



Islamabad POST

Wednesday, July 08, 2026

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

President Zardari says relations with Kyrgyzstan excellent

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Mushahid says Africa offers huge benefits

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Task force for SME announced, says Aurangzeb

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Briefs

Group Capt. Tariq laid to rest

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Funeral prayers of Group Captain Asim Tariq Shaheed, who embraced Shahadat while courageously intervening to rescue a woman in distress in Islamabad, were offered today. The martyred officer was laid to rest with full military honours in recognition of his exceptional courage, selfless devotion and unwavering sense of duty. Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, NI (M), HJ, Chief of the Air Staff, attended the funeral prayers along with senior officers, airmen and a large gathering of civil community to pay final respects to the valiant officer and honour his supreme sacrifice. Chief of the Air Staff paid rich tribute to Group Captain Asim Tariq Shaheed, stating that the sacrifice epitomizes the finest traditions of the Pakistan Air Force and the Armed Forces of Pakistan. He observed that by laying down his life while protecting an innocent citizen, the martyred officer demonstrated that the men and women of the Pakistan Air Force remain steadfast in their commitment not only to safeguarding the nation's frontiers, but also to protecting the lives, dignity and honour of their fellow countrymen.

India to sell missiles to Indonesia

DNA

JAKARTA: India will supply BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles and Astra air-to-air missiles to Indonesia, an Indian government official said on Tuesday, as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi started a two-day visit to Jakarta. Indian sources earlier told Reuters that the deal, worth around \$630 million, would likely be signed during Modi's visit. Indonesia would be the third country to sign an agreement to buy the missiles, which are manufactured by BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited. The deal would mark a major expansion of India's defence exports and deepen strategic ties with Southeast Asia's largest economy. BrahMos missiles, jointly developed by India and Russia, are among the world's fastest cruise missiles and can be launched from land, sea and air platforms. The Astra beyond-visual-range air-to-air missiles can be integrated on Russian-made Sukhoi fighter jets in the Indonesian Air Force.

UK spends \$254 mn on missile program

DNA

LONDON: Britain said on Tuesday it would strengthen the army's long-range capabilities by spending £190 million (\$254.22 million) on the Precision Strike Missile (PrSM) program, buying a weapon which can neutralize targets up to 500 kilometers away. The country's outgoing Prime Minister Keir Starmer is at the NATO summit in Ankara on Tuesday, where he wants to convince US President Donald Trump and other countries in the western military alliance that UK defense spending is heading in the right direction. The PrSM procurement will strengthen Britain's contribution to NATO deterrence, Britain's Ministry of Defense said in a statement, adding that the first deliveries could be received in 2027.

In Ziarat

Nine cops martyred, 5 abducted

15 terrorists killed in clearance operation following Ziarat attack, says Balochistan govt spokesperson

DNA

QUETTA: Nine police personnel were martyred, and five others were abducted after armed assailants attacked their checkpoint in Balochistan's Ziarat district late on Monday, police said. Ziarat Superintendent of Police (SP) Abdul Qudoos said the attackers stormed the police post in Mangi area of the district, triggering a gun battle in which nine police personnel were martyred. The official confirmed that the attackers took five police personnel with them after the assault. He said the bodies of the martyred officers had been shifted to the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital. Meanwhile, in a clearance operation against terrorists after the attack, security forces and police killed 15 terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Khawarij, Balochistan government spokesperson Shahid Rind said. He said the terrorists had paid a heavy price for attempting to undermine peace in Balochistan, adding that the security forces and police had foiled their malicious designs. "There will be no safe haven for terrorists in Balochistan, and every attack will receive a decisive response," he said, adding that intelligence-based operations against terrorists would continue across the province. He also vowed that the sacrifices of the police officers and personnel martyred in the Ziarat attack would not go in vain.

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Govt committed to root out terror, says PM Shehbaz

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment to eradicating terrorism from the country, as the country's security forces were working tirelessly and the day was not far when the menace would be completely eliminated. Addressing the federal cabinet at the start of its meeting, the prime minister paid tribute to Pakistan Air Force Group Captain Asim Tariq, who was martyred a few days ago in Islamabad while intervening to stop an assault on a woman. He prayed for the elevation of the martyr's ranks and expressed condolences to the bereaved family. The prime minister said the accused had been arrested and would be brought to justice in accordance with the law. He also lauded the sacrifices of the country's security forces in the fight

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FIFA World Cup 2026

Messi magic rescues Argentina in 3-2 thriller against Egypt

SPORTS DESK

NEW YORK: In what will instantly be written into football folklore as perhaps the greatest match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup so far, Argentina staged a breathtaking comeback to defeat a relentless Egypt 3-2. The reigning world champions were pushed to their absolute limits, surviving an Egyptian masterclass before Lionel Messi once again conjured the magic needed to rescue his nation. From the opening whistle, Egypt defied the pundits by completely dominating the pitch. Displaying incredible tactical discipline and explosive counter-attacking football, the Pharaohs stunned the heavy favorites. Argentina's defense looked completely unraveled as Egypt clinically slotted home two goals, taking a shocking, yet entirely deserved, 2-0 lead. For the first hour, the African giants did not just lead; they dictated the tempo, controlled the midfield, and starved the world champions of space. Just as an historic upset seemed written in the stars, Argentina's legendary captain

took matters into his own hands. Spurred on by the looming disaster, Messi began putting on a footballing clinic, executing dazzling tricks, turns, and pinpoint distributions that finally unlocked Egypt's stubborn backline. The Albiceleste pulled one back to bridge the gap, but the defining moment came shortly after. Dropping deep to pick up the ball, Messi danced past two defenders and unleashed a trademark, curling strike into the back of the net. It was his second goal of the match and his 8th overall in World Cup history, sending the stadium into absolute delirium and leveling the scoreline. With the momentum entirely shifted, Argentina pushed forward against an exhausted but valiant Egyptian side. In the dying embers of the match, the South Americans found the dramatic winning goal, sealing a 3-2 victory that felt like a great escape. While Argentina walks away with the crucial three points, Egypt exits the pitch with their heads held immensely high, having pushed the very best in the world to the precipice of defeat. It was a thriller for the ages—a pure, unadulterated advertisement for the beautiful game.

PM says Pak to be made polio free soon

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that the government was taking every possible measure to protect Pakistan's children from the debilitating disease of polio and secure their future. Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to achieving a polio-free future, the prime minister emphasized that polio eradication remained a key national priority and urged all stakeholders to further intensify their collective efforts. He was talking to a delegation of Polio Oversight Board, which called on him at the PM House. The delegation included Mike McGovern, Chair of Rotary's Polio Oversight Board; Chris Elias, President of Global Development at the Gates Foundation;

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Italy arrests two over spying for Russia

APP

ROME: Italy has arrested two people, including a former member of its intelligence services, for allegedly passing classified information to a Russian agent, the Rome prosecutor's office said on Tuesday. Prosecutors said the main suspect, whom they did not name, was a 59-year-old former officer in the Carabinieri military police who had worked as part of the intelligence community. The accusations include the transfer of protected information, as well as unauthorized access to IT and telecoms services. Five other people have been placed under investigation as part of a probe launched in May 2025.

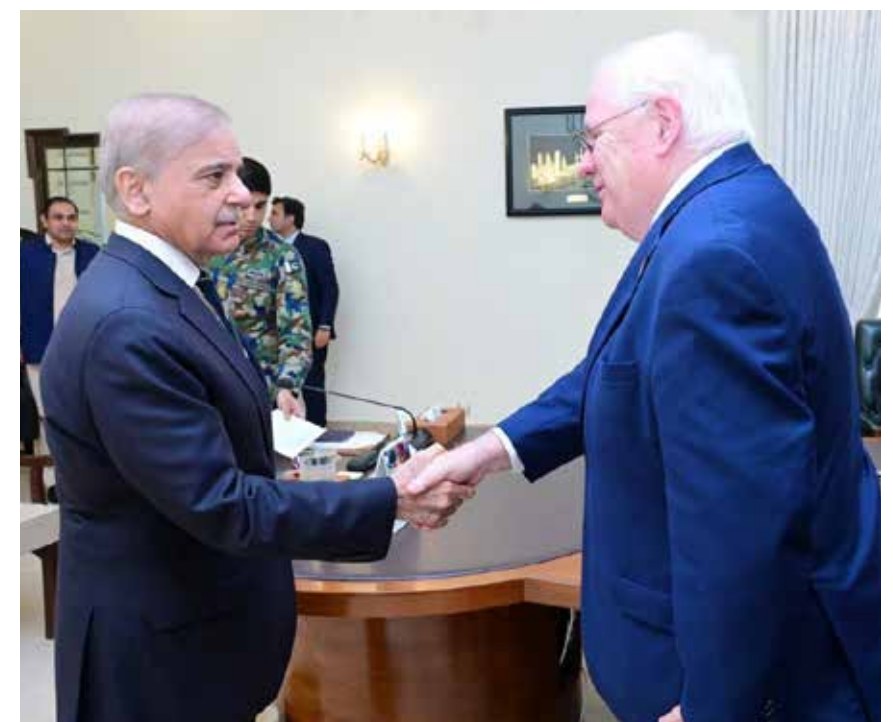
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Macron says France ready to help rebuild Syria

NEWS DESK

DAMASCUS: France is ready to help rebuild Syria's economy and banking sector, French President Emmanuel Macron said on Tuesday as he pressed on with a visit to Damascus after two bombs exploded near a hotel where he had been holding meetings. "We want to continue working on the restructuring of the banking sector," Macron said at a news conference alongside Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa. France was working on helping the Syrian central bank, Macron added.

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ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Polio Oversight Board called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

US to sell F-35s to Türkiye

Trump says NATO disappointed him during war with Iran

In 2020, Washington imposed CAATSA sanctions on Türkiye over its acquisition of Russian S-400 air defence systems

CENTRELINE REPORT

ANKARA: US President Donald Trump said he would lift sanctions off Türkiye and make a decision on a potential sale of F-35s to Ankara as he began a meeting on Tuesday with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan at a Nato summit. "We're going to be taking the sanctions off," Trump told reporters when asked about the measures imposed under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act. In 2020, Washington imposed CAATSA sanctions on Türkiye over its acquisition of Russian S-400 air defence systems. It also removed Ankara from the F-35 fighter jet program, a move Türkiye called unjust and illegal. Trump was expected to throw his support behind the potential sale of F-35s during the visit to Ankara, two sources familiar with the matter said on Tuesday, even as legal and congressional hurdles have yet to be fully resolved. "It's a decision we're going to make," Trump said.

