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Aurangzeb says Govt committed to reform agenda

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US President says Iran must have a deal

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D 8 chief Sohail honours Iranian supreme leader

Detailed News On Page-07



Trump's Board of Peace

Palestine body to take over control of Gaza

"The factions welcomed Hamas's decision, describing it as a serious step toward enabling the National Committee to take up its governing role," the official said

NEWS DESK

GAZA CITY: Hamas has dissolved the body that has governed the Gaza Strip for nearly two decades, officials from the group said Monday, clearing the way for a Palestinian technocratic committee to implement civilian rule. The move marks a significant political shift by militant group Hamas, which has run Gaza since its fighters seized control from rival Palestinian movement Fatah in 2007. Since a ceasefire took effect in Gaza last October between Hamas and Israel, the group has repeatedly said it is prepared to step aside from day-to-day governance, but the thorny issue of its disarmament remains unresolved. "The movement has decided to dissolve the Gaza government committee and to appoint a nationally accepted figure to oversee the committee's work until the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza formally assumes its responsibilities," a Hamas official told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to talk publicly on the matter. Hamas's media office in Gaza said it would hold "an important press conference" later on Monday, without providing details. A second Hamas official said the group had already informed other Palestinian factions of the move at a recent meeting in Cairo. "The factions welcomed Hamas's decision, describing it as a serious step toward enabling the National Committee to take up its governing role," the official said. The dissolution of the Hamas body paves the way for the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG), headed by Palestinian official Ali Shaath, to assume administrative responsibilities.

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Israeli Minister issues threat against Iranian leaders

NEWS DESK

TEL AVIV: Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz has warned that any Iranian leader who seeks Israel's destruction will be "eliminated." His remarks came amid heightened tensions between Israel and Iran, following months of escalating rhetoric and regional instability. Speaking at a public event, Katz declared that Israel would not tolerate threats to its existence and would act decisively against those who attempt to advance hostile plans. He stated: "Any Iranian leader who tries to destroy Israel will be eliminated. The destroyer has been destroyed, and so will anyone who follows." The comments follow the death of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei earlier this year, which Katz attributed to a joint U.S.-Israeli strike. He claimed that the operation removed "immediate existential threats" to Israel and severely weakened Iran's strategic capabilities.

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UN Secy Gen post aspirant seeks support of Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Ms. Maria Fernanda Espinosa, former Foreign Minister of Ecuador and currently candidate for the position of United Nations Secretary-General, called on the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. Welcoming Ms. Espinosa, DPM/FM expressed Pakistan's full support for strengthening multilateralism, and ensuring the central role of the United Nations in the global affairs. He expressed the hope that the incoming Secretary General will carry out much needed reforms in the United Nations and will ensure the implementation of longstanding UNSC

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Trump warns Iran: deal or we "finish the job"

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump delivered a sharp message on U.S.-Iran relations, declaring that there will either be a deal or America will "finish the job." His remarks underscore both a willingness to negotiate and a readiness to escalate if diplomacy fails. Trump emphasized that Washington is prepared to strike a peace agreement with Tehran, but he warned that if Iran does not comply, the U.S. will take decisive action. The statement comes amid heightened tensions in the Gulf, where the Strait of Hormuz

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SC issues notices to Imaan, Hadi

APP

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Monday issued notices to the Additional Attorney General and other respondents on pleas filed by lawyers Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and Hadi Ali Chatha, seeking an early hearing of their challenge to a Feb 19 Islamabad High Court (IHC) decision in the controversial social media posts case. On Jan 24, an Islamabad sessions court sentenced Imaan and Hadi to a total of 17 years in jail on multiple charges under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca). On Feb 19, the IHC had denied the lawyers' plea for the

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ISLAMABAD: Ms. Maria Fernanda Espinosa, former Foreign Minister of Ecuador and currently candidate for the position of United Nations Secretary-General, called on the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. - DNA

Better facilitation

PM orders embassies to step up overseas job efforts for Pakistanis

Pakistani missions abroad to provide overseas job information via Digital Youth Hub, meeting told

MEHTAB PIRZADA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed Pakistani embassies abroad to accelerate efforts to identify employment opportunities for the country's workforce. He issued the directives while chairing a review meeting on measures aimed at providing jobs for Pakistani youth. The prime minister instructed that the entire system of the Protectorate of Emigrants be digitized. He also directed the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis, the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTC) and the PM's Youth Programme to ensure the provision of skills and language courses along with certifications. PM Shehbaz said Pakistani workforce was highly capable and emphasised that the government was taking every possible step to ensure access to international-standard education and opportunities at the global level. The premier instructed relevant institutions to strengthen engagement with dif-

ferent countries to align Pakistani certifications with international standards. The prime minister further ordered that language education, along with certifications, be ensured for countries offering employment opportunities and called for a report on the performance of technical and vocational training institutions as well as the establishment of "Country of Destination Centres". During the meeting, participants were given a detailed briefing on employment opportunities for the workforce, particularly young people. The meeting was informed that 800,000 young people had already registered on the Digital Youth Hub, a platform developed through partnership between PM's Youth Programme and Unicef. The officials also briefed the meeting that training programmes aimed at helping Pakistanis secure employment opportunities were continuing, and that the country's missions would provide information on job openings and the qualifications required for

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

PAF officer murder suspect sent to jail

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Islamabad on Monday sent suspect Saad Abbasi to jail on a 14-day judicial lock-up for an identification parade in the murder case of PAF Group Captain Asim Tariq. ATC Judge Abul Hasanat at Mohammad Zulqarnain heard the case registered by Islamabad Police against Abbasi. A PAF officer was martyred after intervening to protect a woman from abduction on the 9th Avenue, police said on Sunday. Group Captain Asim Tariq was travelling on the 9th Avenue when he saw a woman getting off a motorcycle while the rider was pulling her hand, police said.

Macron arrives in Syria

DNA

DAMASCUS: French President Emmanuel Macron arrived Monday in Syria, making him the first major western leader to visit the war-torn country since the ouster of Bashar Assad in 2024. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky visited April but Macron is the first leader from western Europe or North America to do so. The French president's visit comes during a period of relative calm in the Middle East after the month-long war in Iran and Lebanon. He will travel next to Ankara, Türkiye, for the NATO summit, where Syrian President Ahmad Al-Sharaa is also expected to attend and hold a high-profile meeting with US President Donald Trump. Syria's state-run SANA news agency said Macron would visit with a business delegation to discuss regional security as well as business and investment opportunities.

Corps commanders

No compromise on Pak water resources

Forum "appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in promoting dialogue, de-escalation and regional stability" as it remains a mediator in the peace negotiations between the United States and Iran

DNA

RAWALPINDI: As India continues to violate the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), the army's top brass on Monday affirmed its "resolute commitment" to undertake "all measures necessary" to ensure the availability of Pakistan's rightful share of water. The development came as Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir presided over the 276th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, according to a statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). "The Forum, taking note of Indian rhetoric surrounding the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), reaffirmed the guidance given in the National Security Committee (NSC) directive" of April 24, 2025, which followed India's unilateral move to put the treaty in abeyance. "The forum expressed resolute commitment to undertake all measures necessary to ensure availability of Pakistan's rightful

share of water as per the directives of the government and inspirations of the people of Pakistan," the statement read. The top army brass "rejected and strongly condemned the ongoing human rights violations and unilateral demographic engineering in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), declaring that Kashmir remains the jugular vein of Pakistan". Reaffirming Pakistan's unyielding diplomatic, political and moral support to the Kashmir cause, the forum emphasised that "true regional stability hinges entirely on granting the Kashmiri people their inalienable right to self-determination in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions", ISPR said. The forum noted that "post comprehensive defeat inflicted" in Marka-i-Haq - the period of conflict with India last year - there was "increased reliance on an evolving pattern of externally supported hybrid warfare and disinformation campaigns to cause unrest".

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Amjad Hussain takes oath, becomes Gilgit-Baltistan CM

Chairman PPP said that along with the interim status, GB should attain constitutional rights. He said he wants to see the day when the representatives of GB are sitting alongside him in the National Assembly, and the day is not far

STAFF REPORT

GILGIT: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Amjad Hussain Advocate was sworn in as the new chief minister of Gilgit-Baltistan on Monday, following his party's victory in the 2026 regional elections. Gilgit-Baltistan Governor Syed Mehdi Shah administered the oath to the newly elected chief minister at a ceremony in Gilgit. Addressing the ceremony, Chief Minister Hussain said the PPP had emerged as the largest party in Gilgit-Baltistan in the June 7 elections. He said young people and women had played a significant role in the 2026 elections, while PPP candidates secured victories in their respective constituencies. "I thank those who gave the Pakistan Peoples Party a 100% result in the elections," he said. The chief minister said the people had continued the longstanding tradition of placing their trust in the PPP by giving the party a strong mandate and greater responsibilities. "This relationship is not new; it spans three generations," he said.

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Fred Senevirathne

July 2026

Editor: Ansar M Bhatti

Sri Lanka: Climbing global rankings in governance and integrity

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Performance agreement to drive accountability in KP

PESHAWAR: The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Monday formally launched its Performance Agreement Framework, with the Health Department, Expanded Programme on Immunization and Polio Eradication Programme becoming the first entities to sign performance-based commitments aimed at delivering measurable results for citizens. The agreements were signed during a ceremony attended by senior government leadership, marking the first phase of a province-wide initiative designed to link departmental performance with clearly defined targets, timelines and independent monitoring mechanisms. The agreements are being executed between the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, represented by Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, and the respective Administrative Secretaries. The concerned provincial ministers serve as witnesses to these commitments, while Additional Chief Secretary (General) Muhammad Abid Majeed and Additional Chief Secretary Planning & Development Lt. (R) Islam Zaib also witnessed the signing ceremony, reflecting collective ownership of the reform initiative at the highest administrative level. The first Performance Agreement was signed between Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, Health Secretary Shahid Ullah Khan, committing the Health Department to a series of ambitious reforms aimed at strengthening primary and secondary healthcare services across the province. Under the agreement, the Health Department pledged to recruit and deploy at least 500 additional doctors to Basic Health Units (BHUs) and Rural Health Centres (RHCs), ensuring that no primary healthcare facility remains without a doctor.—APP

Summer vacations for winter zone schools announced

QUETTA: The Department of Secondary Education, Balochistan, has officially announced short summer vacations for schools located in the province's winter zone. According to the notification issued, all public and private schools in the winter zone will remain closed from July 18 to August 2, 2026. The notification further added that teaching and academic activities across both summer and winter zones will resume regularly from Monday, August 3, 2026. The department has directed divisional directors, district education officers, school heads, and relevant administrators to ensure strict compliance with the schedule and to make all necessary arrangements for the timely resumption of classes after the holidays. In its advisory, the department also appealed to parents, teachers, and students to plan their academic activities in line with the announced schedule so that the new academic session can begin in an organized and effective manner.—APP

OIC-COMSTECH programmes reach 54 countries, train 5,000 scientists

ISLAMABAD: The OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) extended its scientific and educational programmes to 54 countries during 2024-25, training 5,000 scientists and researchers and offering 759 scholarships and fellowships, according to its annual performance report. The Islamabad-based body undertook 174 projects and initiatives during the year, awarded 52 research grants and organised 68 training programmes, while expanding its network to more than 80 universities, research centres and academic institutions. According to the report, scientists, students, researchers and institutions from countries including Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Iran, Morocco, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Palestine and Yemen, as well as several African states, benefited from the programmes. The 759 scholarships and fellowships formed a major part of COMSTECH's human resource development efforts, providing students and young researchers with opportunities for higher education, research and specialised training at

universities and partner institutions in Pakistan and other countries. The report said 5,000 scientists and researchers received training through 68 programmes covering the use of advanced scientific equipment, biotechnology, health sciences, vaccine technology, information technology and other emerging fields. Another 52 research grants were awarded to support young and women scientists, biotechnology research, international scientific collaboration and research-related activities. The grants were aimed particularly at researchers in developing countries, where limited access to funding often restricts scientific work. The report showed that COMSTECH's activities covered a broad range of sectors. These included 17 initiatives in health and biological sciences, 15 in education, 13 in research, 11 in environment, climate change and water, nine in information technology and nine in development-related fields. Programmes were also undertaken in agriculture, food security, biotechnology, engineering, humanitarian assistance, energy and science diplomacy. One of the report's major fea-

tures was the expansion of a network of more than 80 universities and research institutions. The network is being used to facilitate joint research, training, exchange of expertise and academic linkages across OIC member states and beyond. COMSTECH Coordinator General Prof Dr M. Iqbal Choudhary said the organisation's priorities included strengthening scientific capacity in the Muslim world, creating education and research opportunities for young people and connecting universities and research institutions across national borders. He said scientific and technological cooperation should contribute not only to academic advancement but also to socio-economic development, human resource development and stronger long-term links among countries. The report reflects the growing role of the Islamabad-based COMSTECH Secretariat in connecting scientists, students and institutions across the Muslim world and beyond through research, higher education, capacity building and science diplomacy.—DNA

Sindh, IFC to partner on various projects

"We are focused on creating an enabling environment for investment in emerging sectors, particularly digital infrastructure and renewable energy, which are critical for economic growth and job creation," said the Chief Minister. The discussion also focused on strengthening agriculture value chains, improving storage and processing facilities, and enhancing farmers' livelihoods through mechanisation

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) Division Director for Pakistan, Simon Andrews, have agreed to explore collaboration in important sectors including digital infrastructure, renewable energy, agriculture, healthcare, human capital development, and social protection.

