." The agency said on Thursday afternoon that extreme heat is expected to "continue across most of the central and eastern US through Friday," then it will focus "across the eastern US through the Independence Day holiday weekend". "Peak heat indices of up to 115 degrees are possible," the forecasters added. The NWS warned that "prolonged periods of extreme heat are among the deadliest weather hazards" in the US, be-

cause impacts build over time. "Protect yourself by limiting time outdoors, staying hydrated, and ensuring access to A/C or cooling centers," the agency said. As of Thursday morning, numerous areas across the Mississippi Valley, Great Lakes, Ohio Valley, and the northeast are under extreme heat warnings, which are issued when "extremely dangerous heat conditions are expected or occurring". In New York City, temperatures reached 100F in Central Park on Thursday afternoon, marking the park's first triple-digit day since July 2012. Forecasters in New York warned that "dangerous heat and humidity" is expected through Saturday, with heat index values forecast to reach "as high as 115F". The NWS in New York also warned that thunderstorms are "possible Friday evening, and a few may become severe with damaging winds, heavy rainfall, and localized flash flooding". More than 7,000 customers in New York City were without power Thursday afternoon amid the searing heat, according to figures from PowerOutage.us, with nearly all of those customers in the Bronx and Queens. Electric utility Con Edison is reducing voltage or has turned off power in parts of the New York City mayor, Zohran Mamdani, urged residents to take precautions. - APP

Pakistan's largest circulated diplomatic magazine

Member APNS



For over two decades, CENTRELINE HAS BEEN the trusted source of news and analysis on diplomacy, international relations and global developments from Pakistan and around the world.

- DIPLOMATIC COVERAGE**
In-depth reporting on global affairs, foreign policy and diplomatic engagements.
- EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS**
Conversations with diplomats, decision-makers and thought leaders.
- ANALYSIS & INSIGHTS**
Expert views and analytical pieces on key international issues.
- PREMIUM QUALITY**
A high-quality publication with credible, balanced content.

Your window to Pakistan, the region and the world.

Subscribe. Read. Stay Informed.

centrelinemag@gmail.com CentrelineAnsar