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Gulf national condemn Damascus attack

APP

DUBAI: The Saudi Foreign Ministry has led the condemnation of the bomb attacks that took place in Damascus on Tuesday, injuring a number of civilians and security. The explosions rocked Damascus on Tuesday as France's president Emmanuel Macron met with his Syrian counterpart, Ahmad Al-Sharaa, in a landmark visit. At least 18 people were injured including members of the security forces, Syria's Interior Ministry said. The blasts happened close to the hotel that Macron is staying at during his visit, although at the time of the blast he was reported to have said he was unaware of the any explosion.

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Lifetime passports for KP MPs and their spouses

However, the three laws have remained under wraps since the governor's assent. The Acts and the gazette notifications have yet to be uploaded to the KP Assembly website

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government on Tuesday enacted a law expanding provincial assembly members' powers and immunities, including the issuance of lifetime official passports to them and their spouses. The KP Assembly passed the KP Provincial Assembly (Powers, Immunities and Privileges) Act, 2026, on April 30. On the same day, it also passed two other laws: the KP Province Speaker and Deputy Speaker (Powers, Immunities and Privileges) Act, 2026, and

the KP Province (Salaries and Allowances of Members) Act, 2026. KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi assented to the laws on May 6. However, the three laws have remained under wraps since the governor's assent. The Acts and the gazette notifications have yet to be uploaded to the KP Assembly website. Through the KP Provincial Assembly (Powers, Immunities and Privileges) Act, 2026, the government has repealed the 1988 law on the same subject. Although most provisions of the repealed law have been retained in the new legislation, certain changes

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Daily Islamabad Post & DNA sign MoU with Uzbekistan's DUNYO News Agency

The MoU is expected to further cement media contacts between Uzbekistan and Pakistan, opening new avenues for cooperation in journalism, information sharing, and cultural promotion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant step towards strengthening media cooperation between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, the Daily Islamabad Post and Diplomatic News Agency (DNA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with DUNYO News Agency, the official news agency of Uzbekistan. The ceremony was held in Islamabad where Ambassador of Uzbekistan, Alisher Tukhtaev, and veteran journalist Ansar Mahmood Bhatti, Chief Editor of Daily Islamabad Post and DNA, formally exchanged documents. Both sides pledged to



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Alisher Tukhtaev and Ansar Mahmood Bhatti Editor exchanged documents after MoU signing between Diplomatic News Agency (DNA) / daily Islamabad POST and Uzbek official news agency 'DUNYO'.

promote each other's content under the framework of media collaboration, aiming to enhance mutual understanding and coverage of bilateral relations.

The MoU is expected to further cement media contacts between Uzbekistan and Pakistan, opening new avenues for cooperation in journalism, information sharing, and cultural promotion. Ambassador Tukhtaev highlighted the importance of media in fostering people-to-people ties and expressed confidence that this partnership would bring the two nations closer.

On the Pakistani side, Ansar Mahmood Bhatti emphasized the role of independent media in bridging gaps between countries. He noted that DNA, Pakistan's leading private news agency, and Daily Islamabad Post, the country's first and only diplomatic daily, have always prioritized international collaboration. Bhatti, with over 35 years of experience in journalism and analysis, underscored that this initiative reflects Pakistan's commitment to strengthening diplomatic and cultural bonds with Uzbekistan. The collaboration will allow for the exchange of news, features, and analytical reports, ensuring that audiences in both countries gain deeper insights into each other's political, economic, and cultural landscapes. This partnership marks another milestone in Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations, reinforcing the role of media as a vital tool in diplomacy and international cooperation.

KP okays Rs 126m for terrorism-affected minority families

He said the provincial government is committed to ensuring protection, religious freedom and welfare of minority communities, adding that every deserving affected family would receive assistance in accordance with the law

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has approved a financial assistance package worth Rs126 million for minority families affected by terrorism across the province. The decision was taken during a meeting of the Assessment Committee chaired by KP Minister for Auqaf and Religious Affairs, Sahibzada Muhammad Adnan Qadri, said an official release issued here. The committee reviewed 173 applications and approved financial assistance for 167 eligible individuals and families. The beneficiaries include injured victims, widows, orphaned children, unmarried daughters and persons with dis-

abilities affected by acts of terrorism. According to the statement, all cases were approved after thorough scrutiny at both district and departmental levels. Each application was re-verified to ensure transparency and merit. The committee also decided that women qualifying under more than one category would receive financial assistance under only one category to ensure fair distribution of funds. Seven cases involving permanent disability were also reviewed, while six were approved subject to the submission of the required documents. The committee further approved Rs4 million in financial assistance for the family

affected by the attack on Gurdwara Singh Sabha in Mardan. Financial support will also be provided to the legal heirs of Shaheed Jagan Nath and his wife. The district scrutiny committee has been directed to complete its report within one week. Speaking on the occasion, Sahibzada Muhammad Adnan Qadri said supporting victims of terrorism was a state, national and humanitarian responsibility. He said the provincial government is committed to ensuring protection, religious freedom and welfare of minority communities, adding that every deserving affected family would receive assistance in accordance with the law.—DNA

10 injured as passenger van overturns

PESHAWAR: At least 10 people, including women were injured after a speeding passenger van overturned near Maran Dho on Srikot Road in Haripur district on Tuesday. According to police, the van was travelling from Srikot to Gadwalian when the driver reportedly lost control of the vehicle, causing it to overturn. Rescue teams responded promptly to the scene and shifted all the injured passengers to a nearby hospital. Police have launched an investigation to determine the cause of the accident.—APP

KPK plans crackdown on illegal immigrants

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is set to launch a major operation against illegal Afghan immigrants across the province from July 10, with authorities completing all necessary preparations. The repatriation process of undocumented foreign nationals is also continuing. According to official sources on Tuesday, more than 14,000 Afghan families returned to Afghanistan between July 1 and July 6. During the same period, several houses, shops and business premises in different parts of Peshawar were vacated. Authorities said the crackdown will begin in various parts of Peshawar and the cantonment area, targeting undocumented immigrants and businesses operating in violation of the law. The planned operation is expected to cover key commercial areas, including Namak Mandi, Qissa Khwani Bazaar, Food and Flour Market, Ashraf Road, Khyber Bazaar, University Road, Fruit and Vegetable Market and other major trading centers in the city. The operation will be carried out jointly by the police and law enforcement agencies. Officials have reportedly completed the identification of undocumented Afghan traders and other individuals engaged in illegal business activities, paving the way for legal action during the crackdown.— APP

MoU signed for research, open distance learning

ISLAMABAD: In a significant step towards strengthening international academic collaboration, Alama Iqbal Open University (AIU) and the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) during a virtual ceremony to promote academic cooperation, institutional partnership and research and development collaboration.

The Letter of Intent was signed by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood on behalf of AIU and President Dr. Manuel M. Muhi on behalf of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. The agreement establishes a framework for long-term co-operation in Open, Distance and e-Learning (ODEL), research, faculty and student mobility and knowledge sharing. The ceremony began with an audio-visual presentation introducing the Polytechnic University of the Philippines and highlighting its academic achievements and international initiatives.

This was followed by presentations from Dr. Zahid Majeed, Director, Directorate of Collaboration and Exchange and Prof. Dr. Zafar Iqbal Lillah, Chairman, Department of Distance, Non-Formal and Continuing Education (DN-F&CE) who briefed participants on AIU's academic programmes, research strengths, international collaborations and global outreach initiatives. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Saima Nasir, Director, Directorate of Quality Enhancement, emphasized that international academic partnerships play a pivotal role in improving the quality of higher education and research. She expressed confidence that the collaboration would facilitate the exchange of best practices, enhance institutional capacity and strengthen quality assurance mechanisms at both universities. Addressing the ceremony, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood underscored the importance of translating agreements into meaningful outcomes. "We are not interested in signing agreements merely for the sake of numbers. The real value of any partnership lies in its implementation

and the tangible benefits it delivers to students, faculty and researchers." He stressed that every international partnership should be supported by a clear roadmap, measurable objectives and regular follow-up to ensure timely implementation. He added that academic collaborations should create opportunities for innovation, research excellence, faculty development and enhanced learning experiences.

Under the Letter of Intent, the two universities have agreed to collaborate in a wide range of academic and research activities. These include joint research projects, faculty and student exchange programmes, collaborative conferences, seminars, webinars, workshops, online learning initiatives, curriculum development, scholarly publications and the exchange of educational resources and instructional materials. The partnership also encourages collaborative supervision of research, professional development programmes and the sharing of expertise in Open, Distance and e-Learning.— DNA

Huawei ICT academy to advance digital skills

ISLAMABAD: Huawei Pakistan and the National Institute of Banking and Finance (NIBAF) Tuesday inaugurated the Huawei ICT Academy at NIBAF, reinforcing a shared commitment to developing Pakistan's Financial Sector workforce through internationally recognized ICT education and certification. The inauguration ceremony brought together officials of the State Bank of Pakistan, industry leaders, academia, financial sector representatives, and technology experts to celebrate the launch of the Huawei ICT Academy that will equip professionals with the advanced digital skills required to thrive in the modern economy, said a news release. The Huawei ICT Academy at NIBAF will deliver world-class training in key technology domains including Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cloud Computing, Data Communications, Cybersecurity, Big Data, and other emerging digital technologies. Participants will benefit from Huawei's globally recognized curriculum, hands-on learning, and internationally accredited certification pathways. Speaking at the inauguration, Lubna Farooq Malik, CEO NIBAF, welcomed the collaboration and highlighted its significance for the country's financial and technology sectors. "The establishment of the Huawei ICT Academy represents an important milestone in NIBAF's journey to prepare future-ready professionals. As digital transformation accelerates across every sector, this partnership will provide our learners with access to cutting-edge technologies, globally recognized certifications, and practical skills that are increasingly demanded by employers both within Pakistan and internationally" the CEO NIBAF said. Addressing the ceremony, Huawei's leadership highlighted the critical role of industry-academia collaboration in building a digitally empowered Pakistan. Mr. Ahmed Bilal Masud, CEO AI and Cloud Business, Huawei Pakistan, said: "Digital talent has become the most valuable resource for every nation's future. Huawei believes that investing in people is the foundation for sustainable digital transformation. Through the Huawei ICT Academy at NIBAF, we are creating new opportunities for Pakistani professionals specifically working in the Pakistan Financial Sector to acquire globally competitive skills that will enable them to contribute to Pakistan's digital economy while competing successfully in international markets." — APP