This understanding was reached at a meeting held at CM House, attended by Minister for Planning & Development Jam Khan Shoro, Chief Secretary Sindh Asif Hyder Shah, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Agha Wasif, Chairman P&D Najam Shah, and Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatui. The IFC delegation included Ms Naz Khan and Sahar Eteazz. During the meeting, the Chief Minister highlighted Sindh's commitment to attracting investment in strategic sectors and discussed the establishment of an international data centre in the province as well as expanding renewable energy generation for the private sector. "We are focused on creating an enabling environment for investment in emerging sectors, particularly digital infrastructure and renewable energy, which are critical for economic growth and job creation," said the Chief Minister. The discussion also focused on strengthening agriculture value chains, improving storage and processing facilities, and enhancing farmers' livelihoods through mechanisation. Highlighting the challenges faced by small farmers, the Chief Minister said, "a large number of our



farmers are small landholders owning up to 25 acres. We want to help them mechanise their farming by encouraging neighbouring growers to form groups and jointly benefit from government-subsidised tractors." Shah added, "When two or three farmers cultivating adjoining lands come together, we can support them with subsidised tractors, enabling them to improve productivity and make better use of their land." The IFC Division Director for Pakistan expressed interest in supporting initiatives aimed at improving human capital, particularly in healthcare, nutrition, and skills development. Discussions included collaboration on Sindh's stunting reduction programme and efforts to enhance

children's health and educational outcomes. "The future of Sindh depends on healthy, educated and skilled young people. We are investing in programmes that improve healthcare, reduce stunting and equip our children with the skills needed for tomorrow's economy," the Chief Minister said. Simon Andrews appreciated the Sindh government's reform agenda and reiterated IFC's commitment to supporting sustainable and inclusive development initiatives in the province. "IFC sees significant opportunities to partner with the Government of Sindh in sectors that can generate long-term economic and social impact, including digital infrastructure, renewable energy, agribusiness, healthcare and

human capital development," said Andrews. The meeting also discussed addressing workforce shortages in the healthcare sector, particularly nursing. The Chief Minister shared his vision of substantially increasing the annual output of trained nurses in Sindh. "We want to produce at least 15,000 nurses every year to meet domestic demand and create opportunities for our skilled professionals internationally. The government is prepared to seed this initiative, while encouraging private sector participation for its long-term sustainability," he said. Recognising the shortage of trained nursing professionals in Pakistan, both sides agreed to work together on developing a comprehensive

model for basic nursing education and specialised training. The Chief Minister directed his team to engage closely with IFC experts to identify collaborative opportunities across healthcare, agriculture, social protection and human capital development. "We look forward to working with IFC to translate these ideas into practical projects that improve livelihoods, create jobs and deliver better services to the people of Sindh," the Chief Minister concluded. Andrews reaffirmed IFC's willingness to deepen engagement with Sindh and explore innovative financing and investment solutions to support the province's development priorities.

Special funds for OOSC in merged districts: KP CM

DNA

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Sohail Afridi has announced special funding for out-of-school children and significantly improving public service delivery, governance, education, healthcare and security services in Merged Districts. Chairing a high-level review meeting on law and order, governance and development programmes in the merged districts on Monday, the chief minister instructed the administration to ensure visible improvements in public services within the next three months. He said restoring public confidence through bet-

ter performance of government institutions remained a top priority. The chief minister also ordered the restoration of all development activities in North Waziristan within one week and directed the relevant departments to immediately deploy the required officers and staff to avoid further delays. Highlighting the importance of education, Afridi said special funds had been allocated in the current fiscal year's budget to bring out-of-school children back into the education system. He also ordered the urgent recruitment of teachers to address staff shortages in schools. On healthcare, the chief minister directed officials to reassess the shortage of doctors in hospitals across the merged dis-

tricts and recruit additional medical staff where needed to improve healthcare services. Afridi further instructed the relevant authorities to write to the federal government regarding the payment of pending compensation to the victims of Operation Zarb-e-Azb. Discussing security, he said the merged districts remain on the frontline in the fight against terrorism and would continue to receive priority in the provision of modern weapons, equipment and other security resources. The chief minister also praised the police for establishing state-of-the-art Police Facilitation Centres, stressing that the real measure of success lies not in constructing buildings but in providing efficient and high-quality public services.

Govt okays immediate security operation in Hanna Urak


QUETTA: The Balochistan government, in a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, has decided to launch an immediate sanitization operation in Hanna Urak and adjoining areas to eliminate terrorists and their facilitators. The meeting, attended by Provincial Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langove, cabinet members, senior civil and military officials, and representatives of law enforcement agencies, reviewed the province's overall law and order situation with particular focus on Hanna Urak. Officials provided a detailed briefing on the recent tragic incident and the broader se-

curity environment. Several key measures were approved to restore peace. CM Bugti directed indiscriminate action against all those involved in terrorism, stressing that operations must continue until perpetrators are brought to justice. He firmly stated that the writ of the state would not be compromised under any circumstances. To strengthen security, the meeting also approved the activation of a joint check post where all law enforcement agencies will work together to monitor terrorist movements and ensure a safe environment for citizens. Expressing condolences to the families of those martyred in

the Hanna Urak tragedy, the Chief Minister instructed that financial assistance and official compensation be provided within two days to support affected families. The meeting also addressed the concerns of peaceful protesters. CM Bugti emphasized that peaceful protest is a constitutional and democratic right, and the government is committed to addressing legitimate demands. A high-level committee led by Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langove and Provincial Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar has been formed to engage with protesters, tribal elders, elected representatives, civil society.—APP

Peace and uplift must go together, says Kundi






PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday said that lasting peace in the merged districts, particularly Waziristan, was inseparable from sustainable development, assuring tribal elders that he would take their concerns to the highest authorities. Talking to a North Waziristan jirga led by Nour Rehman Dawar at the Governor House, the Governor said Waziristan is his own area and reiterated that the Governor House would always remain open to the people of the tribal districts. He said the people of the erstwhile FATA had rendered unparalleled sacrifices for the country and deserved lasting peace, development and improved public services. The Governor stressed to address the issues of the merged districts through consultation and consensus, saying only collective efforts could pave the way for mega development projects in the region. Referring to the constitutional merger of the tribal districts, Kundi said all powers had been transferred to the provincial government, urging the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to effectively utilize the development funds allocated for the merged areas. He said the annual Rs100 billion allocation and the three percent share under the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award should be spent transparently for the welfare of the tribal population, adding that funds meant for the merged districts should not be diverted elsewhere. The Governor also called for addressing issues relating to taxes in the former FATA and PATA regions, high electricity tariffs, and the construction of dams to ensure affordable energy and water security. Highlighting the economic potential of the province, Kundi said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was rich in minerals, oil, gas and tourism resources, but these sectors required a comprehensive mechanism and effective planning to fully benefit the people. He emphasized the need to reopen border crossings with Afghanistan to promote bilateral trade and economic activity, saying enhanced trade would create employment opportunities and contribute to regional stability. The Governor said NADRA facilitation centres have been established in the merged districts to improve access to essential public services. He added that issues such as CNG supply and wheat shortages had previously been resolved through consultation and cooperation among political parties. Kundi said the Pakistan Peoples Party had always made sacrifices for the welfare of the people and would continue to raise its voice for the rights and development of the tribal districts.—APP



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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
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- July 30/Morocco National Day

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- Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
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- Shifa International 4603666



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Islamabad Metropolitan

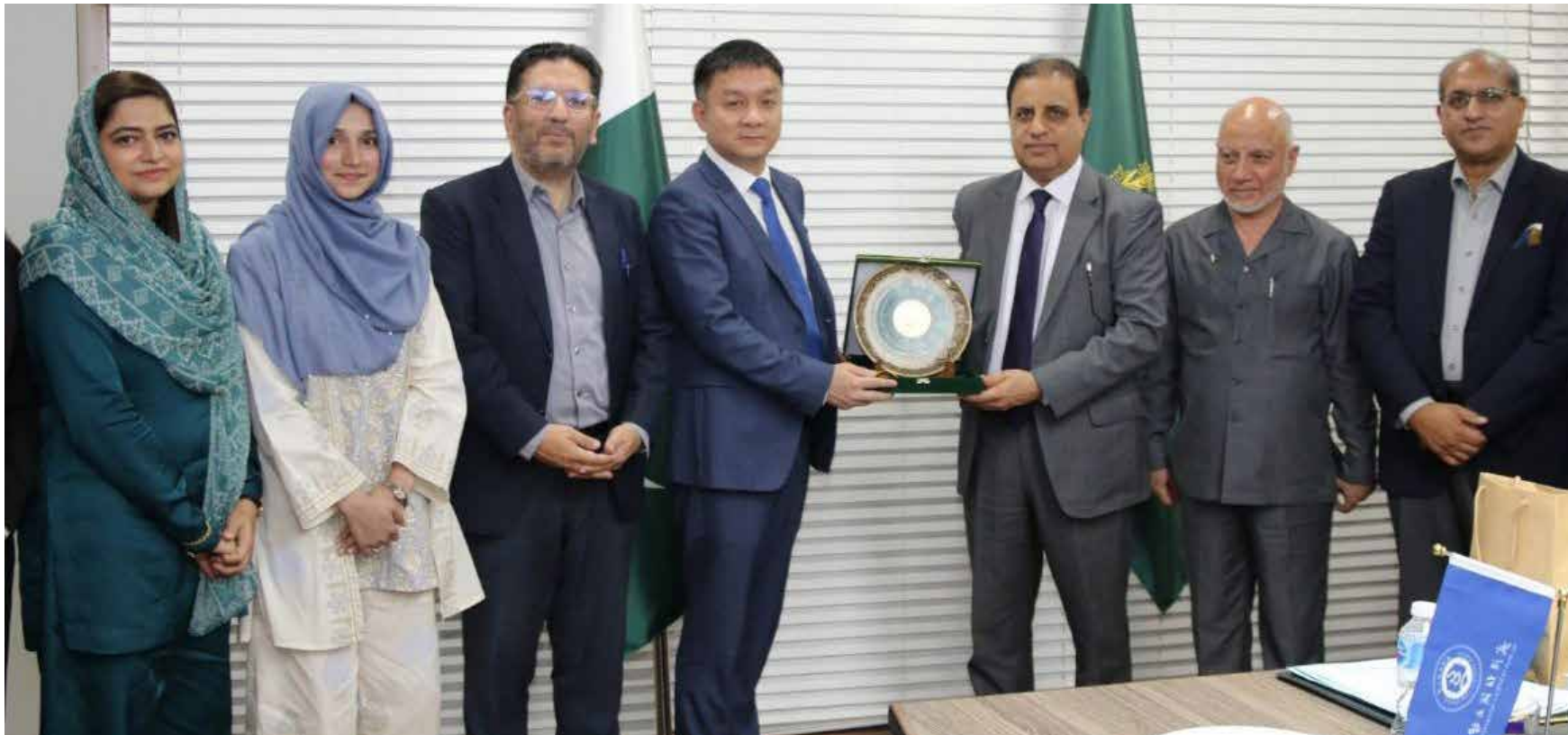
- Corporation.....9209224
- Potohar Town.....9209224
- Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

PSF, Wuhan varsity sign MoU to boost scientific coop

The visit reaffirmed the shared commitment of the Pakistan Science Foundation, the Ministry of Science and Technology and Wuhan Textile University to promoting scientific excellence and fostering long-term academic and research partnerships between Pakistan and China



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) and Wuhan Textile University (WTU), China on Monday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance bilateral cooperation in science, technology, research, innovation and higher education. The MoU signing ceremony was held at the PSF headquarters, where a four-member delegation from Wuhan Textile University, led by Prof. Dr. Zhaowei Zhang, Dean of the School of Biomedical Engineering and Health, participated in the event. Speaking on the occasion, PSF Chairman Prof. Dr. Mohammad Akmal

highlighted the importance of strengthening scientific partnerships between Pakistan and China. He said the collaboration would create new opportunities for joint research, faculty and student exchanges, academic cooperation and capacity building. Prof. Dr. Zhaowei Zhang gave a presentation on Wuhan Textile University's academic and research strengths, international collaborations and areas of mutual interest. Dr. Mirza Habib Ali, Member Science, PSF, also briefed the participants on the Foundation's mandate, research support programmes and initiatives aimed at promoting international scientific collaboration. Following detailed discussions, the two sides formally signed the MoU,

providing a framework for cooperation in joint research projects, academic exchanges, scholarships, scientific events and other mutually beneficial initiatives. The ceremony concluded with a vote of thanks by Raja Shahryar, Deputy Scientific Adviser (International), Ministry of Science and Technology and Director (International Linkages), Pakistan Science Foundation. Later, the Wuhan Textile University delegation called on the Secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology, Shahid Iqbal Baloch. During the meeting, both sides discussed ways to expand scientific and technological cooperation, strengthen institutional partnerships, promote joint research and facilitate academic exchanges between Pakistan

and China. The secretary appreciated the growing collaboration between PSF and Wuhan Textile University and reaffirmed the ministry's full support for strengthening bilateral cooperation. He also assured the delegation of the Government of Pakistan's commitment to facilitating future collaborative initiatives in science, technology, innovation and higher education. The delegation also visited the Pakistan Museum of Natural History at Shakar Parian, Islamabad. The visit reaffirmed the shared commitment of the Pakistan Science Foundation, the Ministry of Science and Technology and Wuhan Textile University to promoting scientific excellence and fostering long-term academic and research partnerships between Pakistan and China.

Pakistan's rights under IWT non-negotiable: Fazal

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary on Monday said Pakistan's rights under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) are historic, legitimate, and non-negotiable. In a post on his X account, he said, "Water is our lifeline, essential for our people, agriculture, and future generations. Any unilateral attempt to undermine this internationally recognised agreement is neither as simple nor as acceptable as India may assume." He said international commitments could not be set aside through unilateral decisions or political ambitions. "Pakistan stands firm and is fully capable of defending its rightful share of water while continuing to uphold the principles of justice, cooperation, and the global vision of 'One Water-One Vision'," he added. —APP

IRSA releases 302,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 302,400 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 414,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1480.52 feet, which was 78.52 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 249,700 cusecs and 157,000 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1166.05 feet, which was 116.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet.—APP

Lalak Jan's unparalleled courage pride for nation: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq paid rich tribute to Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed (Nishan-e-Haider) on the occasion of his 27th martyrdom anniversary, saying that the valiant soldier laid down his life while defending the motherland. He said that Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed's exemplary courage, unwavering sense of duty and supreme sacrifice have earned him an enduring place in the nation's history and remain a source of immense pride for every Pakistani. Ayaz Sadiq said that on July 7, 1999, during the Kargil conflict, Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed embraced martyrdom while bravely repelling repeated enemy attacks with exceptional courage, steadfastness and professional excellence.

Despite intense shelling and extremely challenging battlefield conditions, he continued to defend his post until his last breath, foiling the enemy's designs through his extraordinary resilience and determination. NA Speaker said that the mountains of Kargil still stand as silent witnesses to his remarkable bravery and sacrifice. Ayaz Sadiq said that the officers and personnel of Pakistan's armed forces have always rendered unparalleled sacrifices in defence of the country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. He said that the entire nation salutes its martyrs and holds their families in the highest esteem for their patience, resilience and invaluable sacrifices. Ayaz Sadiq said that the sacrifices of the nation's martyrs

continue to strengthen the spirit of national unity, stability and the collective resolve to safeguard the homeland. The Speaker said that the nation will always remember the sacrifices made by its brave defenders in the line of duty. Ayaz Sadiq also prayed to Allah Almighty to elevate the ranks of Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed in Jannat-ul-Firdous and to bless Pakistan with lasting peace, security, progress, and prosperity. Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah also paid rich tribute to Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed and said that his courage, devotion to duty and unwavering loyalty to the motherland serve as a shining example for future generations. He said that the nation remains the custodian of the legacy of its martyrs.—APP

IIOJK's Gen Z carries forward Wani's legacy as icon of resistance

ISLAMABAD: On the upcoming 10th death anniversary of the Kashmiri iconic youth leader Burhan Muzaffar Wani on July 8, the indigenous freedom struggle of the Kashmiri people against oppressive Indian state rule takes center stage, highlighting the enormous sacrifices of the youth and leadership of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Burhan Wani, a young and promising student, grew up witnessing the severe brutalities of Indian security forces. At an early age, understanding the hopeless future faced by Kashmiri youth under occupation, he joined the armed struggle on October 16, 2010. His decision was driven by unending Indian repressive human rights violations and a desire to avenge the humiliation of being severely beaten and insulted by Indian troops. As a commander of Hizbul Mujahideen, Wani became the face of Kashmiri resistance against Indian occupational forces, gaining massive popularity among the Kashmiri populace—especially the youth—through his extensive social media outreach. For six years, he remained a potent threat to Indian suppression, using modern communication tools like the internet, Facebook, and WhatsApp to promote the Kashmiri cause. His digital activism sent shockwaves through the top ranks of the Indian government and military leadership, giving New Delhi's security establishment sleepless nights.—DNA

Strong Pak-Russia academic collaboration showcased

ISLAMABAD: The First Pakistan-Russia International Student Research Conference (2025-2026) was jointly successfully organized online by the Department of IR, Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAST), Islamabad, Financial University Moscow under the Government of the Russian Federation and the Consortium for Asia Pacific & Eurasian Studies (CAPES). The conference started with an inaugural session, where Vice Chancellor of FUUAST, Prof. Dr. Zabta Khan Shinwari, congratulated both universities and appreciated the efforts of the Department of IR FUUAST for building strong international academic and research linkages. He said that it is a matter of pride that FUUAST students are presenting their research at an international conference. He appreciated the students for their hard work and encouraged them to continue contributing to research and knowledge. He added that the university will continue to support students and promote quality research while strengthening Pakistan's academic image at the international level. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Daria Osinina, Deputy Dean of the Financial University, thanked FUUAST and CAPES for organizing this important academic event. She said that Pakistan and Russia have great potential to work together in research and higher education. She highlighted that media, culture, environment, and international relations are important areas where both countries can build strong academic partnerships. Conference Co Coordinator and Head of the Department of IR, Dr. Faisal Javaid, thanked all participants, faculty members, Supervisors, students, CAPES and the administration of the Financial University for their support.—APP

Seminar scores Pak's thrusts legal stance into global limelight

ISLAMABAD: An international seminar on the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) held in Islamabad on June 30 has marked an extraordinary milestone in Pakistan's legal, diplomatic, and media strategy. This first-of-its-kind international gathering successfully catapulted the IWT back into the global spotlight, highlighting Pakistan's stance that the unilateral suspension or modification of international treaties aligns neither with international law nor the spirit of the international system. The event proved that Pakistan has effectively shifted the narrative, transforming an issue that India sought to treat as a closed, silent bilateral file into a central topic of global diplomatic dialogue. The strategic seminar was not merely an academic or policy debate, but a calculated diplomatic initiative designed to elevate the treaty into a broader international discourse centered on treaty obligations, lower riparian rights, water security, and regional stability. Pakistan effectively framed

the IWT not as a simple administrative arrangement between two states, but as a binding international legal obligation affecting regional peace and the water security of millions of people. Pakistan brought its long-standing legal case, which is permanently recorded at the United Nations Security Council and the Court of Arbitration, directly to the forefront of global public opinion. The core measure of the seminar's success was its immense international resonance and its ability to shape the global agenda. Within hours of the event, global newspapers, news agencies, and policy platforms prominently reported on Pakistan's legal stance. Prestigious international print and news agencies, including The Washington Post, Associated Press, The Independent, Arab News, TRT World, BBC Hindi, The Discourse, and The Eastern Herald, published analytical articles and news reports detailing the sanctity of the treaty, lower ri-

parian rights, and regional stability. While India uses the term "suspension," the international press focused heavily on international law and treaty compliance, achieving editorial space in Washington, London, Riyadh, and Hong Kong on the exact same day. Concurrently, the event gained overwhelming traction across India's top-tier media landscapes, proving that New Delhi could not ignore Islamabad's narrative. Major Indian print and digital outlets—including The Hindu, India Today, NDTV, Times of India, Hindustan Times, Navbharat Times, Dainik Jagran, News9, India Herald, MSN India, Deccan Herald, and The Economic Times—provided extensive coverage. Indian electronic media and YouTube channels, such as ANI, Times Now, CNBC-TV18, CNBC Awaaz, CNN-News18, and News18 India, aired broadcast packages, dedicating unprecedented prime-time coverage to the event.—DNA



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Briefs

Dues waiver offered to plot owners

RAWALPINDI: The Management Board of the RCCI Rawat Industrial Estate has announced a limited-time special discount offer for factory and plot owners to clear their outstanding dues. According to the details, the offer aims at facilitating the industrial community and ensuring timely collection of revenue. The scheme will remain operational until September 30, 2026. Under the incentive package, a 25 percent discount will be provided on outstanding monthly dues for all operational factories and plots, while a 50 percent waiver will apply to fixed dues for vacant plots. However, the management clarified that the discount can only be availed upon a lump-sum payment of all accumulated liabilities, and no relief will be extended for payments made in installments. The notification, issued by Board Chairman, Chaudhry Nadeem A. Rauf further specified that the discount includes the one percent accumulated surcharge, and no additional concessions will be granted under this package. The special offer will automatically expire after the September 30 deadline. Chaudhry Nadeem urged the industrial community to leverage this opportunity and clear their total outstanding payments before the cutoff date. He emphasized that the timely recovery of dues is critical to sustaining ongoing infrastructure projects, including road networks, drainage systems, utility services, and other essential civic developments within the Rawat Industrial Estate.—APP

Gold prices fall by Rs2,400 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold witnessed a decline in the local market on Monday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola decreasing by Rs2,400 to settle at Rs437,436, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold fell by Rs2,058 to Rs375,030, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold declined by Rs1,886 to Rs343,790. In the international market, the price of gold dropped by \$24 to settle at \$4,150 per ounce. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola decreased by Rs37 to Rs6,679, while the price of 10 grams of silver went down by Rs31 to Rs5,726. The price of silver in the international market also declined by \$0.37 to \$62.00 per ounce, the association reported.—APP

CJP showcases judicial reform agenda

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the URAAN Overseas Pakistanis Summer Scholars Programme 2026, a flagship initiative of the Government of Pakistan under the Youth Ki URAAN Court of Pakistan Monday as part of its official study tour. The Programme seeks to reconnect outstanding young members of the Pakistani diaspora with their homeland by providing first-hand exposure to Pakistan's constitutional institutions, governance framework, development priorities, and national policymaking. The delegation called on the Chief Justice of Pakistan, who highlighted the structure of Pakistan's judiciary and emphasized the pivotal role of the District Judiciary in ensuring effective and accessible justice. He also outlined the role of the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee (NJPMC) in leading nationwide judicial reforms and strengthening institutional coordination across the justice sector. The Chief Justice briefed the participants on the judiciary's reform agenda aimed at building a citizen-centric, technology-enabled, transparent, and efficient justice system. He highlighted major initiatives, including digital court services, the National Judicial Analytics Dashboard, the Public Facilitation Centre, the Overseas Litigants Facilitation Cell, Helpline 1818, and other measures designed to improve accessibility, service delivery, and public trust.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Jan Gerald Krausser (Head of Communications, Culture Affairs and Protocol) German embassy being briefed by artist during the art exhibition at FMR Art Space in the Federal Capital.