PMYP, PPAF, Arid uni partner to transform peanut economy

RAWALPINDI/ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, the chief guest, on Tuesday launched the Climate Resilient Peanut Value Chain Development for Rural Enterprise and Economic Graduation Project at the signing of a partnership agreement between the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) and Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS AAUR). Funded by PPAF and to be implemented with the technical assistance of PMAS AAUR. The ceremony was attended by PPAF Chief Executive Officer Nadir Gul Barech as guest of honour and PMAS AAUR Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Qamar uz Zaman, the project's Patron in Chief. The three year project will initially be launched in the peanut growing areas of Gujjar Khan in Rawalpindi district and Fateh Jang in Attock district to promote climate smart agriculture, improve productivity, strengthen value addition, create rural enterprises, generate employ-

ment and increase farmers' incomes through research, innovation, entrepreneurship and market linkages. Addressing the ceremony, Rana Mashhood said the government is investing heavily in education, technical skills, innovation and agricultural research to build a knowledge based economy and prepare young Pakistanis for emerging global opportunities. He said universities must move beyond conventional degree programmes by integrating technical qualifications, professional certifications and industry relevant skills so graduates remain competitive in rapidly changing international markets. Highlighting reforms in technical education, Chief PMYP said the government, in collaboration with NAVTTC and leading Chinese institutions, had introduced 21 modern technical trades aligned with international industry requirements. Nearly 50 Pakistani universities are also being connected with Chinese universities to strengthen research collaboration, technology transfer and academic

partnerships. Rana Mashhood said that government planned to train up to 10,000 youth in advanced agricultural technologies. He added that a leading Chinese agricultural university would collaborate with PMAS AAUR and other Pakistani institutions to establish state of the art research facilities and promote joint scientific research. Referring to the success of Pakistan's olive industry, Mr. Khan said similar interventions in the peanut sector could significantly improve farmers' incomes, promote agribusiness and expand export potential. He said new employment opportunities are emerging for Pakistanis in Japan, South Korea, Europe, the United States, Canada, the United Arab Emirates and other international markets. Speaking on the occasion, PPAF Chief Executive Officer Nadir Gul Barech described the agreement as the beginning of a strategic partnership that brings together research, innovation, entrepreneurship and community development to transform Pakistan's rural economy.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Stall holders waiting for customers after clean their burnt stall without help any authorities at H-9 Weekly Bazaar in the Federal Capital.

NDMA warns of landslide risk on Skardu Rondo road

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Tuesday issued a landslide alert for the JSR Skardu Rondo Road, warning that heavy rainfall and slope erosion could trigger landslides between July 7 and 9 in Skardu and adjoining areas, prompting authorities to activate preparedness measures and urge travellers to avoid unnecessary movement. The alert was issued by the NDMA's National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC), which said the evolving weather situation is consistent with its earlier forecast. The NEOC added that it continues round the clock monitoring, risk assessment and timely dissemination of information to all relevant authorities to minimise the impact of weather related hazards. According to the advisory, landslides are likely in several vulnerable locations, including Burumdo Nala, Chamcho, Malupa, and the Dambudas, Tormik and Haramosh section of the Skardu Rondo Road over the next two days. The NEOC warned that soil erosion, rockfalls and debris movement in local streams could further increase the risk to commuters, making travel on mountainous routes particularly hazardous.—APP

Kundi urges PESCO to reduce prolonged load shedding

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday urged the Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) to take effective measures to reduce prolonged electricity load shedding in the province, saying the extended outages were causing severe hardship to the public. He expressed these views during a meeting with a high level Wapda delegation led by PESCO Chief Akhtar Hameed Khan at the Governor House.

During the meeting, the delegation briefed the Governor on steps being taken to address public concerns over excessive load shed-

ding in Dera Ismail Khan. The Wapda officials informed the Governor that the commissioning of Dera Grid Station-II would help resolve voltage fluctuations and frequent tripping issues in the area. They said progress on a transmission line near Yarik had been delayed due to a court stay order, adding that a project worth around Rs6 billion remained stalled because of litigation involving seven transmission towers. The officials further informed the meeting that several feeders of the Dera Ismail Khan grid station were overloaded and that the inauguration of

a new grid station would significantly improve the electricity supply situation. The meeting also discussed the inauguration of the Band Korai Grid Station in DI Khan. Matters relating to overcoming the shortage of staff in PESCO, installation and upgradation of transformers in various areas, and replacement of worn-out electricity wires also came under discussion. Governor Kundi stressed the need for expediting these projects and ensuring improved electricity services to provide relief to consumers across the province.—APP

Interior minister condemns deadly Ziarat terror attack

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said the fallen officers had made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of peace and national security, adding that such martyrs were "the pride of the nation" whose unparalleled sacrifices could never be forgotten. He stressed that their courage and commitment would remain a lasting source of inspiration. The interior minister also commended the police for their swift and determined response, praising security personnel for eliminating 15 Indian-sponsored terrorists during the operation. He said the officers had foiled the terrorists' nefarious designs by laying down their

lives in the line of duty, preventing a greater threat to public safety. Naqvi lauded the police force for bringing the attackers to what he described as their "deserved and exemplary end," saying the successful operation reflected the professionalism and resolve of Pakistan's law enforcement agencies. Reaffirming the state's commitment to combating terrorism, the interior minister said the nation and its security forces remained united and determined to thwart every conspiracy by Indian-sponsored terrorists aimed at sabotaging peace.—APP

حکومت پاکستان

دفتر برائے اسٹینڈرڈس اینڈ کنٹرول آف پولیس (ایچکس)، اسلام آباد

سٹیٹڈ رائٹس نمبر 03 برائے مالی سال 2026-27 تا 2027-28

(نفری، مال بردار گازیوں و کنسٹینرز، فورک لفٹرز، کرین وغیرہ کی کرائے پر فراہمی)

- 1- اسلام آباد پولیس کو مالی سال 2026-27 تا 2027-28 میں مختلف اوقات میں پیش ڈیوٹی کے دوران لا اینڈ آڈیٹ حالات کو منظم کرنے اور نظری دسمان کی منتقلی کے لئے مختلف اقسام کی پبلک سروس مال بردار گاڑیوں، کنسٹینرز، کرین، فورک لیفٹرز وغیرہ کی کرائے پر فراہمی مطلوب ہے۔
- 2- اسلام آباد کونسل برائے میٹری پولیس، EPADS اور ڈن 2.0 پر دستیاب بڈجٹ دستاویزات میں درج دسمان کی خریداری کے لیے اہل بولی دینندگان سے تعلق بنڈ ایکٹراکٹ پولیس مطلوب ہیں۔
- 3- تمام دلچسپ رکھے والی فرمزوں، کمپنیوں، جوورس اور فعال این ٹی این (NTN) اور نیٹنگس ریزرویشن نمبر (STRN) رکھنے والی، کو دعوت دی جاتی ہے کہ وہ پبلک پروویڈرمنٹ ریگولٹری اتھارٹی (PPRA) کی ای-پاک ایکویٹی اینڈ سپروائزر (E-PADS) کے ذریعے بولی کے عمل میں حصہ لیں۔
- 4- ٹینڈرز صرف رجسٹرڈ ادارے اور فرمز حصہ لے سکتے ہیں جو نیٹنگس اور ایم ٹی ایف کا قاعدہ ادا کرتے ہوں اور FBR کے Active Tax Payers List میں شامل ہوں۔ ٹینڈرز کے ساتھ فرمی ریزرویشن، جرنل نیٹنگس ریزرویشن کی تصدیق، جرنل نیٹنگس نمبری تصدیق، کاپی اور فرمز کے بک اکاؤنٹ کی تفصیل بھی منسلک ہونی چاہیے۔ وینڈر نمبر AGPR اسلام آباد میں ہونے کی صورت میں واضح طور پر درج کریں۔
- 5- اس خریداری کے لیے ایک مرتبہ، دو لفافہ (Single Stage Two Envelope) کا طریق کار اختیار کیا جائے گا، جس میں معیار اور قیمت کی بنیاد پر منتخب (Quality and Cost Based Selection - QCBS) کیا جائے گا۔ یہ عمل پبلک پروویڈرمنٹ ریگولٹری، 2004 اور پبلک پروویڈرمنٹ ریگولٹری اتھارٹی (PPRA) کی جانب سے وقتاً فوقتاً جاری کردہ قواعد و ضوابط اور رہنما اصولوں اور ہدایات کے مطابق ہوگا۔
- 6- ہر بولی کے ساتھ بڈجٹ دستاویزات کے (Bid Security) ضابطہ بولی تکٹیشن میں درج متروکہ مالیت کے مطابق ضابطہ بولی (Bid Security) مع کرنا لازمی ہوگی، جو چھ آڈر، کالڈ پازٹرس (CDR)، ایک گائیڈ لائن ڈرافٹ کی صورت میں قابل قبول ہوگی۔ جہاں بڈجٹ دستاویزات میں اجازت دی گئی ہو وہاں متروکہ طریقہ کار کے مطابق Bid Securing Declaration بھی جمع کرانی جاسکتی ہے۔
- 7- ایکٹراکٹ بڈجٹ دستاویزات، جن میں تفصیلی شرائط و ضوابط، تکنیکی خصوصیات، ضروری تقاضے اور دیگر معلومات شامل ہیں، ای-پاک ایکویٹی اینڈ سپروائزر (EPADS) پر درج ذیل لنک پر دستیاب ہیں۔ <https://epads.gov.pk/opportunities/federal/procurements/55043>
- 8- تمام دلچسپ رکھے والے بولی دینندگان کے لیے EPADS اور ڈن 2.0 پر رجسٹریشن لازمی ہے تاکہ وہ بڈجٹ کے عمل میں حصہ لیں۔
- 9- بڈجٹ دستاویزات میں دی گئی ہدایات کے مطابق تیار کردہ ایکٹراکٹ پولیس صرف EPADS اور ڈن 2.0 کے ذریعے 23 جولائی 2026 بروز جمعرات صبح 11:00 بجے تک جمع کرانی جائیں۔ پولیس اور ڈن 11:30 بجے EPADS کے ذریعے کھولی جائیں گی۔ دستی (Manual) طور پر جمع کرانی گئی ہو یا اس کی صورت قبول نہیں کی جائے گی۔
- 10- محکمہ ضرورت کو پیش نظر رکھتے ہوئے طلبہ یا شیڈ کی تعداد کو زیادہ یا کم کر سکتا ہے۔

اسلام آباد کونسل برائے میٹری پولیس (ICT) پولیس، اسٹینڈرڈس اینڈ کنٹرول آف پولیس

ایچکس، اسلام آباد (یکٹری، پیچ کیٹیگوری، رابطہ نمبر: 051-9258371 (120&124))

PID/216/26

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/Argentina Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium National Day

July 20/TRNC Independence Day

July 23/Egypt National Day

July 26/Cuba National Day

July 26/Liberia National Day

July 30/Morocco National Day

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

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

Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police...9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114

PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange 9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi...5555489

CAA.....9281092

Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....5611116

Cantt Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank Islamabad.....0321-5744480

ISSI-PAIDAR commemorates Rwanda's liberation day

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood said that Rwanda's Liberation Day commemorates the country's remarkable journey from the tragedy of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi to peace, reconciliation, and development

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with Pakistan Africa Institute for Development and Research (PAIDAR), organized an event to commemorate Rwanda's Liberation Day. The proceedings began with the national anthems of Pakistan and Rwanda. Speakers included Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman, BoG, ISSI; High Commissioner Harerimana Fatou, High Commissioner of Rwanda to Pakistan; High Commissioner Naeem Khan, High Commissioner of Pakistan to Rwanda; and Dr. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA. The Chief Guest on the occasion was Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed; President PAIDAR, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood said that Rwanda's Liberation Day commemorates the country's remarkable journey from the tragedy of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi to peace, reconciliation, and development. He noted that Pakistan values its growing partnership with Rwanda, based on mutual respect and shared aspirations. He recalled the longstanding historical linkages between the two countries, particularly Pakistan's contribution to UN peacekeeping and post-genocide recovery efforts. He paid tribute to former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Shaharyar M. Khan, who served as the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Rwanda during a critical period in the country's recovery. He stressed that this reflected Pakistan's enduring commitment to peace, stability, and reconciliation in Rwanda. He also observed that the establishment of diplomatic missions in Kigali and Islamabad has opened a new chapter in bilateral relations, creating new opportunities for cooperation in trade, education, technology, and people-to-people exchanges.



Dr. Amina Khan said that Rwanda's Liberation Day symbolizes the country's remarkable transformation from the tragedy of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi to peace, reconciliation, and sustainable development. She noted that CAMEA is committed to promoting Pakistan's engagement with Africa by strengthening institutional linkages and fostering dialogue with African partners. She highlighted that the establishment of diplomatic missions in Kigali and Islamabad has given new momentum to Pakistan-Rwanda relations and appreciated the efforts of Ambassador Muhammad Naeem Khan and High Commissioner Harerimana Fatou in further strengthening bilateral cooperation. She expressed confidence that the friendship between Pakistan and Rwanda would continue to deepen in the years ahead. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed praised Rwanda's remarkable journey of resilience, reconciliation, and socio-economic transformation, describing the country as a model of stability, modernization, and digital progress. He also underscored Pakistan's longstanding support for

African liberation movements and emphasized the growing momentum in Pakistan-Rwanda relations, particularly following recent high-level diplomatic exchanges. He further reaffirmed the shared commitment of both countries to strengthening bilateral cooperation, enhancing people-to-people ties, and promoting Afro-Asian solidarity in an evolving global landscape. High Commissioner Harerimana Fatou paid tribute to the soldiers of the Rwanda Patriotic Army who sacrificed their lives during the country's struggle, saying that their courage and selfless sacrifices laid the foundation for Rwanda's remarkable transformation into one of Africa's cleanest, greenest, and most innovative nations. She highlighted Rwanda's achievements in artificial intelligence, digital innovation, healthcare, and peaceful nuclear energy, as well as its emergence as a leading conference destination. Reaffirming the strong and friendly ties between Pakistan and Rwanda, she emphasized the importance of expanding bilateral and multilateral coop-

eration, particularly in climate change and green energy, and appreciated the contributions of the Pakistani diaspora in Rwanda and the Friends of Rwanda in Pakistan in further strengthening relations between the two countries. High Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Khan said that Rwanda's Liberation Day marks a historic milestone and reflects the country's extraordinary achievements in peace, development, and nation-building. He praised Rwanda's remarkable progress in digitalization, governance, public service delivery, and transparent development, noting that its success offers valuable lessons for other countries. Highlighting the growing momentum in Pakistan-Rwanda relations, he referred to the exchange of high-level visits, including business delegations, which has contributed to increased bilateral trade. He also encouraged Pakistani businesses and tourists to explore the opportunities available in Rwanda and emphasized the need for both countries to fully capitalize on the expanding avenues of cooperation.

ICCI hosts interactive session with CTO

ISLAMABAD : Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Islamabad, Ms. Kainat Azhar Khan, visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Tuesday and held a productive and interactive session with members of the business community to discuss traffic-related challenges and explore practical solutions for improved traffic management in the federal capital. Addressing the gathering, Ms. Kainat Azhar Khan emphasized that the Islamabad Traffic Police and the business community are partners in the shared objective of making Islamabad a model city in terms of traffic discipline, mobility and public convenience. "We are one family and together we will address and resolve all issues pertaining to traffic management through mutual coordination and understanding," she remarked. The CTO assured the business community that her office maintains an open-door policy and remains readily accessible to traders and citizens alike. She stated that she is personally available to receive feedback and facilitate timely resolution of traffic-related

concerns. She further announced that she would undertake visits to major commercial centers across Islamabad and engage directly with the office bearers of the respective Traders Welfare Associations to identify challenges on the ground and devise workable solutions in consultation with stakeholders. Welcoming the distinguished guest, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sardar Tahir Mehmood, highlighted a range of traffic and parking issues affecting both the business community and residents of the capital. He stressed the need for stronger coordination between the traffic authorities and trade bodies to improve traffic flow, reduce congestion and promote a culture of discipline and compliance. He reaffirmed ICCI's commitment to working closely with the Islamabad Traffic Police to make the capital an exemplary city in terms of traffic management and civic order. Senior Vice President ICCI, Tahir Ayub, particularly drew attention to the traffic-related challenges being faced by traders operating in the Fruit and Vegetable Market and

called for targeted interventions to facilitate smooth transportation and commercial activity in the area. During the interactive session, ICCI Executive Members, Presidents and senior representatives of various Traders Welfare Associations apprised the CTO of traffic bottlenecks, parking constraints, encroachments and sector-specific mobility issues confronting businesses in different commercial zones of Islamabad. The participants appreciated the proactive approach adopted by the Islamabad Traffic Police and expressed confidence that sustained engagement would yield positive results. In his vote of thanks, Vice President ICCI, Muhammad Irfan Chaudhry, expressed gratitude to the Chief Traffic Officer for her visit and for engaging directly with the business community. He appreciated her commitment to maintaining close liaison with traders and hoped that her proposed visits to commercial centers would pave the way for effective and lasting solutions to longstanding traffic issues.—DNA

SCP acknowledges UN partnership

ISLAMABAD: The Chief Justice of Pakistan, Tuesday received Mr. Mohammed Yahya, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan, on his farewell call at the Supreme Court of Pakistan, marking the successful conclusion of his tenure. The meeting underscored the enduring partnership between the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the United Nations in advancing judicial reform, strengthening the rule of law, and promoting equitable access to justice. The Chief Justice of Pakistan appreciated Mr. Yahya's constructive engagement with Pakistan's justice sector and acknowledged the United Nations' continued support for initiatives aimed at strengthening access to justice, institutional capacity, and the rule of law. He commended the spirit of partnership that has characterized the collaboration between the United Nations and the judiciary during Mr. Yahya's tenure. The meeting provided an opportunity to reflect on the progress achieved through joint engagement in areas of mutual interest, including judicial reform, gender-responsive justice, legal empowerment, and institutional capacity building. Both sides reaffirmed the importance of sustained cooperation in advancing a people-centred, inclusive, and responsive justice system aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.—APP

OIC-COMSTECH trains 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 2025, training 5,000 scientists and researchers and offering 759 scholarships and fellowships, according to its recent annual report for the year 2025. The Islamabad-based international 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 from OIC member states. 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 in 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. Several programmes were also undertaken in agriculture, food security, biotechnology, engineering, humanitarian assistance, energy and science diplomacy. Moreover, according to the report, COMSTECH conducted free medical and relief camps in flood-affected areas of Punjab during 2025, providing medicines, medical assistance and food rations to around 5,000 affected people in southern Punjab and Chinioi district. In another major health initiative, COMSTECH, in partnership with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), LRBT and Al-Shifa Trust, launched an eye surgery campaign across Africa in collaboration with the OIC General Secretariat. The programme provides free cataract and retinal surgeries while also building the capacity of local healthcare professionals through advanced training.—DNA

Banking Mohtasib Pakistan calls on CJP

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to promoting efficient, transparent, and citizen-centric mechanisms for the resolution of banking disputes and to strengthening institutional collaboration in support of broader justice sector reforms

ISLAMABAD: Sirajuddin Aziz, Banking Mohtasib Pakistan, called on the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi, here at the Supreme Court of Pakistan on Tuesday. During the meeting, matters relating to the strengthening of banking dispute resolution and ongoing reform initiatives in the banking sector were discussed. The interaction followed the recent high-level consultation convened by the Chief Justice, in his capacity as Chairman of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP), to identify legislative and procedural reforms aimed at improving the efficiency of banking litigation and promoting Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms. During the meeting, the Banking Mohtasib apprised the Chief Justice of the institution's disposal performance, stating that 36,280 complaints were disposed of during 2025 despite 13,793 complaints having been brought forward and 35,130 fresh complaints received during the year, resulting in an eight percent reduction in overall pendency. The institution also provided relief amounting to Rs. 1.87 billion to banking customers, with the entire complaint redressal mechanism remaining free of charge for complainants. The Chief Justice applauded the efforts of the Banking Mohtasib in swiftly disposing of a substantial number of cases and providing significant relief to banking customers. Mr. Sirajuddin Aziz reaffirmed the Banking Mohtasib's commitment to supporting measures aimed at improving banking dispute resolution through enhanced institutional cooperation and exchange of best practices. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to promoting efficient, transparent, and citizen-centric mechanisms for the resolution of banking disputes and to strengthening institutional collaboration in support of broader justice sector reforms.—APP