China's GDI delivers tangible path for Pak's export goal

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As China's Global Development Initiative (GDI) continues to deliver tangible outcomes across Pakistan, a Pakistani policy expert has called for framing the initiative as a project-design architecture that translates macroeconomic reforms into real opportunities for youth and underprivileged communities. Dr. Hassan Daud Butt, Honorary Visiting Fellow and Co-Lead of the China Study Centre at Pakistan's Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), made the remarks at a conference, China Economic Net reported on Monday. The event, titled "China's GDI and Pakistan's 5Es Framework: Strategic Synergy for Pakistan's Economic Transformation" was organized by the SDPI, a Pakistan's premier policy research institution, bringing together senior

officials, diplomats and researchers to align two development blueprints for inclusive growth. Pakistan has set an ambitious 60 billion U.S. dollar export target by 2029 under its Uraan Pakistan national economic transformation plan (2024-2029), which is structured around 5Es (exports, e-Pakistan, environment, energy and equity) framework. "GDI should be rolled out in Pakistan through a three-pillar implementation system centered on financing, technology and capacity building. These pillars will be targeted at boosting exports, advancing digital inclusion, strengthening green resilience and prioritizing youth development across all related projects." Against a global backdrop where over 90 percent of the world's young people live in developing countries, Pakistan faces a distinct demographic reality. The country's total population has surpassed 250 mil-

lion, with 64 percent aged under 30, translating to around 160 million young people. Dr. Butt described the investment in this youth cohort as a national priority that must be embedded in every GDI-5Es program through structured skills training, formal apprenticeship programs and targeted business creation support. He also highlighted that China's 15th Five-Year Plan spanning 2026 to 2030 provides a critical reference point for Pakistan's strategic planning. He called for aligning local youth skills development, national industrial policy and CPEC 2.0 projects with the trajectory of Chinese technology advancement and capital flow. Dr. Butt places GDI within a broader global strategic context, noting that the initiative forms part of a carefully sequenced set of frameworks, each addressing distinct dimensions of the evolving global governance system. Since its

inception, GDI has moved rapidly from a conceptual framework to on-the-ground operations in Pakistan and around the world. Globally, China has advanced more than 1,800 practical cooperation projects under GDI and mobilized more than \$23 billion in development funding through multiple collaborative channels. The SDPI conference featured remarks from Minister Shi Yuanqiang of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, SDPI Board of Governors Chairman Shaqat Kakakhel, Former Board of Investment chairman Haroon Sharif, alongside SDPI research fellows and former Pakistani envoys to China. Participating policy experts broadly agreed on the need for targeted institutional reforms, private sector-led investment, structured technology transfer, green industrialization and innovative financing mechanisms to deliver sustainable economic growth through the GDI-5Es partnership.

Public-private synergy essential for Islamabad's growth

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Mohammad Asif, Deputy Commissioner Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Senior Special Magistrate, has reaffirmed his commitment to maintaining close coordination with the business community and assured that his office will remain readily accessible for addressing issues confronting traders and entrepreneurs. He expressed these views during his visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Monday, where he held a detailed interaction with the chamber leadership and members. Addressing the gathering, Sardar Mohammad Asif said that the business community is the real engine of the national economy, which continues to contribute towards the country's development with resilience and dedication despite numerous challenges. He emphasized that all stakeholders must work collectively to transform Islamabad into a model capital city par excellence, equipped with modern civic facilities and a conducive business environment. He stated that the doors of his office would always remain open for the resolution of issues faced by the business community, adding that stronger collaboration between the civic administration and the private sector would contribute significantly towards sustainable urban development. Speaking on the occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that the business community and the Capital Development Authority share a special relationship aimed at promoting the development of the federal capital and enhancing trade and investment activities. He observed that close cooperation between the two institutions is essential to realize the vision of transforming Islamabad into a regional business hub. He highlighted the significance of cordial relations between ICCI and CDA in making Islamabad a clean, green and attractive city, expressing confidence that this partnership would further strengthen in the coming days to make the capital more vibrant, business-friendly and aesthetically appealing. Chairman ICCI Founder Group Sheikh Tariq Sadiq said that a strong and constructive relationship between public institutions and the business community is indispensable for ensuring economic progress and improving the quality of life in the capital. He appreciated the proactive engagement of the CDA administration with the business sector and expressed hope that such interactions would continue to foster mutual trust and understanding.—DNA

DIG Rana chairs Safe City, SPU meeting

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Security Islamabad Rana Umar Farooq chaired a high-level meeting with the Safe City technical team and officers of the Special Protection Unit (SPU) to review security arrangements for Chinese nationals residing in the federal capital. An official told APP on Monday that the meeting was briefed on the security measures being implemented through modern technology to ensure the safety and protection of Chinese nationals in Islamabad. The Safe City technical team presented an overview of the surveillance and monitoring mechanisms being used to strengthen security, while SPU officers shared updates on operational preparedness and protection arrangements. Rana Umar directed the officers concerned to further enhance security measures by making effective use of modern technology and ensuring close coordination among all relevant units. He emphasized that the safety of Chinese nationals remained a top priority and instructed officers to maintain the highest level of vigilance and operational readiness to effectively respond to any security challenge.—APP

ICT demolishes 7 illegal structures during operation

ISLAMABAD: The district administration intensified its action against illegal construction and encroachments in Shah Allah Ditta, demolishing seven unauthorized structures and arresting nine individuals during the latest operation. Officials also suspended a patwari and removed a revenue estate numberdar over alleged negligence in carrying out official responsibilities. The operation was conducted under the supervision of the Assistant Commissioner Shalimar as part of an ongoing campaign against unlawful construction in the area. According to the district administration here on Monday, teams carried out inspections in Mauza Shah Allah Ditta and took action against structures built without the required approvals. During the operation, authorities demolished seven illegal construction sites, including a commercial panel court that was under construction without a No Objection Certificate (NOC). Officials said the action was taken without distinction and that all unauthorized developments were treated in accordance with the law.—APP

New Pakistani restaurant opens in Beijing as culinary ties deepen

BEIJING: A new Pakistani restaurant opened in Beijing, with Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi, attending the opening ceremony and taking part in a traditional ribbon-cutting. China Economic Net reported on Monday. Speaking to the media, Hashmi described Pakistani cuisine as a bridge between the peoples of Pakistan and China, noting that food remains one of the most direct and enduring forms of cultural exchange. He said the growing presence of Pakistani cuisine in the Chinese capital reflects the warmth of bilateral ties and increasing interest among Chinese diners in South Asian flavours. The opening reflects a broader trend. Beijing is now home to a growing number of Pakistani restaurants serving dishes such as Karachi-style biryani, Lahori karahi, freshly baked naan and chapli kebabs. What was once a cuisine largely catering to Pakistani students, traders and embassy staff has gradually attracted more local diners, aided by social media food reviews and growing people-to-people exchanges under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Among the guests was Hao Yuejiao, a Chinese visitor attending the event. She said she enjoyed the biryani and karahi, describing the flavours as bold but balanced. "Pakistani food feels warm and generous," she said. "I would like to bring my friends to try it." Guests at the ceremony included members of Beijing's Pakistani community, Chinese business representatives and food industry figures. A selection of traditional Pakistani dishes was served following the ribbon-cutting. The opening comes as Pakistan and China continue to deepen engagement in trade, culture and tourism, with cuisine increasingly becoming an accessible channel for people-to-people exchange.—APP

March train crash inquiry faults 9 employees

Secretary Pakistan Railways Mazhar Ali Shah briefed the committee that while 35,000 to 38,000 trains run annually maintaining a low overall accident rate of 0.02% a critical 35% of mishaps happen at unmanned crossings

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has finalized its inquiry into two major train accidents from March 2026, attributing them to human error and technical failures. Departmental action has been initiated against nine employees: six held responsible for the Shalimar Express collision (including a station master and head train examiner) and three for the Tezgam Express derailment. According to an official report presented to the National Assembly Standing Committee on Railways, out of 135 train accidents recorded in a year, 35% occurred at unmanned crossings, while 34 incidents were

caused by defective tracks. The probe revealed that the collision between the Shalimar Express and a container freight train at Mehrabpur was caused by gross driver negligence. The driver overshot a stop signal and failed to brake in time, ramming into a stationary cargo train on the loop line. The crash killed one railway employee and derailed the locomotive, two passenger coaches, and three freight wagons. Authorities directly blamed driver Fayyaz Muhammad, assistant driver Asif Saeed, senior train examiners Asif Hussain and Waliullah Khan, and head train examiner Imran Nisar, while Sta-

tion Master Asadullah was held indirectly responsible. The second major accident, involving the Tezgam Express on the Lodhran-Bahawalpur section, resulted from negligent technical monitoring. A technical fault in the dining car's front trolley caused eight coaches to derail, blocking both tracks and injuring multiple passengers. For fitness-monitoring lapses, disciplinary action has been launched against TXR Lahore Saqib Ghafoor and TXR Multan Minhas Anwar for direct negligence, and Head TXR Secretary Pakistan Railways Mazhar Ali Shah briefed the committee that while 35,000 to 38,000

trains run annually maintaining a low overall accident rate of 0.02% a critical 35% of mishaps happen at unmanned crossings. He noted that trains operate between 65 to 110 km/h, and the administration is maintaining infrastructure using existing workforce despite limited resources. Consolidated annual data showed that defective tracks were the leading cause of accidents with 34 incidents, followed closely by staff negligence (32), rolling stock defects (30), sabotage (10), and natural disasters. The committee was assured that emergency measures are underway to curb these occurrences.—DNA

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have just as much to teach policymakers about governing one. Its value-added tax system, for example, looks increasingly like a tax structure designed for a postwork economy – or at least for one in which consumption is taxed more heavily than labor income. Consumption taxes are generally more efficient and less distortive than income taxes and encourage saving, even if they can be somewhat more difficult to administer.

Europe's long-standing political consensus in favor of income and wealth redistribution may prove an unexpected strength. Moreover, VATs are more politically feasible than wealth taxes yet achieve many of the same objectives by reducing the purchasing power of capital. While a VAT can have regressive effects, these become much less concerning when the revenues are used to finance large transfers to low- and middle-income households. Europe's long-standing political consensus in favor of income and wealth redistribution may prove an unexpected strength. If AI significantly reduces labor's share of income, societies already accustomed to redistributive policies may adapt more easily than those built around work as the primary source of income.

Immigration, however, remains a major challenge. Europe's relatively generous welfare states have found it much harder to integrate large migrant inflows than America's market-oriented system. In the US, many immigrants understand that they need to find work, as access to federal benefits is generally contingent on immigration status. In much of Europe, by contrast, asylum seekers and recognized refugees receive publicly funded housing and benefits, adding strain to increasingly overburdened welfare systems. With more time on their hands and fewer economic outlets, citizens may become even more resentful of perceived competition from immigrants, creating fertile ground for increasingly noxious politics. For all of Europe's current energy problems, the picture could look very different in another decade or so. Assuming green technologies continue to improve, the continent may ultimately find itself on the right side of energy history. Conversely, America's renewed emphasis on fossil fuels under President Donald Trump could leave it with comparatively high energy costs, rather than the cost advantage it has long enjoyed. Europe has another, subtler political advantage: it has not spawned the same class of tech oligarchs that the US has. That, along with the absence of a Trump-like political figure, may be one reason it has been somewhat more successful at preserving democratic norms. None of this diminishes the formidable challenges facing Europe in an AI-centric world. Its relative economic decline may continue for years to come. Still, if AI lives up to its promise and ushers in an age of material abundance, Europe may discover that its greatest comparative advantage lies not in building the most advanced systems but in demonstrating how to live well in the world they create. Unfortunately, as chess players like to say, before the endgame, fate has placed the middlegame. Europe may have compelling ideas about how to live in an age of abundance, but it must first find a way to get there.



Europe and the life of abundance

KENNETH ROGOFF

In many respects, the EU appears likely to become one of the artificial intelligence revolution's biggest losers, with China and the US leaving its economies in the dust. Even if European energy policies were not already making a massive data center buildout prohibitively expensive, its fragmented capital markets would make raising the necessary financing extraordinarily difficult. Europe's high tax burden, in particular, makes it harder to cultivate and retain AI superstars, much less attract them from abroad. Meanwhile, its ever-expanding regulatory state discourages business formation and entrepreneurship. But even without the AI boom, Europe's aging welfare states look increasingly unsustainable. Economic growth has been glacial – Germany, the continent's largest economy, has effectively stalled – while rearmament is placing ever greater demands on public finances. Compounding these problems is a shortage of centrist political leaders capable of containing populist movements on both the left and the right, both of which would likely favor higher public spending if they gained power. As a result, a major crisis seems inevitable.

And yet, Europe does have one decisive advantage: its societies are far further along than those of the US and Asia in adapting to a world of abundance. Thanks to generous welfare states and tax systems that encourage individuals to seek refuge in nonmarket activities, Europeans are generally less career-oriented than most Americans or Asians, placing greater value on leisure, community and culture. They take longer vacations, work fewer hours and spend more time with family and friends – though this has not spared the continent from the global collapse in birth rates. To be sure, the EU is currently pursuing abundance while sapping its economies of the dynamism needed to achieve it. If global real interest rates remain elevated for a prolonged period, its heavy debt burden will continue to act as a drag on growth. Given their strained public finances, it is far from clear how Europe's economies could absorb a major shock – whether cyberwar, conflict over Taiwan or something else – without triggering another debt or financial crisis.

The good news is that debt crises eventually end. If AI ultimately delivers extraordinary productivity gains without giving rise to any of the catastrophic scenarios predicted by tech skeptics, Europe could emerge as the world's premier lifestyle destination. People may travel there not only to buy luxury goods but also to learn how to make the most of their newfound free time. If Europe can teach the world how to live in an age of abundance, it may

Ayatollah's Nostalgic Goodbye!

Sayed Anwar

Khamenei built a system of parallel institutions, the Revolutionary Guard chief among them, that answered to him directly and could override the elected government whenever the elected government drifted too far from his preferences. He oversaw the curbing of the 2009 Green Movement after a disputed election, the calming of the 2019 fuel protests, and the quelling of Mahsa Amini uprising in 2022. He also presided over Iran's nuclear program through years of sanctions, negotiations, and collapsed agreements like Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), positioning the country as a regional power broker and a "pariah state" at the lens of the West

TEHRAN this week is draped in red and black. The air over five cities of Iran and Iraq carries the low murmur of a nation staging its own resurrection through grief. Known as Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hosseini Khamenei, this man spent thirty five years as the most powerful person in Iran and a global leader of millions. He was born in 1939 in Mashhad, the son of a modest cleric, in a household where religious study was less a career choice than an inheritance. He came of age inside the seminaries of Qom and Najaf, absorbing the language of jurisprudence and revolution in equal measure. Like so many of his generation of Shia clerics, his political education happened in the prisons and exile networks of the Shah's Iran, where a young mullah's opposition to the monarchy hardened into something more systematic. He was arrested repeatedly through the 1960s and 1970s. By the time the 1979 Islamic revolution whisked the Pahlavi dynasty away, he was already a tried-and-true lieutenant of Ruhollah Khomeini, the man whose name would shape the Islamic Republic and, eventually, his own. The new state wasted no time in repaying his loyalty. He became a founding ideologue of the Revolutionary Guard Corps' political apparatus. In 1981, he escaped a bombing that nearly ended his career before it dawned, an assassination attempt that left his right arm permanently paralyzed. That same year he became president, a post he held for two terms while the country bled through its war with Iraq. The presidency in that era was a weaker office and subordinate to the Supreme Leader. Khamenei spent those years learning the limits of formal power and the deeper currents of informal power that actually moved the Islamic Republic. When Khomeini died in 1989, Khamenei was an unlikely heir. He lacked the religious credentials that the office of Supreme Leader traditionally demanded. Many senior clerics doubted he had the schol-

arly weight for the job. He got it anyway, elevated in rank almost overnight by an Assembly of Experts eager to approve Khamenei. Khamenei built a system of parallel institutions, the Revolutionary Guard chief among them, that answered to him directly and could override the elected government whenever the elected government drifted too far from his preferences. He oversaw the curbing of the 2009 Green Movement after a disputed election, the calming of the 2019 fuel protests, and the quelling of Mahsa Amini uprising in 2022. He also presided over Iran's nuclear program through years of sanctions, negotiations, and collapsed agreements like Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), positioning the country as a regional power broker and a "pariah state" at the lens of the West. His period as a supreme leader is also marked by the fatwa (religious ruling) against the production, stockpiling, and use of nuclear weapons, perceiving these to be haram (forbidden) under Islam, along with others such as prohibiting insults against Sunni revered figures and forbidding the "unlawful" use of social media. These rulings have had significant religious, social, and political influence within Iran and across the wider Muslim world. His foreign policy was built on a durable hostility toward the United States and Israel, a posture that outlines his anti-colonial position at centre of Middle Eastern geopolitics. He was vocal against the apartheid, targeted racism, and settler colonial measures against the Palestinians by the Israelis. Iran's proxy network across Lebanon, Gaza, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen absorbed enormous resources and drew enormous retaliation, and by 2025 that confrontation had turned direct. The Twelve Day War between Iran and Israel that year, followed by American strikes on Iranian nuclear sites, marked the moment his strategy of managed confrontation stopped being manageable. On February 28, 2026, Khamenei was killed

in Tehran during a series of Israeli airstrikes targeting senior Iranian officials, part of a joint operation with the United States using intelligence to locate the country's leadership. His death was confirmed by the Iranian government the following day, and the state declared forty days of mourning alongside a week of public holiday. His son Mojtaba, whom he had reportedly resisted grooming as a dynastic heir, was nonetheless pushed into the role by Revolutionary Guard pressure on the Assembly of Experts, and was announced as the new Supreme Leader on March 9. However, the funeral of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, delayed for months, was finally scheduled for a multi city procession running from July 4 through July 9, ending at the Imam Reza shrine. It is not merely a burial. It is a speech delivered in silence, a message penned in the grammar of mourning rather than diplomacy. Every mourner who lines the streets of Tehran, Qom, and Mashhad this week is, whether they know it or not, a punctuation mark in that sentence. It is a party where piety and politics meet. It is, on one hand, a test of Mojtaba's political career and Iran's showcase of diplomatic and geopolitical muscle on the other, as delegations from more than hundred countries are expected to join the ceremony. He carried Khomeini's voice in his throat for thirty-five years, and now the incense rising over Tehran marks more than a death. It marks the passing of the founding generation itself. The mourners walking through Qom and Mashhad this week are not just burying a man; they are watching an era close, one whose full costs and achievements historians will spend decades weighing. The sentence he began must now, finally, find its own ending. Four months between death and burial, Ayatollah's goodbye to Iran turned out to be nostalgia for millions of people all over the world. Iran's goodbye to him may take it the longest. He will continue to live in the hearts of the people of Iran and beyond, maybe, forever.

Kashmir: Memory, Martyrdom, and an Unresolved Question

Abdul Wassay

Kashmir's long history of struggle and martyrdom is a continuation of legitimate political demands for rights, recognition, and dignity, which remain unaddressed. Kashmir Martyrs' Day also reminds the world that the core political question of the future of IIOJK remains open and unanswered. The sacrifices made over generations will continue to shape the collective memory and identity of the Kashmiri people. The people of Pakistan share in the grief and stand in solidarity with their Kashmiri brethren

EVERY year, Kashmir Martyrs' Day is observed on 13 July to commemorate the indiscriminate killings of Muslims under the Maharaja Hari Singh's rule. For Kashmiris, it symbolises a sustained struggle for rights, recognition, and independence. On this day, Kashmiris stood up against injustice and paid with their lives. That legacy of resistance, along with the demand for political and civil rights, continues to endure. This day is not just about remembering those sacrifices but also understanding why the struggle still continues. The story of the 13 July 1931 Kashmir uprising starts outside the Central Jail of Srinagar. Thousands of Kashmiris gathered to witness the trial of freedom activist Abdul Qadeer Khan, who was accused of sedition for delivering a fiery speech against Dogra occupation. Tension rose when one man stood to deliver the "Azan" in an act of defiance toward Dogra rule, but was shot dead by state forces. Dogra police martyred 22 people as, one after another, individuals rose to complete the Azan. This act of defiance against tyranny transformed into a defining symbol of collective resistance, and it firmly embedded martyrdom into Kashmir's political consciousness. This act started the organised struggle against the rule of oppression that continues to this day in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). In the past 95 years, this organised struggle against systemic repression has produced multiple martyrs, including Burhan Wani, Abdul Ahad Guru, Ashfaq Majeed, Tuffail Ahmed, Ghulam Mohammad Lone, and others. Many peaceful political activists, like Yasin Malik, Asiya Andrabi, Shabbir Ahmad Shah, Khurram Parvez, Masarat Alam Bhat, and others, are also detained under the draconian laws of India. This shows that the issue is not episodic but structural. Across gener-

ations, the Kashmiri political resistance has faced indiscriminate killings, detentions, and torture. Since the abrogation of Article 370 by the Indian Hindutva regime in 2019, the government has imposed severe restrictions such as lockdowns, communication blackouts, detentions, and targeted operations against freedom fighters. The oppressive regime has also stopped the public remembrance of the 13 July martyrs by removing the holiday from the official calendar. This is a blatant attempt to erase historical memory. Authorities have also blocked visits to the Srinagar graveyard, where those martyrs are buried. This shows that the Indian regime is afraid of the people of Kashmir. In the Kashmiri struggle against occupation, mourning is seen as a political act of resistance, not just a cultural or religious activity. The Indian regime has systematically restricted the mourning of Kashmiri political activists. For example, one of the most influential freedom activists, Syed Ali Gillani, who died under Indian illegal detention, was buried in a tightly controlled, pre-dawn ceremony in 2021, just hours after his death. Police snatched his body and forced his burial without the presence of his family. Authorities implemented a strict security crackdown and communication blackout across IIOJK to prevent mass gathering, fearing his death would trigger large-scale anti-India protests. Commemorating Kashmir Martyrs' Day, in this sense, becomes a day of resisting historical erasure and reinterpretation. Kashmir's long history of struggle and martyrdom is a continuation of legitimate political demands for rights, recognition, and dignity, which remain unaddressed. Kashmir Martyrs' Day also reminds the world that the core political question of the future of IIOJK remains open and unanswered. The sacrifices made over generations

will continue to shape the collective memory and identity of the Kashmiri people. The people of Pakistan share in the grief and stand in solidarity with their Kashmiri brethren. The Pakistani government also continues to play its part by consistently highlighting, at all relevant international forums, that Jammu and Kashmir is an unresolved international dispute. This has been reflected in multiple United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) like UNSCR 47, 51, 80, 91, and others. Pakistan will continue to support the Kashmir cause politically, morally, and diplomatically, and will not let the blood of Kashmiri martyrs go to waste. On this Kashmir Martyrs' Day, there is a need for renewed commitment to support Kashmir's struggle for self-determination and justice. Pakistan will also continue to raise this issue at all forums to ensure a peaceful and just resolution in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people. Kashmir Martyrs' Day is not just about the past, but also about the present, where the core question remains unresolved, and the future is still being contested. The memory of the martyrs of the 1931 massacre and the decades that followed continues to shape the political consciousness of the people of Kashmir to keep the demands for rights and self-determination alive. Attempts by oppressive Indian authorities to suppress the freedom struggle, silence the remembrance of martyrs, and redefine history cannot erase the lived experience of the Kashmiri people. As long as these grievances remain unaddressed, the call for justice will continue across generations that refuse to forget.

– Abdul Wassay is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS) Lahore. He can be reached at info@casslhr.com

Briefs

Palestine body to take over control of Gaza

FROM PAGE 01
The NCAG was established by the Board of Peace, which was in turn set up by US President Donald Trump when he brokered the ceasefire between Hamas and Israel last October. But it has remained based outside Gaza for months, reportedly due to Israeli objections to its entry into the war-devastated territory. Hamas and other Palestinian factions have held several rounds of talks in Cairo with mediators to narrow differences, particularly over the second phase of the Gaza ceasefire. The first phase involved the release of the last Israeli hostages held by Hamas in exchange for Palestinians detained by Israel. The transition to the second phase, which was to involve Hamas's disarmament and a gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, has been stalled for months. Israeli forces have actually expanded their presence in the territory in recent months, taking control of nearly 70 percent. Meanwhile, Hamas is demanding the establishment of a Palestinian administration before it will consider handing over any part of its arsenal. The question of Gaza's post-war governance remains one of the main sticking points in negotiations on implementing phase two. Israel rejects any return of Hamas to power, but also rejects a direct takeover by the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority at this stage.

No compromise on Pakistan water...

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"The forum condemned all such forms of state-supported financing, facilitation or sponsorship of proxies and underscored that any attempts to use hybrid means to destabilise Pakistan would continue to be countered with strategic clarity and firm resolve," the statement read. Reviewing the evolving regional landscape, the forum "appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in promoting dialogue, de-escalation and regional stability" as it remains a mediator in the peace negotiations between the United States and Iran. The CCC "reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to peaceful conflict resolution, respect for international law and enhanced regional cooperation to address shared security challenges", the ISPR said. Meanwhile, the forum "expressed serious concerns over the continued use of territory under [the] control of Afghan Taliban regime by Indian-sponsored terrorist groups, including Fitna al Khawarij (FAK) and Fitna al Hindustan (FAH) to orchestrate attacks inside Pakistan". The Pakistani government uses the term "Fitna al Khawarij" to refer to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and its affiliates. It uses the term "Fitna al Hindustan" to refer to groups it accuses of being sponsored by India to execute terrorist attacks on Pakistani soil.

Amjad Hussain...

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The CM said the PPP had secured a strong mandate in Diamer for the first time. Hussain added that despite the PPP not being in power at the Centre, the people had once again reposed confidence in the party. He also expressed gratitude to the party leadership for its support. Hussain also thanked the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leadership for giving the PPP the opportunity to form the government. Hussain — who was elected unopposed as no other member submitted their nomination papers for the top post — has become the fifth chief minister of Gilgit-Baltistan. He was elected from the GBA-1 constituency in the GB Legislative Assembly elections and is also the President of the PPP GB chapter. Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing the oath-taking ceremony of the Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan, Amjad Hussain.