Commemorative postage stamp to honour Sadequain

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Post today successfully unveiled The World's Longest Commemorative Postage Stamp and a special Souvenir Sheet in honour of the legendary artist, calligrapher, poet, and national icon Sadequain during a prestigious inauguration ceremony held at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), Islamabad. The ceremony brought together distinguished government officials, renowned artists, philatelists, cultural personalities, members of the media, and art enthusiasts to celebrate the remarkable legacy of one of Pakistan's greatest creative visionaries. This historic philatelic issue pays tribute to Sadequain's extraordinary contributions to art, calligraphy, literature, and Pakistan's cultural heritage. Recognized internationally for his monumental murals, revolutionary calligraphic style, and enduring artistic vision, Sadequain continues to inspire generations of artists and admirers around the world. The highlight of the event was the formal unveiling of The World's Longest Commemorative Postage Stamp, an unprecedented philatelic achievement that represents a unique fusion of art, culture, and innovation. The issue marks a significant milestone in Pakistan Post's philatelic history and reflects the organization's continued commitment to preserving and promoting the nation's cultural heritage. The concept and design of this remarkable commemorative issue were developed by Abu Obaidah Ayyaz, Pakistan's youngest postage stamp designer, in collaboration with Hasnain Mahmud, whose shared vision transformed the project into a landmark philatelic tribute worthy of Sadequain's unparalleled artistic legacy. Alongside the commemorative stamp and souvenir sheet, Pakistan Post also released a specially designed First Day Cover (FDC), an informative Philatelic Leaflet, and dedicated commemorative cancellation marks (cancellers), providing collectors with a complete and memorable philatelic package. Addressing the gathering, officials of Pakistan Post emphasized the importance of commemorating national icons whose contributions have shaped Pakistan's artistic and intellectual identity. The issuance reaffirms Pakistan Post's dedication to celebrating individuals whose work has earned both national and international recognition.—DNA

RCCI, RCB discuss institutional coop

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) President Usman Shaukat held a meeting with Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) Chief, Aamer Rashid to discuss matters of mutual interest and strengthen institutional cooperation for the local business community. During the meeting, both sides exchanged detailed views on various issues affecting the business community and RCCI members. The discussion particularly focused on improving inter-institutional coordination, facilitating local businesses, and addressing pressing civic and administrative concerns. The meeting reaffirmed the shared commitment of the RCCI and the Cantonment Board to work closely for the welfare of traders, promote a business-friendly environment, and build stronger public-private collaboration to achieve sustainable economic growth in the region.—APP

IRSA releases 287,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 287,900 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 385,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1484.20 feet, which was 82.20 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 236,800 cusecs and 157,700 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1166.85 feet, which was 116.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 31,600 cusecs and 13,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 225,500, 176,500, 111,400, and 51,800 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 49,900 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 37,500 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Dr. Tariq Fazal condemns terrorist attack

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Tuesday strongly condemned the terrorist attack on police personnel in Ziarat, describing the incident as deeply tragic and reprehensible. In a statement posted on X, the minister paid tribute to the police personnel who embraced martyrdom while performing their duty. "Our brave sons of the soil laid down their lives in the line of duty. The martyrs have set a remarkable example of courage, sacrifice, and dedication," he said. Dr. Tariq said the sacrifices of the martyrs would never go in vain, adding that the nation would always remember the courage.—APP

Briefs

Nation stands united

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Information, Barrister Danyal Chaudhry on Monday said the entire nation stands united with the armed forces in the fight against terrorism and in safeguarding the country's security. Speaking to a private television channel, he alleged that India was using water as a weapon against Pakistan and warned that Islamabad was fully capable of responding to any violation of the water treaty. He said Pakistan will use all international and legal forums to expose Indian attempts to block the country's water supply. Barrister Danyal Chaudhry said all political parties and the nation were standing shoulder to shoulder with the armed forces to counter any misadventure by the rival country. Responding to a question, he emphasized that continuous policies are essential to address the country's challenges.—APP

President, PM pay tribute to Havaldar Lalak Jan

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday paid rich tribute to Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, on his martyrdom anniversary, honoring his great sacrifice and bravery during the Kargil war of 1999. In their separately issued statements, the president and the prime minister said that Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed's determination and patriotism served as a guiding light for future generations, as well as a source of pride for the entire nation. President Zardari said that the sacrifices of the martyrs were guarantee for a secure, strong, and dignified future for Pakistan. He said that Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed set a bright example of unparalleled courage, steadfastness, and devotion to duty for the defense of the homeland. The president said that the sacrifices of the martyrs formed a strong foundation for Pakistan's security, sovereignty, and national dignity, which the nation would always remember with reverence and pride. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said that Havaldar Lalak Jan's courage, bravery, and great sacrifice for the defense of the homeland during the Kargil war were a source of pride for the entire nation. He said that remaining steadfast against the enemy despite being severely injured was proof of his unparalleled spirit of patriotism. The prime minister reaffirmed that the nation would never forget the sacrifices of this great son of the soil and all other martyrs of Pakistan.—APP

ANF seizes narcotics worth over Rs 63.2m

RAWALPINDI: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) conducted four operations in different parts of the country and recovered 513.7 kilograms (kgs) of narcotics worth more than Rs 63.2 million and arrested one suspect, an ANF spokesman said on Tuesday. During an international drug interdiction operation, officials recovered 2.7 kg of heroin concealed in a shopping bag packed inside a parcel destined for the United Kingdom at a courier office in Azizabad, Karachi. In a domestic operation near GT Road in Peshawar, ANF personnel seized 1.2 kg of hashish from a suspect, who was arrested on the spot. In another operation near Murtaza Chowrangi in Karachi, 34.8 kg of hashish was recovered from bushes. Separately, ANF recovered 475 kg of opium, 400 kg of suspected material, one light machine gun (LMG) with 110 rounds and two sub-machine guns (SMGs) with 60 rounds from a compound near Naukandi in Chagai district. Cases have been registered under the Control of Narcotic Substances Act, 1997, and further investigations are underway.—APP

IRS launches landmark report on TTP's cognitive warfare

The session was moderated by Dr. Waqas Ahmad Waheed and concluded with an interactive question-and-answer session attended by diplomats, senior government officials, law-enforcement officers, academics, researchers, members of the media, and students

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, launched its report, Cognitive Warfare and Insurgent Legitimacy: TTP's Strategic Communication Post-Taliban Takeover and Pakistan's Counter-Narrative Imperative. The study is a joint effort of the Centre for Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Studies (CCTVES) and the Institute's Strategic Discourse and Cyber Security Programmes.

The report comes at a critical time, with Pakistan ranking first in the Global Terrorism Index 2026 after recording 1,139 terrorism-related deaths across 1,045 incidents in 2025. It notes a 24 per cent increase in TTP attacks, making the group the world's third deadliest terrorist organisation. With overall violence rising by approximately 258 per cent since the Taliban's return to Kabul in August 2021, the report argues that Pakistan urgently requires a proactive, well-resourced, and evidence-based national counter-narrative to complement its counter-terrorism efforts. In his opening remarks, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President of IRS, described the report as both timely and necessary after two decades of counter terrorism operations. While acknowledging Pakistan's significant operational successes, he observed that the terrorist threat has evolved since 2021, with the TTP benefiting from renewed sanctuary in Afghanistan as well as India's Offensive Defence Doctrine whereby New Delhi has incorporated terrorism into its foreign policy toolkit. He emphasised the need for a proactive, institutionally coordinated



counter-narrative rooted in the lived realities of local communities, stressing that the war of ideas must be accorded the same priority as the fight on the ground. Jawad Ahmad Dogar, National Coordinator of the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), emphasised that an effective counter-narrative policy must be grounded in evidence. He noted that sustainable progress requires addressing the root causes of terrorism and strengthening governance and state institutions. He further underscored the need to bridge the gap between the state and society, arguing that only then can a credible national narrative take root and effectively counter violent extremism. Appreciating the report for providing timely policy direction, he encouraged closer collabora-

tion between researchers, academics, and policymakers to translate research into effective implementation. Senior Journalist and well-known media anchor Arifa Noor contrasted TTP's simple, relatable messaging with the state's often technical, bureaucratic language. She argued that an effective national narrative must enjoy public legitimacy and emerge through a genuine partnership between the state and society. Addressing local grievances, she observed, remains indispensable, as kinetic measures alone cannot provide a lasting solution. Major General (R) Tariq Rashid Khan, H.I. (M) described the study as timely, insightful, and highly relevant. He observed that military power alone has never been sufficient to defeat an ideology. In conflicts

where legitimacy is contested, and behaviour is the principal target, narratives become the centre of gravity. He noted that while kinetic operations had previously achieved considerable success through capability and resolve, the post-2021 environment requires a broader strategy in which the state simultaneously denies militants operational space, reduces the socio-economic drivers of violence, strengthens public confidence, and ensures close coordination among all stakeholders. The session was moderated by Dr. Waqas Ahmad Waheed and concluded with an interactive question-and-answer session attended by diplomats, senior government officials, law-enforcement officers, academics, researchers, members of the media, and students.