Neymar signals Brazil farewell after shock WC exit to Norway

"I tried, I tried... Now it's over! I started here, I finished here," says Brazilian legend

DNA

NEW YORK: Neymar Junior suggested he may have played his final match for Brazil after scoring in their defeat by Norway in the World Cup round of 16 on Sunday. The forward converted a stoppage-time penalty in Brazil's 2-1 loss, a result that eliminated the five-times champions and extended their wait for a sixth World Cup title. Speaking briefly after the match to Bruno Formiga, a pundit for Brazilian channel, Neymar indicated that his tenure with Brazil had come to an end. "I tried, I tried... Now it's over! I started here, I finished here," Neymar said, referring to the stadium in New Jersey, where he made his Brazil debut in a friendly against the United States in 2010. The 34-year-old was moved to tears after the match. It was the national team's worst World Cup performance since 1990. Brazil are now heading towards their longest spell without a World Cup title since they first won the tournament. By 2030, they will have gone 28 years without lifting the trophy. If Neymar confirms his international retirement, he will end his Brazil career with 80 goals and 58 assists in 130 appearances. Neymar has won multiple titles at club level but his only senior trophy with Brazil was the 2013 Confederations Cup.



PCB becomes first cricket board to introduce AI-powered TruMan 3 bowling machine

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Monday unveiled the state-of-the-art TruMan 3 AI-powered bowling machine at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) Lahore, becoming the first cricket board in the world to adopt the cutting-edge technology for player development. In a video released by the PCB, Director High Performance Aaqib Javed and cricketer Salman Ali Agha highlighted the features and benefits of the new machine, which is designed to simulate realistic match scenarios for batters.

Calling it "the latest in cricket technology," Aaqib Javed said, "TruMan 3 is the most advanced bowling machine available today, and the Pakistan Cricket Board is the first cricket board to use it." He said the machine overcomes one of the biggest shortcomings of conventional bowling machines. "With traditional bowling machines, it is difficult for batters to pick the bowler's release point. This machine displays a high-contrast LED animation of the bowler on a front screen, allowing batters to read the

action, release point and timing just as they would in a real match," he said. Aaqib explained that the machine could be fully programmed before a training session. "Coaches can customise pace, line, length, swing, bounce and even the height of the delivery. Individual balls, overs and entire spells can be saved and replayed to recreate match situations. It also allows players to prepare against the style and action of specific bowlers," he said. He added that the technology provides batters with match-like preparation and

helps bridge the gap between practice and competitive cricket. Salman Ali Agha termed the innovation a major step forward for player development. "This machine helps prepare us for the challenges of modern-day cricket. Because the ball is released in sync with the bowler's action shown on the screen, you have to maintain the same timing that you would in an actual match," he said. He admitted that adjusting to the system initially required effort but said the benefits were significant. — APP

PGF Islamabad junior amateur golf c'ship 2026 concludes

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Golf Federation (PGF) successfully organized the prestigious Islamabad Junior Amateur Golf Championship 2026 at the scenic Islamabad Club Golf Course. The high-stakes, three-day championship ran from July 3 to July 5, featuring a grueling 54-hole stroke play format. The event drew 72 elite junior golfers from across the country, all competing fiercely across various age categories while showcasing exceptional skill, discipline, and sportsmanship. Under the supervision of Tournament Director Malik Muhammad Kamran, the championship received immense praise from Islamabad Club members, who lauded the determination and grit of the young athletes. In the highly anticipated Category A fixtures, Muhammad Irtaza Hussain delivered a stellar performance to capture the championship title. Hamza Waheed secured the runner-up position, followed closely by Zaid Umar in third place. Category B witnessed an intense battle for the top spot, where Saad Habib ultimately dominated the field to claim victory. Muhammad Raza finished in second place, while Mustafa Zubair took home the third-position trophy. In Category C, Abdul Rahim Usman emerged victorious after displaying great consistency throughout the three days. Mubeen Akram secured second place, and Muhammad Musa Adil finished the tournament in third. — APP

Impeachment of Philippines VP starts

MANILA: The impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte opened in the Philippine Senate on Monday, with the outcome set to determine whether she can run for the presidency in 2028. The 48-year-old former mayor of Davao City assumed the country's second-highest office, after joining Ferdinand Marcos Jr. — the son and namesake of the late Philippine dictator — on the ticket that won a landslide victory in the 2022 election. But their alliance soon disintegrated, and over the past two years, they have been locked in a bitter power struggle. Duterte has since faced numerous impeachment attempts — the first sitting vice president in the Philippines' history to be subjected to such proceedings. Widely considered a frontrunner for the 2028 presidential election, the eldest daughter of former President Rodrigo Duterte is now facing a battle for her political life. If senators, who sit as trial judges, convict her, she could be permanently barred from elected office. According to the constitution, 16 of 24 senators are required to convict the vice-president — a threshold that may be difficult to reach, as both Duterte and Marcos have comparable numbers of allies in the Senate. — APP

MOL Pakistan launches 5th batch of Management Trainee Program

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The MOL Pakistan has launched the fifth batch of its Management Trainee Program for students from communities in the TAL Block operational area, marking five consecutive years of investment in local youth development. Assessment tests were held in Kohat, with selected candidates set to join a one-year program offering hands-on rotations across MOL Pakistan's business functions, one-on-one professional mentorship, and structured workplace training. Past graduates have gone on to secure roles across Pakistan's energy and corporate sectors. The program is a flagship component of MOL Pakistan's community investment strategy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Rather than one-off sponsorships, the company has built a sustainable, year-on-year pathway that gives talented students from host communities access to professional exposure. Commenting on the

launch, Ali Murtaza Abbas, Regional Vice President, MOL Group, said, "Five batches in, we are seeing real impact with students from TAL Block who have developed into confident, capable professionals. This program exists because we believe in empowering our local communities to build a skilled and well-trained workforce for the long term. We look forward to seeing what this new cohort goes on to achieve." Adam László, the CEO/MD of MOL Pakistan, stated on the occasion, "We are proud of the work that MOL continues to do in Pakistan by implementing initiatives like the Management Trainee Program to support the careers of the youth of our local communities." MOL Pakistan, a wholly owned subsidiary of MOL Group, has operated in Pakistan's energy sector since 1999, holding working interests in several key blocks including TAL and Margalla. The Management Trainee Program reflects the company's broader commitment to socio-economic development in the communities where it operates.

Ten-man England beat battling Mexico 3-2 in last-16 thriller

Three Lions hand co-hosts Mexico their first-ever World Cup defeat at the Azteca Stadium



MEXICO CITY: Ten-man England weathered a Mexico storm at the Azteca Stadium to reach the World Cup quarter-finals for the third straight time with a rip-roaring 3-2 victory over the co-hosts on Sunday thanks to a Jude Bellingham double and Harry Kane penalty. Thomas Tuchel's side

made it hard for themselves but handed the battling Mexicans their first-ever World Cup defeat at the iconic stadium to set up a last-eight clash with Norway who shocked Brazil 2-1 earlier on Sunday. Mexico had only lost two competitive games at the Azteca in 89 matches since 1966 but

England deserved to make it three. After the game was delayed by an hour due to thunderstorms, Mexico attacked from the start backed by their fanatical support who raised the decibel level even higher than in their earlier matches at their home fortress, but England held firm and man-

aged to take the sting out of the game. Bellingham put England ahead with a diving header from Bukayo Saka's fine cross just past the half-hour and made it 2-0 within two minutes after another break down the right with captain Harry Kane providing the centre. The Mexican crowd responded with chants of "Yes we can" and their players responded when livewire winger Julian Quinones volleyed home inside the box after a scramble following a free kick to get the hosts back into the match. They got further encouragement after the break when England defender Jarell Quansah was sent off for a rash challenge. The visitors kept their cool, though, and after Anthony Gordon was fouled by the keeper on the hour, Kane calmly scored from the spot. Just as England looked to enjoy some breathing space, captain Kane gave away a penalty as he tried to clear the ball and after a VAR review the referee pointed to the spot. Raul Jimenez stepped up to make it 3-2 and give Mexico hope again. With just over 20 minutes to go England had their backs to the wall and had to dig deep to keep the Mexicans at bay. Despite giving up most of the possession, they hung on for a famous victory in the last match of this World Cup in Mexico. It was England's first visit to the famous stadium since they lost to Argentina in the 1986 World Cup quarter-finals after Diego Maradona's infamous "Hand of God" goal and mazy dribble through a hapless defence sank Bobby Robson's side. — APP

Israeli Minister issues threat...

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Katz also criticized anti-Israel slogans voiced during Khamenei's funeral, describing them as proof of Iran's extremist agenda. He emphasized Israel's close coordination with the United States, noting that joint military efforts had achieved significant objectives against Iran.

UN Secy Gen post aspirant...

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resolutions, especially for Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir which remain crucial for lasting peace in the Middle East and South Asia. DPM/FM reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to continue working towards promoting the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, respect for international law and treaties, and active international cooperation for global peace and prosperity.

PM orders embassies to step up...

FROM PAGE 01
them through the Digital Youth Hub portal. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, Federal Ministers Musadik Malik, Attullah Tarar and Chaudhry Salik Hussain attended the meeting. Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, NAVTTC Chairman Raja Qamar-ul-Islam, PM's Youth Programme Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan and other senior officials were also present.

Trump warns Iran: deal or...

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remains a critical chokepoint for global oil shipments. Iranian officials have not yet issued a detailed response, though regional observers note that Trump's language signals a mix of pressure and opportunity. Analysts suggest that while a deal could stabilize energy markets and ease hostilities, the threat of military action leaves the situation precarious. The broader impact of Trump's words is felt across the Middle East, where nations like Lebanon and Gulf states watch closely for signs of either breakthrough or confrontation. Oil markets, too, remain sensitive to any disruption in the Strait of Hormuz.

President Asif Zardari reaches...

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shortly after his arrival in the Kyrgyz Republic. During the visit, President Zardari was briefed on the significance of the Rukh Ordo Cultural Center as an important symbol of the Kyrgyz Republic's rich cultural heritage, history and traditions. The two Presidents toured different sections of the cultural complex and exchanged views on the importance of preserving cultural heritage and promoting greater understanding among nations through cultural exchanges.

SC issues notices to Imaan, Hadi

FROM PAGE 01
suspension of their sentences. A three-member SC bench headed by Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and comprising Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan heard the case on Monday. During the hearing, senior counsel Faisal Siddiqui contended that the SC had directed the IHC to decide on the suspension pleas within two weeks. "The SC had kept the case pending with it," he informed the bench. He added that after the order, the IHC heard the case on May 20 and the next hearing was scheduled for June 4. However, the cause list for June 4 was cancelled, and a revised date has not yet been issued, he said.

Briefs

PSX
witnesses
bullish trend

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 2,082.49 points, a positive change of 1.12 percent, closing at 187,454.69 points against 185,372.21 points on the last trading day. During the session, the ready market recorded a trading volume of 888.405 million shares with a traded value of Rs49.981 billion, compared to 815.651 million shares valuing Rs42.634 billion in the previous session. The market capitalization increased to Rs20.986 trillion from Rs20.763 trillion a day earlier. Out of 495 active companies in the ready market, 296 advanced, 182 declined, and 17 remained unchanged. TPL Properties topped the volume chart with 66.771 million shares, followed by Lotte Chemical with 42.069 million shares and TPL REIT Fund I with 36.545 million shares. The top gainers included The Premier Sugar Mills, which increased by Rs71.99 to close at Rs791.92, and Sitara Chemical Industries Limited, which gained Rs41.14 to settle at Rs852.18. On the losing side, PIA Holding Company Limited declined by Rs242.78 to close at Rs18,360.36, while Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited fell by Rs219.57 to close at Rs25,443.93. In the futures (DFC) market, turnover stood at 148.183 million shares with a traded value of Rs9.272 billion, compared to 133.076 million shares worth Rs7.377 billion in the previous session. Out of 302 futures-market companies, 193 recorded gains, 105 declined, and four remained unchanged.—APP

Hayabusa2
space probe
mission
success
confirmed

TOKYO: Japan's Hayabusa2 space probe successfully made a close flyby of the asteroid Torifune, the country's space agency said Monday, releasing an image taken during the mission. The flyby observation mission, which required highly accurate navigation, was completed at around 6:30 p.m. Sunday, with data collected using four types of instruments including an optical camera, according to the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency "I'm just utterly moved that it was able to take such a beautiful image. I have goosebumps," said Yuya Mimasu, head of the operations team, during a press conference. While the plan was for the spacecraft to pass approximately 800 meters from the center of Torifune, its actual distance will have to be confirmed after further analysis. Torifune, which is about 100 million kilometers from Earth, appears to be peanut-shaped and seems to have been formed by two asteroids. Hayabusa2, launched in 2014, arrived at the asteroid Ryugu, more than 300 million km away, and during a flyby of Earth in 2020 released a sample capsule containing 5.4 grams of surface material that landed in Australia. Using its remaining fuel, Hayabusa2 began an extended mission and has traveled some 10.7 billion km since 2014.

According to JAXA, Hayabusa2 will continue flying, and is scheduled to reach its next target, the asteroid 1998 KY26, in 2031.—APP

Japan urged
to tackle
food allergy
barriers

ASTANA: An expert has called on Japan to strengthen food allergy protections, including introducing mandatory allergen labeling for restaurants, arguing that the current system leaves families vulnerable and can contribute to the social isolation of children with food allergies, according to an opinion article published by Kyodo News, Qazinform News Agency correspondent reports. In the commentary, Mika Ikemoto, a senior research fellow at the Japan Research Institute, said the number of children with food allergies has increased significantly.—APP

FM reaffirms reform agenda
in meeting with PBC

The Finance Minister also emphasized that the Federal Budget 2026-27 had introduced significant taxation and financing measures aimed at supporting exports, improving exporters' access to finance, and reinforcing the Government's commitment to an export-led and sustainable growth model

DNA

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a meeting with members of the Pakistan Business Council (PBC) during his visit to Karachi to discuss Pakistan's economic outlook, reform agenda, and the Government's economic priorities. Speaking on the occasion, the Finance Minister appreciated the Pakistan Business Council for bringing together leading representatives of Pakistan's business community on a single platform. He acknowledged PBC's continued role in promoting constructive dialogue between the Government and the private sector on key economic and policy issues. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb observed that the global economy had demonstrated greater resilience than anticipated, noting that countries which remained committed to structural reforms had been better positioned to sustain economic stability and growth. He emphasized that Pakistan must continue pursuing its reform agenda to strengthen macroeconomic stability, improve competitiveness, and support sustainable economic growth. Highlighting the Government's approach to budget preparation,



Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said the meeting marked the beginning of consultations for the next federal budget rather than a post-budget review. He noted that the Government had initiated the budget preparation process significantly earlier this year, enabling a more structured and consultative approach to fiscal planning. The Finance Minister also emphasized that the Federal

Budget 2026-27 had introduced significant taxation and financing measures aimed at supporting exports, improving exporters' access to finance, and reinforcing the Government's commitment to an export-led and sustainable growth model. The Finance Minister underscored the importance of policy predictability and reaffirmed the Government's commitment to implementing a

Medium-Term Tax Strategy. He noted that a stable and consistent tax policy framework remained essential for strengthening business confidence, encouraging investment, and supporting long-term economic planning. During the meeting, representatives of the Pakistan Business Council highlighted the Council's role as a broad-based national business advocacy platform and un-

derscored the importance of continued engagement between the Government and exporters from various sectors to support export-led growth. The Finance Minister reaffirmed the Government's commitment to advancing structural reforms, ensuring policy consistency, and fostering a conducive environment for investment and sustainable economic growth.

Bangladesh PM seek new
heights in ties with KSA

We have a wide range of sectors where we seek Saudi investments, in areas like infrastructure, tourism, port management, agro industry, etc. Our bilateral ties with Saudi Arabia are considered brotherly ties, not just simply a relationship between two countries. It's a brotherly one, a comprehensive one

DHAKA: Bangladeshi Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's upcoming first official visit to Saudi Arabia is set to broaden bilateral ties, his office said on Monday, after receiving the Kingdom's official invitation. Saudi Ambassador Abdullah bin Abiyah met with the prime minister at the Cabinet Secretariat, where he presented the invitation, Humayun Kabir, foreign affairs adviser to the prime minister, who was present during the meeting together with Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman, told Arab News. 00:00 02:55. "The ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia made a call on Prime Minister Tarique Rahman this morning to pass on the invitation from His Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to visit Saudi Arabia. Our prime minister has cordially accepted the invitation. The

exact time and date of the travel will be sorted out later. Most likely the visit will take place after the summer," he said. "It's a significant moment that we received such an important invitation from Saudi Arabia, and it will be a very important visit. In the Middle Eastern region, Saudi Arabia is our historical partner. Since the presidency of Ziaur Rahman, it's always been an important partner," Kabir said, referring to the prime minister's father, the former president, who has been credited with establishing bilateral ties in the 1970s, after Bangladesh's independence. "With this visit, our bilateral relationship will be taken to new heights." Rahman's Bangladesh Nationalist Party — a party founded by his father and for decades led by his mother, former Prime Minister

Khaleida Zia — made a landslide win in the February election. Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Dhaka became the first foreign envoy to meet Rahman after he assumed the country's top office.

"Bangladesh wants a strategic, comprehensive and special relationship with Saudi Arabia," the foreign adviser said, as a ministerial delegation from the Kingdom is expected to visit Dhaka next week to discuss investment matters. "We have a wide range of sectors where we seek Saudi investments, in areas like infrastructure, tourism, port management, agro industry, etc. Our bilateral ties with Saudi Arabia are considered brotherly ties, not just simply a relationship between two countries. It's a brotherly one, a comprehensive one. It will be taken to new heights." Agencies

UK tightens rules on
overseas political donations

LONDON: Britain tightened its rules on overseas political donations on Monday, as part of efforts to stop foreign money influencing elections, and as concerns swirl around what Housing Minister Steve Reed called "dodgy funding." Last year, the government ordered a review into foreign financial interference in politics after a former politician in Reform UK was jailed for taking bribes to make pro-Russia speeches and statements. The review found Britain faced a persistent problem of foreign countries, including Russia, China and Iran, trying to influence and undermine the country's democracy, prompting the government to introduce the new rules. They come as the leader of the anti-immigration Reform UK party, Nigel Farage, is under investigation by the parliamentary standards watchdog over whether he should have declared a £5 million (\$6.68 million) donation from a Thailand-based cryptocurrency billionaire, which was given before Farage said he would stand as a member of parliament. Britain's Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government said on Monday that from now on political candidates would be required to declare donations of over £2,230 received prior to becoming a candidate and prove any pre-candidacy funding had come from legitimate sources. "By holding overseas donors to tougher standards and requiring candidates to prove where their funding comes from, we are taking world-leading action to protect the integrity of our elections and tackle the threats we face from abroad," Reed said in a statement. The tougher rules also mean individuals moving to the UK from overseas now have to live permanently in the UK for a year before they can make a political donation of £100,000 or more, while donations from companies are to be assessed against past post-tax profits rather than revenue, helping to ensure only legitimate UK-linked businesses can donate. These rules build on those announced in March, which capped donations by Britons living abroad at £100,000 per year, and introduced a ban on crypto donations until a system to regulate them effectively is established. Farage's Reform UK, which has topped national opinion polls for over a year, has said no rules were broken over the donation to Farage from crypto investor Christopher Harborne, who provided about two-thirds of Reform's funding last year, according to Electoral Commission data. On Sunday, Farage was referred to parliament's standards watchdog after a report that he failed to declare some other benefits.—DNA

Rs 9.8b for
footwear hub to
attract foreign
investment

ISLAMABAD: The government is planning to establish a Rs 9.8 billion footwear industrial hub near Lahore in a bid to attract foreign investment. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the proposed project will be sponsored by the Ministry of Industries and Production, with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) as the lead executing agency. The Board of Investment (BoI) and provincial industry departments will act as lead partners. Pakistan's footwear sector is technically capable but remains concentrated in informal and semi-organized production units, particularly around Lahore. The absence of a dedicated footwear industrial zone has resulted in fragmented manufacturing, high logistics costs, limited technology upgrading, and weak capacity to attract large-scale domestic and foreign investment. The planned hub is intended to address these structural gaps by creating a purpose-built industrial platform where investment, technology, compliance services, and common infrastructure can be co-located. The project objective is to establish a specialised industrial hub for footwear manufacturing near the Lahore cluster, providing a compliance-ready platform for technology adoption, production expansion, and private investment attraction. The total Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) requirement has been estimated at Rs9.8 billion, with no foreign exchange component. The proposed phasing includes Rs280 million in FY2026-27, Rs5.32 billion in FY2027-28, Rs2.8 billion in FY2028-29, and Rs1.4 billion in FY2029-30. The project is expected to be completed over five years. The scope of work includes feasibility studies and site selection, master planning, construction of internal roads, boundary walls, electricity distribution networks, gas supply, water and sanitation facilities, drainage systems, common utility buildings, green spaces, effluent management systems, and common facility areas. A major component will be the establishment of a technology adoption platform, including a technology demonstration centre equipped with modern cutting lines, injection moulding equipment, and automated stitching machinery. This is expected to support technology transfer to occupant firms and help manufacturers move towards higher-value and export-oriented production. The project also proposes shared testing and quality control laboratories, storage for chemical and material inputs, safety facilities, buyer meeting spaces, showroom facilities, and other common services. Under the implementation arrangement, SMEDA will lead project design, procurement, and technical coordination. The BoI will handle investor facilitation, allotment policy development, incentive packages, registration, and one-window service provisions for hub occupants. The provincial industry departments will coordinate land acquisition, provincial approvals, and interaction with the local government. A high-level steering committee, comprising the Ministry of Industries and Production, SMEDA, BoI, and the provincial government, will provide executive oversight. The expected outcomes include a fully developed and operational footwear industrial hub, organised industrial plots, shared facilities, increased private investment, expanded production capacity, improved access to technology and compliance services, and a measurable contribution to footwear export growth targets.—APP

Caution urged
as demand
grows for AC
in heatwave-
hit UK

LONDON: Londoner Zainab Hussain once saw air conditioning as a luxury in Britain. Now, the 35-year-old "can't see how we'll survive without it." She and her husband are among a small but growing proportion of British households embracing AC to deal with increasingly hot summers. But the trend has attracted criticism, particularly from sustainability experts who argue it should not be the "default answer." "It's seen as a quick fix and it's not actually, because it can cause a lot of damage," Rajat Gupta, professor of sustainable architecture and climate change at Oxford Brookes University, told AFP. He noted AC increases electricity demand, energy bills and carbon emissions, while worsening the so-called urban heat island effect by releasing hot air onto city streets. However, after sweltering at night through the second heatwave of 2026 last month, the Hussain family were undeterred, opting to add AC upstairs at their semi-detached home in the south London suburb Selsdon. "We realized that our summers were just getting more and more unbearable so it was something that we definitely needed to have for the downstairs area," Hussain explained. "But after last week's heatwave, we realized that actually upstairs was really unbearable as well," she added, as workers fitted the new appliance.—APP

Tesla reports
25% increase
in Q2 2026
deliveries

ASTANA: Tesla delivered more than 480,000 vehicles worldwide in the second quarter of 2026, a 25% increase from a year earlier, while production totaled over 450,000 vehicles, the company announced on July 2, Qazinform News Agency reports. According to Tesla, Model 3 and Model Y accounted for the bulk of deliveries, with 467,762 units delivered and 442,936 units produced during the April-June period. Tesla's other models recorded 12,364 deliveries and 8,822 units produced. The company delivered 480,126 vehicles worldwide in the second quarter of 2026, up 25% from 384,122 vehicles delivered in the same period the previous year. In addition to vehicle sales, Tesla deployed 13.5 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of energy storage products during the quarter. The company noted that its second-quarter vehicle deliveries and energy storage deployments are only partial indicators of financial performance, which also depends on factors such as average selling prices, cost of sales, and foreign exchange movements. Tesla is scheduled to release its full second-quarter financial results after the close of U.S. markets on July 22. The company will also host a live webcast and a question-and-answer session with management to discuss its financial performance, business results and outlook.—APP

Lebanon says
Israeli strike
on south kills
4, including 3
women

BEIRUT: Lebanese state media said an Israeli strike on a car in the country's south on Monday killed four people, including three women, despite a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah. Lebanon's official National News Agency (NNA) said a school principal, her mother, a foreign female domestic worker and a male Syrian worker were killed when an Israeli drone targeted their car as they returned from inspecting their family home in Nabatieh Al-Fawqa. Israel has kept up intermittent strikes on south Lebanon, particularly in the Nabatieh area, despite the two-week-old truce, usually saying it is targeting Hezbollah sites and operatives. Both sides accuse the other of violating the ceasefire. An agreement signed last month by the United States and Iran aimed at ending the wider regional war also established a ceasefire in Lebanon, in effect since June 21. Days later, after talks in Washington, Lebanon and Israel agreed to a US-backed framework agreement aiming to pave the way for a permanent end to hostilities.—APP

D-8 chief honours late supreme
leader in Tehran

DNA

TEHRAN: The Secretary-General of the Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8) Sohail Mahmood traveled to Tehran to participate in the official 'Farewell and Tribute Ceremony' organized for foreign dignitaries in honor of the late Supreme Leader. His Eminence Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei During the solemn state function, the Secretary-General joined other international representatives in paying final respects to the revered leader. In a gesture of solidarity, the D-8 chief formally conveyed profound condolences to the bereaved family, as well as to the leadership, Government, and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In an official statement following the ceremony, the Secretary-General offered prayers for the departed leader, stating: "May His Eminence's noble soul rest in eternal peace and may the people of Iran find abiding solace and strength and enduring peace. Ameen!" The attendance underscores the D-8's commitment to its member states during times of national significance, reinforcing the bonds of fraternity and cooperation among the bloc's developing nations.