IT minister reaffirms Pak commitment to global digital coop

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to international cooperation on digital transformation. On the sidelines of Geneva Digital Week and the United Nations Global Dialogue on AI Governance, the minister participated in a series of ministerial-level engagements with senior government officials and United Nations leaders. According to a news release received here on Tuesday, the minister held bilateral meetings with Amandeep Singh Gill, UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Envoy for Digital and Emerging Technologies; Guy Ryder, UN Under-Secretary-General for Policy; Abdullah Alswaha, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Communications and Information Technology; Zhaslan Madiyev, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development of Kazakhstan; Mahmoud Badawi, Egypt's Deputy Minister for Digital Transformation; Dr. Hans Wijayasuryia, Chief Adviser to the President of Sri Lanka on the Digital Economy; and Krzysztof Gawkowski, Deputy Prime Minister of Poland. The meetings focused on expanding cooperation in areas of mutual interest, including artificial intelligence (AI), digital governance, digital public infrastructure, AI sovereignty, cybersecurity, innovation ecosystems, and cross-border technology partnerships. The discussions also underscored the importance of collaborative policymaking to ensure that digital technologies contribute to inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. Pakistan continues to actively engage with international partners to exchange best practices, strengthen institutional collaboration, and develop forward-looking policies aimed at positioning the country as a responsible and competitive player in the global digital economy. The minister also expressed its appreciation to the United Nations for Digital and Emerging Technologies for convening an exceptional edition of Geneva Digital Week. The event provided a valuable platform for ministers, policymakers, representatives of multilateral institutions, and technology leaders to advance global dialogue and forge partnerships that will help shape the future of digital transformation.—DNA

PM directs SMEDA to facilitate credit

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) to facilitate the provision of loans to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to boost the country's exports. The prime minister, chairing a high-level review meeting to discuss matters related to SMEDA, emphasized the need to enhance the capacity of SMEs and instructed that special facilitation, awareness, and access to easy credit should be provided to farmers for the processing of agricultural commodities and fruits. He called for encouraging the commercial banks to design specialized financial products tailored specifically for the credit needs of SMEs, directing comprehensive assistance for SMEs during the preparation of feasibility studies and other stages. Prime Minister Shehbaz directed the relevant authorities to formulate a comprehensive strategy in collaboration with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and com-

mercial banks to streamline and improve SMEs' access to credit. Calling for immediate steps to eliminate hurdles in the growth of SMEs, the prime minister stressed that SMEDA must actively support young entrepreneurs, including women, in establishing their own small and medium businesses. Earlier, the meeting was briefed on various initiatives taken by SMEDA to facilitate the sector. It was told that 700 SMEs participated in 16 international events this year to enhance their access to global markets and boost exports. Besides, business and financial management training was also provided to SMEs across 35 cities. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister Dr. Musadik Malik, Special Assistant to the PM Haroon Akhtar, and senior officials. The chief secretaries of all four provinces, along with experts, joined the meeting via video link.—APP

FGEHA issues 24-hour ultimatum for removal of encroachments in Sectors G-13, G-14

“After the expiry of the stipulated time, no individual will be served a personalised notice

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a stern move against rampant illegal constructions, the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) on Tuesday issued a 24-hour ultimatum to residents of Sectors G-13 and G-14, directing them to voluntarily remove all encroachments on government land or face swift demolition without any further notice. The urgent public notice, released by the FGEHA's Directorate of Enforcement and Vigilance, warns that all illegal sheds, fences, boundary walls, and constructions that exceed the originally approved property limits or sit on

state land must be cleared within the deadline. The announcement carries an unambiguous caveat: failure to comply will trigger strict legal action and large-scale demolition operations under the relevant laws. All residents are directed to voluntarily remove all illegal constructions, sheds, and fences erected on government land or exceeding approved property limits within 24 hours. Failure to comply within the specified timeframe will result in strict legal action and demolition operations under relevant laws and regulations without further notice,” the notification reads. The targeted sectors, developed by FGEHA for federal government employees,

have long been plagued by encroachments. Over the years, residents and commercial entities have extended porches, built shops on greenbelts, raised boundary walls into service lanes, and constructed additional rooms on public utility spaces. Despite repeated warnings, temporary relief measures, and multiple previous deadlines, the violations persisted, effectively shrinking public spaces and choking civic infrastructure. According to sources within the Enforcement Directorate, a fresh, detailed survey of both sectors was conducted last month, identifying hundreds of fresh and long-standing violations. The survey report categorised encroach-

ments into minor boundary extensions, permanent structures on parkland, and commercial kiosks set up without authorisation. With the monsoon season under way, the unauthorised structures have also been blamed for obstructing natural drainage, leading to waterlogging in several blocks. “We have exhausted every channel of persuasion. Notices have been pasted, warnings have been issued, but compliance has been negligible. This 24-hour deadline is the final opportunity,” a senior FGEHA official told reporters, speaking on condition of anonymity. “After the expiry of the stipulated time, no individual will be served a personalised notice.

Teenage girl shot dead in Pindigheb

ATTOCK: A 17-year-old girl was shot dead in Pindigheb on Tuesday, police said. According to police sources, the incident occurred in the Mohalla Civil Hospital area, where the victim, identified as Misbah Javed, daughter of Muhammad Javed, sustained a gunshot and died. Police reached the scene after being informed of the incident, took the body into custody and shifted it for medico-legal formalities. An investigation has been initiated to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the killing and identify those responsible. Police said further legal proceedings were underway.—APP

Mohsin Naqvi pays tribute to Lalak Jan

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a heartfelt tribute to Havaldar Lalak Jan on his martyrdom anniversary, describing the decorated soldier as a timeless symbol of courage, patriotism, and sacrifice whose legacy will continue to inspire generations of Pakistanis. In a statement issued on the occasion, the minister said Havaldar Lalak Jan wrote an immortal chapter of bravery through his unwavering courage and devotion to the nation. He said the Pakistani nation would remain proud of the martyr's unparalleled sacrifice on the Kargil War front for all time. Mohsin Naqvi said Havaldar Lalak Jan laid down his life in defence of the country, thwarting the enemy's hostile designs through exceptional valour. He described Lalak Jan and all other martyrs of the nation as Pakistan's true guardians and a source of national pride. The interior minister said the Nishan-e-Haider recipient displayed extraordinary courage and the highest standards of patriotism by advancing to the front lines and standing firm against the enemy under the most difficult circumstances. He said the sacrifices rendered by the country's brave soldiers in defence of the homeland were a priceless national asset that could never be forgotten. Quoting a well-known national sentiment, Mohsin Naqvi said, “The death of a martyr is the life of the nation,” adding that heroes like Havaldar Lalak Jan would forever live in the hearts of the people. Expressing solidarity with the families of the fallen, the minister extended his heartfelt salute to the family of Havaldar Lalak Jan and to the families of all martyrs who sacrificed their loved ones for the country. Mohsin Naqvi said the nation could never fully repay the debt owed to those who laid down their lives for the peace, security.—APP

Three detained dacoits injured

ISLAMABAD: Three detained members of a dacoity gang were injured after their accomplices opened indiscriminate fire on a Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) police raiding team during an operation in the jurisdiction of Noon Police Station, while the police personnel remained unhurt due to bullet-proof jackets and protective measures. An official told APP on Tuesday that a police raiding team was taking the detained suspects to Sector I-15 for the arrest of their accomplices and recovery of stolen property on their identification when armed gang members hiding in a vacant house opened fire on the team. The official said the detained suspects, identified as Arslan, Salman and Shahzaib, were injured by bullets fired by their own accomplices during the exchange, while the police team remained safe because of protective gear. According to the official, the injured suspects were shifted to a nearby hospital for medical treatment, while police launched a search operation to arrest the fleeing attackers. The official said the arrested suspects had recently injured Constable Saleh Muhammad in firing during a police encounter in the jurisdiction of Noon Police Station and were wanted by Islamabad Police in several cases of armed attacks on police, dacoity, robbery and shop robberies. Police also recovered two snatched motorcycles, dozens of stolen mobile phones and wallets, along with three pistols and ammunition used in criminal activities. The official said search operations were continuing to arrest the remaining gang members involved in the attack on the police team and bring them to justice.—APP

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 06 Issue: 228

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New realities call for GCC-EU reset

DR. ABDEL AZIZ ALUWAIHESH

THE next Gulf Cooperation Council-EU summit, expected later this year in Saudi Arabia, comes at a critical moment for both blocs. It should serve as an opportunity to reset their partnership in light of the Iran conflict. The high-level regional security meeting scheduled for this month in Brussels could kick off discussions on this new direction. As the US and Iran negotiate a final deal, the GCC and the EU need to consider redefining their relationship as a result of the war and its uncertain aftermath. They need to ensure that their core interests are protected during the US-Iran negotiations and beyond. The Iran conflict has seriously affected GCC and EU countries alike, albeit in different ways. For the GCC, the war has made clear the need to put to work the partnerships they have cultivated over the decades to protect their economic model, their citizens' livelihoods, regional peace and energy security. They need to deploy those partnerships to support their diplomatic efforts, restore their economic capacity, defend against Iranian missiles and drones, and shield their critical infrastructure, energy assets, ports, cities and investment hubs from attacks by Iran and its proxies. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has unified the world like never before in opposition to this new development, which has wreaked havoc with the global economy. Curiously, Iran's sworn enemies the US and Israel are among the least affected by this act, which the rest of the world sees as a form of collective punishment Iran has inflicted on them for no reason. It thus requires united action to restore freedom of navigation in the waterway. With the Iran war, Europe suffered its second energy shock in four years. Attacks on GCC oil installations and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz exacerbated Europe's energy insecurity and disrupted trade routes. Already struggling with low growth rates, some EU countries' economic prospects are more in doubt now. Europe's estrangement from the US and lack of leverage with Iran made it helpless to influence developments in the Gulf, but it could become more effective when partnering with the GCC. The 1988 GCC-EU Cooperation Agreement was largely about technical and economic cooperation, which was important at the time, but it no longer suffices. The two blocs reset their relationship in February 2022 with an announcement of a "strategic partnership" and they agreed on a new and more ambitious "joint action program," followed shortly after by the adoption of the EU-Gulf Strategy. These developments were followed by the GCC-EU summit in Brussels in October 2024, with even greater ambitions to trans-



form their relationship into something stronger and more comprehensive. When the war and Iran's attacks on the Gulf started on Feb. 28, EU leaders were among the first to express genuine solidarity. The foreign ministers of both blocs met on March 5, just five days after the start of the war, followed by a summit of leaders from the two sides and countless other gatherings since. There is enough goodwill to build on that strategic partnership. The two blocs need to ensure that their core interests are protected during the US-Iran negotiations and beyond. The GCC and the EU need now to translate their solidarity, shared pain and common interests into practical cooperation to address the damage done by the war. More than ever, they need to act as the two belligerents negotiate a final deal. In particular, the parameters and spirit of their relationship must be redefined to reflect the new realities. Those parameters could include the following.

First, through coordinated political action, they should be part of the ongoing negotiations on the final deal in the Iran war and not wait until afterward. The EU should support GCC action at the UN Security Council to secure a resolution guaranteeing freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. Their partnership on other regional issues, such as Gaza, the two-state solution, Syria, Yemen and Lebanon, should be deepened and sustained. Second, their regional security cooperation should place more emphasis on maritime security, especially in the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea, military industry and integrated air, missile and drone defense, especially drone technology and interceptors. Third, connectivity cooperation should accelerate, starting with Saudi Arabia's proposals for maritime and land routes, railroads and digital connectivity. The EU could be part of the regional discussion to establish alternatives to routes through the Strait of Hormuz, to be used when the safety and security of regional passageways are challenged. Fourth, energy cooperation should include the export of hydrogen through pipelines and tankers. Electricity grid integration, in particular, provides a reliable common market in energy, of any type, which is immune to the closure of any waterway. Fifth, drawing lessons from the current war, interregional economic cooperation should eschew the transactional, zero-sum bean counting that has dominated trade discussions for decades. Instead, GCC-EU trade and investment negotiations should be based on the strategic and security needs of the two blocs, not merely the immediate financial benefits. Investment and sectoral interim agreements should be considered as stopgap measures while more comprehensive frameworks are pursued. Sixth, people-to-people engagement should be given a higher priority, whether through tourism, education, scientific research or cultural exchanges. Visa-free mobility, which has been on the table for some time, should be fast-tracked. These parameters should be used to reset the GCC-EU partnership in light of the Iran war. They give greater priority to strategic resilience – coordinated political and diplomatic action, security, energy, investment, trade, connectivity and safe supply chains. Business as usual is no longer an option. The reset could be one of the key outcomes of the next summit and could take the form of a new agreement or memorandum of understanding to supplement the outdated 1988 deal.

Trionda, Trust, and Pakistan's Moment on the World Stage

Qamar Bashir



The third source of pride has been Pakistan's performance at the United Nations. During one of the most sensitive periods in recent international affairs, Pakistan's representatives articulated their positions with clarity, conviction, and professionalism. They defended principles of sovereignty, international law, dialogue, and peaceful dispute resolution while engaging effectively with representatives of major powers. For overseas Pakistanis, these moments were especially meaningful

AS the FIFA World Cup 2026 unfolds across the United States, Canada, and Mexico, billions of people are captivated by the world's greatest sporting event. Every goal, every save, every pass, every moment of triumph and heartbreak revolves around a single object: Trionda, the official FIFA World Cup 2026 match ball manufactured in Sialkot, Pakistan. For Pakistanis, Trionda is much more than a football. It is a symbol of excellence, craftsmanship, innovation, and international recognition. Although Pakistan has never qualified for the final stages of the FIFA World Cup, it has nevertheless become an indispensable participant in the tournament. Every team plays with a football made in Pakistan. Every goal scored in the tournament is scored with a football produced by Pakistani hands. Yet, as I watch these developments from the United States, I find that Trionda is only one part of a much larger story. The real story is that Pakistan today finds itself at the center of global attention not merely because of what it manufactures, but because of what it has increasingly come to represent: a country capable of building bridges where others build walls, a country capable of facilitating dialogue when confrontation appears inevitable, and a country whose voice is increasingly being heard in discussions that shape the future of regions far beyond its borders. The first source of pride is Trionda itself. The success of Sialkot's football industry demonstrates that Pakistan possesses the talent, ingenuity, and entrepreneurial spirit necessary to compete at the highest levels of international manufacturing. The second and perhaps more consequential source of pride is Pakistan's growing diplomatic stature. The Middle East recently stood at the edge of a dangerous and potentially devastating confrontation. The conflict involving Iran, Israel, and the United States threatened not only regional stability but also the global economy. Energy supplies, international shipping routes, financial markets, trade flows, and investment confidence all faced uncertainty. The consequences of a prolonged conflict would have extended far beyond the region, affecting billions of people around the world. It was during this critical period that Pakistan emerged as an active diplomatic participant. What makes Pakistan's diplomatic role particularly noteworthy is not merely the outcome of the negotiations but the degree to which Pakistan was perceived as a trusted facilitator of communication during a period of extraordinary tension. In international diplomacy, agreements are often delayed, diluted, or derailed by layers of intermediaries, competing bureaucracies, conflicting agendas, and institutional rivalries. Messages pass through multiple channels, each adding interpretation, hesitation, or distortion. Frequently, noise overwhelms substance and misunderstandings replace clarity. The diplomatic engagement associated with Pakistan appeared different. The most valuable asset in diplomacy is not military strength, economic power, or

political influence. It is trust. Trust cannot be purchased. It cannot be demanded. It must be earned through consistency, discretion, credibility, and reliability over time. The events surrounding the negotiations suggested that Pakistan had accumulated a remarkable reservoir of such trust. It appeared capable of maintaining communication with multiple stakeholders simultaneously while preserving confidence on all sides. Whether engaging with Washington, Tehran, regional capitals, or major international partners, Pakistan demonstrated a capacity to remain a credible interlocutor at a moment when credible interlocutors were desperately needed. The resulting Memorandum of Understanding carried significance far beyond the text of the document itself. It symbolized the possibility that dialogue could prevail over escalation and negotiation over confrontation. It also reflected a level of confidence in Pakistan's diplomatic role that would have been difficult to imagine only a few years ago. For many Pakistanis, one of the most powerful aspects of the process was the perception that Pakistan's leadership had earned the confidence necessary to engage directly with key decision-makers during a period of historic importance. Whether viewed from Islamabad, Washington, Tehran, Ankara, Beijing, or elsewhere, the broader message was clear: Pakistan was no longer merely observing history; it was participating in it. The importance of this trust cannot be overstated. Military power creates deterrence. Economic power creates leverage. Diplomatic trust creates opportunity. A nation that can communicate with competing powers, maintain relationships across geopolitical divides, and contribute to reducing tensions acquires a form of influence that cannot be measured merely in economic or military terms. Such influence enhances strategic relevance and elevates international standing. The third source of pride has been Pakistan's performance at the United Nations. During one of the most sensitive periods in recent international affairs, Pakistan's representatives articulated their positions with clarity, conviction, and professionalism. They defended principles of sovereignty, international law, dialogue, and peaceful dispute resolution while engaging effectively with representatives of major powers. For overseas Pakistanis, these moments were especially meaningful. Watching Pakistan's voice resonate within the world's most important diplomatic forum created a sense that the country was participating confidently in debates of global significance. The interventions of Pakistan's representatives reflected preparation, intellectual rigor, and diplomatic maturity. Rather than reacting emotionally to unfolding events, they advanced their positions in a manner that projected confidence and credibility. Their performance demonstrated that Pakistan possesses diplomats capable of representing the country effectively on the most consequential international stages. The fourth source of pride has been the performance of

Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States. As someone who has spent much of his professional life in communications, public diplomacy, and media management, I watched his appearances with particular interest. He appeared before major American and international media organizations and faced probing questions from experienced journalists determined to test every aspect of Pakistan's position. What distinguished his performance was his composure. He neither avoided difficult questions nor allowed himself to become entangled in controversy. Instead, he consistently articulated Pakistan's perspective with clarity, confidence, and discipline. He explained Pakistan's positions, defended its interests, advocated peace and stability, and communicated effectively with influential audiences throughout the world. His media engagements projected an image of Pakistan that was thoughtful, responsible, and constructive. He demonstrated that it is possible to defend national interests vigorously while maintaining professionalism and diplomatic decorum. Taken together, these developments tell a larger story. For too long, international narratives about Pakistan have focused almost exclusively on instability, conflict, and crisis. While challenges undoubtedly remain, they do not define the nation. Pakistan is also a country of skilled workers, innovative entrepreneurs, capable diplomats, resilient citizens, and remarkable achievements. The challenge now is to convert visibility into lasting progress. Diplomatic credibility should translate into stronger partnerships. International recognition should attract greater investment. Enhanced visibility should create new opportunities for trade, technology, commerce, and economic growth. Most importantly, these achievements should inspire Pakistan's younger generation. The workers of Sialkot, the entrepreneurs who built world-class industries, the diplomats who represented the nation abroad, and the leaders who pursued dialogue rather than confrontation all demonstrate what Pakistan can achieve when vision, competence, and determination come together. As billions continue to watch FIFA World Cup 2026, Trionda will remain at the center of every match. Yet beyond football itself lies a larger and more enduring story: the story of a nation that is increasingly finding its voice, earning trust, building influence, and contributing to the world in ways that command attention and respect. For Pakistanis at home and abroad, that is a source of immense pride. And perhaps it is also a glimpse of the Pakistan of tomorrow—a Pakistan whose greatest contribution to the world is measured not by conflict or controversy, but by excellence, diplomacy, credibility, and constructive engagement.

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The Real Revolution is Institutional Reform

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Pakistan's civil service remains one of the country's most important state institutions. It possesses considerable professional expertise, yet concerns about administrative delays, overlapping jurisdictions and procedural complexity continue to affect governance. Modern states increasingly rely on efficient public administration, digital governance and evidence-based policymaking

POLITICAL ideas often outlive the societies in which they were first developed. They survive because they address recurring questions about power, institutions and change. Few twentieth-century thinkers illustrate this better than Leon Trotsky. Although his theories emerged from revolutionary Russia, the debates he initiated continue to resonate wherever states struggle with institutional weakness, political fragmentation and the challenge of reform. For Pakistan, Trotsky's writings are not a political blueprint to be followed, but they offer a useful lens through which to examine the country's own institutional evolution. Trotsky remains one of the most influential yet controversial figures in modern political thought. A leading figure in the 1917 Russian Revolution, Trotsky developed the theory of Permanent Revolution, arguing that societies experiencing incomplete political and economic transformation could not rely on gradual or isolated reforms. Instead, he believed political and social change was an ongoing process requiring continuous institutional development. While many aspects of his revolutionary programme remain subjects of historical debate, his broader concern with political stagnation, bureaucratic concentration of power and institutional decay continues to attract scholarly attention. Perhaps even more significant than his theory of Permanent Revolution was Trotsky's criticism of bureaucratic authoritarianism. Following the consolidation of power under Joseph Stalin, Trotsky argued that revolutionary ideals had been overshadowed by an expanding bureaucracy that increasingly concentrated authority in a narrow political elite. In his view, institutions become less effective when they cease to encourage accountability, open debate and public participation. Whether or not one agrees with his conclusions, his warning about excessive bureaucratic centralisation remains relevant to discussions of governance across the world. Pakistan's political experience differs fundamentally from the circumstances of early Soviet Russia. Pakistan is a constitutional parliamentary republic with its own legal traditions, democratic institutions and social complexities. Nevertheless, like many developing states, it has experienced recurring tensions between political continuity and institutional reform. Governments have changed, policies have shifted and economic priorities have evolved, yet structural governance challenges have often persisted. One of Pakistan's enduring difficulties is not the absence