Briefs

DNA of three suspects 'matches'

DNA

LAHORE: The DNA of three suspects accused in the alleged kidnapping and gang rape of foreign women in Lahore's Defence area has matched forensic evidence, according to the investigation and police sources. Police had sent DNA samples of eight suspects to a forensic laboratory for cross-matching as part of the investigation. Two foreign women – Venezuelan and Dutch – were allegedly subjected to torture and sexual assault in Lahore. The incident came to the limelight after a first information report (FIR) was registered against five suspects, including Muhammad Raza Dar, identified as the grandson of a high-profile political bigwig. Five suspects, including Dar, are currently on physical remand. According to investigation sources, the DNA of three suspects has now been matched with the evidence collected during the probe. Investigation sources said the prime suspect, identified as Nawaz, tops the list of those whose DNA matched. They alleged that Nawaz was the first to sexually assault one of the foreign women and that the other suspects followed after being encouraged by him. Police sources identified the other two suspects whose DNA reportedly matched as Sajid and Sikandar.

China says conducted test missile launch

Beijing says relevant countries were informed before routine Pacific missile launch

DNA

BEIJING: China's navy said it successfully conducted a test missile launch in the Pacific Ocean on Monday, after nations in the region warned that Beijing was planning to test an intercontinental ballistic missile. "At 12:01 pm on July 6, a strategic nuclear submarine of China's People's Liberation Army Navy successfully launched a... strategic missile carrying a training simulation warhead into the relevant high seas of the Pacific Ocean, accurately landing in the designated sea area," spokesperson Wang Xueming said in a statement posted on a navy WeChat account. "This missile test launch is a routine arrangement of China's annual military training, and relevant countries were informed in advance," Wang said. The launch came on the same day that China and Russia were due to begin their annual joint naval exercises off Qingdao, a major military port and seaside resort in China's east. It was not immediately clear if the missile launch was part of those drills. Papua New Guinea's foreign minister and a New Zealand government source told AFP earlier on Monday that China was preparing to test-fire a nuclear-capable missile into the Pacific Ocean. "Yes, China has briefed me. I was personally called by the Chinese ambassador," Papua New Guinea Foreign Minister Justin Tkatchenko said when asked if he had been warned.

Israeli strikes kill 4 in Lebanon

BEIRUT: Lebanese state media said an Israeli strike on a car in the country's south on Monday killed four people, including three women, despite a fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah. Lebanon's official National News Agency (NNA) said a school principal, her mother, a foreign female domestic worker and a male Syrian worker were killed when "an Israeli drone targeted the car" they were traveling in as they returned from inspecting their family home in Nabatieh Al-Fawqa. – APP

AJK unrest: government says subsidies already provided

The Secretary accused the group of inciting civil disobedience and spreading anti-state rhetoric, including calls for rebellion within the armed forces. He revealed that 79 FIRs have been registered against the group's leaders and agitators, who are allegedly receiving support from anti-Pakistan elements abroad

STAFF REPORT

MUZAFFARABAD: The Secretary of Information and the spokesperson for Azad Kashmir Police held a major press conference today, addressing recent unrest and the activities of the proscribed Awami Action Committee. The Secretary of Information stated that the banned group attempted to destroy peace in Kashmir through violent actions, causing an estimated 15 billion in damages over the past month.

He said the movement for public rights had been hijacked by "subversive and pseudo-nationalist elements" who misled citizens into believing that failure of their strike call would result in loss of basic rights and government subsidies. He emphasized that the Azad Kashmir government has already provided significant relief to the public through subsidized flour and electricity. The banned committee, he added, is trying to disrupt upcoming elections – a direct attack on the democratic process. The Secretary accused the group of inciting civil disobedience and spreading

anti-state rhetoric, including calls for rebellion within the armed forces. He revealed that 79 FIRs have been registered against the group's leaders and agitators, who are allegedly receiving support from anti-Pakistan elements abroad. He detailed several violent incidents, including attacks on government offices, police personnel, and public property. In one case, an assistant commissioner's office was attacked and official vehicles were set ablaze; in another, a police officer was martyred in Islamgarh. The spokesperson added that the banned committee used mosques for

political announcements, spread misinformation on social media using old images from Gaza and occupied Kashmir, and coerced traders into closing markets. Citizens and traders have rejected the committee's July 5 strike call, reaffirming their desire for peace and economic stability. The officials urged the public to verify news from credible sources and not fall prey to fabricated narratives. This press conference marks a strong stance by the Azad Kashmir administration against violent and extremist elements threatening regional peace and democratic order.

Over 300 children killed in Sudan in six months

CAIRO: More than 300 children have been killed in the last six months in the war in Sudan, mostly from drone strikes, the UN children's agency said Monday. Sudan has been mired in a war between the Sudanese military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces since April 2023. The war is now concentrated in the Kordofan, Darfur and Blue Nile states, with drone warfare causing 60 percent of casualties, according to UNICEF. The UN, U.S, UK and others have expressed alarm about potential atrocities as the RSF and the military fight for control of the strategic city of el-Obeid, in North Kordofan. The conflict has killed at least 59,000 people, displaced some 13 million and pushed many parts of Sudan into famine. More than 30 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. Drone strikes and shelling have targeted civilian infrastructure including schools, markets, fuel and water stations putting over 500,000 people at risk. Civilians have faced almost siege-like conditions for over a year. "Children are being caught in a relentless cycle of violence, displacement and deprivation," said Sheldon Yett, UNICEF Representative for Sudan. The UN called on parties "to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, allow and facilitate safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access, and take all possible measures to protect children from harm." – APP

Colombo: prison clashes leave 25 dead, 100 injured

The incident unfolded when tensions escalated among inmates, leading to a brutal confrontation that quickly spiraled out of control

DNA

COLOMBO: At least 25 prisoners were killed and nearly 100 others injured during violent clashes between two rival groups inside a Sri Lankan prison on Monday, according to police and hospital sources. The incident unfolded when tensions escalated among inmates, leading to a brutal confrontation that quickly spiraled out of control. Authorities reported that weapons were used during the fighting, and several sections of the prison were damaged in the chaos. Emergency services rushed the injured to nearby hospitals, where medical teams are struggling to

cope with the sudden influx of patients. Police sources confirmed that security forces had to intervene to restore order, deploying additional personnel to prevent further violence. The situation was described as one of the deadliest prison riots in recent years in Sri Lanka. Officials have launched an investigation into the causes of the clashes, with early reports suggesting gang rivalries and disputes over prison control may have triggered the violence. The government has promised swift action to identify those responsible and ensure accountability. This tragedy highlights ongoing challenges in Sri Lanka's prison system, including overcrowding, poor conditions, and the influence of organized crime networks within facilities.



BISHKEK: President Asif Ali Zardari was accorded a warm welcome upon arrival at the Bishkek airport. – DNA

Thousands evacuated from as wildfire burns

ILLE-SUR-TET, France: A wildfire burning out of control in southwestern France has forced the evacuation of 10,000 people from two dozen small towns and villages near the Spanish border and officials said strong winds on Monday would further fan the blaze. The fire has scorched some 4,600 hectares in the foothills of the French Pyrenees, local prefect Pierre Regnault de la Mothe said in a post on X. "This morning conditions are deteriorating again," Interior Minister Laurent Nunez warned on French TV station TF1. "Today the battle resumes." Early summer heatwaves in France and across western Europe in May and June have scorched vast areas of land, making them particularly vulnerable to wildfires this year. The Trevillach blaze is burning in the vicinity of the third

"This morning conditions are deteriorating again," Interior Minister Laurent Nunez warned on French TV station TF1. "Today the battle resumes"

stage of the Tour de France. Local authorities have closed the leg to the public to allow emergency services easy access to the area. Although the race will proceed, the motorcade of team vehicles that follows will now be kept to a minimum. On the Spanish side of the border, the fire ravaged 2,200 hectares – 97 percent of them in the protected natural area of Les Gavarres – but Catalan authorities said late on Saturday that it was stable and would be completely extinguished during the week. Police have arrested an employee of a company contracted by Catalonia's regional government who is suspected of having sparked the wildfire by using an angle grinder at the side of a road. South of Catalonia, in the eastern Castellon province, 500 people were evacuated after a wildfire entered the Sierra de Espadan national park, home to a significant cork oak forest. – APP

Oil slips after Opec+ agrees to raise output targets

Hormuz exports recover as producers gradually restore supplies after regional conflict

DNA

LONDON: Oil prices inched lower on Monday after Opec+ agreed to further increase its output targets from August, while exports from key producers via the Strait of Hormuz are recovering, potentially adding to global supplies. Brent crude futures slid 24 cents, or 0.33%, to \$71.88 a barrel by 0010 GMT after settling 0.45% higher on Friday. US West Texas Intermediate crude was at \$68.58 a barrel, down 11 cents, or 0.16%. There was no settlement for WTI on Friday as US markets were closed ahead of the Independence Day holiday on Saturday. Both contracts were little changed last week, after mostly falling over the past few weeks, as investors kept a close eye on talks between the United States and Iran over the fate of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz while keeping tabs on the recovery in Gulf oil exports. The Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and their allies including Russia agreed on Sunday to further increase output targets by 188,000 barrels per day from August, on top of similar increases for June and July. However, the increase has remained largely on paper be-

cause of the US-Israeli war with Iran, which closed the Strait of Hormuz to tanker traffic for key Opec producers, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq, capping their output. "The number was largely in line with expectation," IG market analyst Tony Sycamore said. "With UAE leaving and when quotas are probably still not being met due to production still ramping up after the conflict - I'm not sure they mean much at the moment." The United Arab Emirates quit Opec as of May 1. Gulf members have begun reviving supplies shut during the Iran war and are increasing exports. Opec oil output in June rose by 3.3 million barrels per day month-on-month to 19.43 million bpd, a Reuters survey found, recovering from its lowest in more than two decades. Gulf oil exports in June jumped more than 3 million barrels from May to exceed 10 million barrels per day, although the volume remained 40% below pre-war levels, data showed. In addition, oil shipments from Russia's western ports hit a record high in June and are expected to maintain that level in July as its refineries have been damaged in drone attacks by Ukraine that have forced Moscow to boost crude exports, industry sources said.

Building collapse kills six in India

NEW DELHI: Six people including five children were killed when a building collapsed in Mumbai, officials said Monday, as monsoon rains pounded India's financial capital, flooding roads and leading to school closures. A dilapidated residential building collapsed Sunday in the megacity's east, trapping residents under the debris, Mumbai Mayor Ritu Tawde said in a statement. The deaths came as heavy rainfall paralyzed parts of the city, with the India Meteorological Department recording more than 200 millimeters (7.8 inches) of rain within 24 hours. Hundreds of millions of people in India rely on the annual monsoon winds to bring vital rains that sustain agriculture and industry. However, climate change is shifting weather patterns and making the world's most populous country hotter. This year's El Nino weather phenomenon has prompted warnings of lower rainfall. The weather office has issued a red alert warning for Mumbai on Monday, forecasting continued heavy rain and gusty winds. With roads inundated, Mumbai authorities declared Monday a holiday for all schools and colleges. Mayor Tawde called on people to stay indoors if possible, warning of falling trees and branches due to strong winds. The downpours in Mumbai follow weeks of sweltering heat, with authorities imposing restrictions on water use last month and cutting supplies to swimming pools and construction sites. The city of over 20 million people is grappling with concerns over pressure on water resources from expanding data-center infrastructure, whose large cooling requirements could exacerbate supply strains. – APP

UN rights council orders urgent inquiry into Sudan's Al-Obeid

GENEVA: The UN Human Rights Council on Monday passed a motion condemning the escalating violence committed by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan's Al-Obeid and setting up an urgent inquiry into abuses there. Britain, which brought the motion alongside 14 other states, has previously warned of the risk of large-scale atrocities as the RSF massed forces around one of Sudan's largest cities, a siege that recalls the takeover of Al-Fashir in North Darfur last year. "These horrors must not be repeated," Britain's Human Rights Ambassador Eleanor Sanders told the body. Others, like South Africa's ambassador Zaeher Laher, backed the move, calling the situation a "red alert as

the rapid security forces are drawing from the very same genocidal playbook they used in Al-Fashir." The UN human rights chief warned on Friday that a "catastrophe" was unfolding around Al-Obeid, and that his office had documented patterns of summary executions, abductions, torture and sexual violence in the surrounding region. In the past, the RSF has denied such abuses – saying the accounts have been manufactured by its enemies and making counter-accusations against them. The motion was adopted by consensus although China disassociated itself from the decision, saying it did not support investigations that target individual countries without their backing. – APP

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