of constitutional institutions but the uneven performance of those institutions. Frequent political polarisation has diverted attention from long-term policy planning. Successive governments have launched ambitious programmes in education, health, taxation and economic management, yet implementation has frequently been inconsistent. Administrative continuity has often been interrupted by political transitions, reducing the effectiveness of otherwise promising initiatives. Trotsky's criticism of bureaucracy invites a broader question that extends beyond ideology: how can state institutions remain efficient, responsive and accountable? The answer lies not in revolutionary upheaval but in strengthening the rule of law, improving public administration and ensuring that institutions operate according to constitutional principles rather than political expediency. Pakistan's civil service remains one of the country's most important state institutions. It possesses considerable professional expertise, yet concerns about administrative delays, overlapping jurisdictions and procedural complexity continue to affect governance. Modern states increasingly rely on efficient public administration, digital governance and evidence-based policymaking. Administrative reform therefore becomes not merely a managerial objective but an essential requirement for democratic stability and economic growth. Another area where Trotsky's analysis retains indirect relevance concerns political participation. Healthy democracies require political competition that remains within constitutional boundaries. They also require opposition parties capable of contributing constructively to national policymaking rather than viewing politics exclusively as a zero-sum contest. Pakistan's democratic future depends upon strengthening parliamentary processes, encouraging issue-based politics and developing greater consensus on national priorities such as education, energy security, fiscal reform and climate resilience. Economic governance presents an equally important challenge. Pakistan's recurring balance-of-payments crises, dependence on external financial assistance and limited industrial diversification underline the need for sustained structural reform. Political instability often discourages long-term investment and weakens policy consistency. Successful economies generally demonstrate continuity in economic planning regardless of changes in government. This principle owes less

to any particular ideology than to institutional maturity. Education represents another critical dimension of institutional development. Countries that have achieved sustained economic progress have generally invested heavily in human capital, scientific research and technical skills. Pakistan possesses a young and dynamic population whose potential can only be realised through consistent investment in education, vocational training and innovation. Strengthening universities, improving school standards and expanding opportunities for research should remain central components of national development strategy. The principal lesson Pakistan may draw from Trotsky is therefore not his revolutionary prescriptions but his concern about institutional stagnation. Modern governance depends upon the continuous improvement of public institutions, the strengthening of democratic accountability and the ability of governments to adapt to changing economic and social conditions. States that neglect institutional reform often find themselves repeatedly confronting the same structural problems despite frequent changes in political leadership. Pakistan today possesses substantial strengths: a resilient society, an entrepreneurial private sector, experienced public institutions and significant strategic importance. Transforming these assets into sustained national progress requires political stability, constitutional continuity and an unwavering commitment to institutional excellence. Reform should be understood not as a moment of political disruption but as a continuous process of improving governance, expanding opportunity and strengthening public trust. History rarely offers ready-made solutions for contemporary challenges. Yet it does provide valuable perspectives. Leon Trotsky's enduring contribution lies less in the revolutionary programme he championed than in the questions he raised about power, bureaucracy and institutional vitality. For Pakistan, the path forward is neither revolution nor ideological confrontation. It lies in patient institution-building, effective governance, democratic accountability and long-term policy consistency. Those remain the foundations upon which stable, prosperous and confident nations are ultimately built.

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Briefs

Trump says NATO disappointed him during...

FROM PAGE 01
He said he and Erdogan would also discuss trade. Congress passed a law prohibiting any F-35 sales to Turkey as long as Ankara retained the S-400s, saying the Russian system posed a security risk to US-made combat aircraft. Currently, the US law does not permit Turkey to operate or possess the S-400 system if it wishes to rejoin the F-35 program. Trump said that he had spoken with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and he hoped the war in Ukraine would soon be settled. "I had a very good talk with President Putin," Trump said during a meeting with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan at the Nato summit in Turkey. "We had a long talk, it lasted a long time. And I also spoke with President Zelenskyy right after that. I think they both want to make a deal. ... I think we're going to get it settled, hopefully soon."

Gulf national condemn...

FROM PAGE 01
It was the second blast to rock the capital in a few days, and a setback for the country's new president as he welcomed his first visit from a western leader since ousting longtime dictator Bashar Assad. Saudi Arabia was one of the first countries to condemn the attack. #Statement | The Foreign Ministry expresses the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's strongest condemnation and denunciation of the cowardly terrorist attack in the Syrian capital, Damascus, which resulted in the injury of a number of security personnel and civilians while they were... pic.twitter.com/iCYif9pH7F In a post on X.com the ministry said it "expresses the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's strongest condemnation and denunciation of the cowardly terrorist attack in the Syrian capital, Damascus, which resulted in the injury of a number of security personnel and civilians while they were attempting to dismantle two explosive devices planted by a terrorist cell."

Lifetime passports for KP MPs...

FROM PAGE 01
have been made to expand the privileges of assembly members. Section 8(1) of the aforesaid law provides that a member, for the purpose of discharging his official functions, can summon a meeting within his constituency or concerned district, at such public place as he may specify, whereas Section 8(2) makes it binding on government officers to attend this meeting. "Every government officer of the district concerned shall be bound to attend the meeting summoned under section 1, provided that the officer has been duly informed," reads the Section 8(2). Section 8(3) provides that any government officer who, without sufficient cause, fails to attend a meeting summoned under Sub-Section 1 shall be deemed to have committed a breach of privilege. Under Section 10 of the legislation, members have been granted blanket immunity from preventive detention.

Macron says France ready to...

FROM PAGE 01
Speaking in a press conference alongside Macron, Syrian President Ahmed Al-Sharaa said Tuesday that he wants France to be a primary partner for Damascus, which he said has regained its role as a transit hub after the Strait of Hormuz closure. "After the Strait of Hormuz crisis, the world realized the value of safe and stable corridors... here the importance of Syrian geography is highlighted, which today has regained its vital role as an indispensable link in the global corridors market, and we want France to be our primary partner in this path".

'I am fine, Shukria': Wasim shuts down death rumours

"If you people cannot identify fake news in today's modern age, then what use are we old men in our sixties?" the cricket legend said in a video posted on Instagram to respond to an AI-generated video claiming that he had a heart attack

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan captain Wasim Akram has dismissed rumours widely circulating on social media, claiming that he passed away and calling out people for believing in fake news. "If you people cannot identify fake news in today's modern age, then what use are we old men in our sixties?" the cricket legend said in a vid-



eo posted on Instagram to respond to an AI-generated video claiming that he had a heart attack. Furthermore, he expressed shock at the social media users for asking him: "Are you alive?". "No, brother, I am making this video after passing away!" he said sarcastically. Referring to the video, Akram – widely regarded as Swing of Sultan – said that the creator of the AI-generated video must have put in a "lot of effort" bringing in former cricketers Shahid Afridi and Shoaib Akhtar to spread this fake news. "If they had used this mind for something good, they would have been highly successful in life," he added. At the end of the video, he thanked the followers for showing concern, saying: "I am fine, thank you." Separately, Shaniera Akram – wife of the former Pakistan captain – also dropped a video on her Instagram account showing her husband working out in the gym. Along with the video, she captioned, "In response to the FAKE news and AI videos circulating, I just took this video for you, and as you can see, he is in the gym and seems to be ok!"

Spain defeat Portugal in a tight match

ARLINGTON: Substitute Mikel Merino scored a late winner to put Spain in the quarter-finals with a 1-0 victory over Portugal and end Cristiano Ronaldo's World Cup career on Monday. The European champions will face the United States – the only one of the co-hosts remaining – or Belgium on Friday in Los Angeles. In front of an expectant crowd of 70,649 at the air-conditioned home of the Dallas Cowboys, a match that on paper promised so much failed to really deliver. Extra time looked certain, before fellow substitute Ferran Torres slipped in Merino to settle the contest in the first minute of injury time. It meant a sour final World Cup match for the 41-year-old Ronaldo, now playing in Saudi Arabia, having con-

firmed on the eve of the encounter that this would be his last dance on football's biggest stage. The neighbors came into the contest both unbeaten, but while Portugal had not been entirely convincing, Spain had not even conceded a goal in the tournament. One of the pre-tournament favorites, they still haven't. For all their pedigree, talent and history, Spain have only lifted the World Cup once, in 2010, while Portugal's best was third place in 1966. In Ronaldo and Spain's 18-year-old Barcelona prodigy Lamine Yamal, the last-16 showdown was touted as a showcase of two extraordinary talents at opposite ends of their careers. There was a somber moment shortly before kickoff when a black-and-white image of the late Portugal

forward Diogo Jota flashed up on the giant screen that looms over the field. Spain should have been ahead with less than 10 minutes gone when Dani Olmo played in Mikel Oyarzabal but with only goalkeeper Diogo Costa to beat, he somehow pulled it well wide. Portugal skipper Ronaldo had his first chance to add to his three goals in North America, stinging the palms of goalkeeper Unai Simon from a tight angle. Luis de la Fuente's Spain cranked up the pressure, Yamal and Alex Baena testing Costa twice in quick succession, the second a wonderful fingertip save. Ronaldo – jeered and cheered in equal measure – was a marginal presence in the central attacking role he now occupies in the twilight of his career. Portugal ended the half on

top and Roberto Martinez's side were inches from taking the lead when Spain full-back Pedro Porro stuck out his head and directed a Nuno Mendes shot onto his own crossbar. The winger Yamal had endured a frustrating time up against Mendes, but the Paris Saint-Germain fullback was forced off injured after 56 minutes in a blow to Portugal. The game needed a spark and Ronaldo, well known to Spain from his time at Real Madrid, threw up his arms when a pass went astray. Martinez made double changes on 71 and 83 minutes, but kept Ronaldo on. And in a game that was cagey, Arsenal midfielder Merino won it at the death with a composed finish that was out of keeping with much of what went on before. – APP

Former Afghanistan pacer Shapoor Zadran passes away at 38

Reports say Zadran had been receiving treatment in Delhi-NCR region for past several months

FORMER Afghanistan fast bowler Shapoor Zadran has passed away at the age of 38 following a prolonged illness, the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) confirmed on Tuesday. Zadran had been battling Hemophagocytic Lymphohistiocytosis (HLH), a rare and severe immune system disorder that can trigger life-threatening inflammation and damage multiple organs. According to reports, he had been receiving treatment in the Delhi-NCR region for the past several months. He first fell ill in October last year and, after medical advice in Afghanistan, travelled to India for specialised treatment. Although his condition initially improved and he was discharged from hospital, he suffered a relapse around 20 days later.

Widely regarded as one of the pioneers of Afghanistan cricket, Zadran played a pivotal role in the national side's rise on the international stage. The left-arm fast bowler was renowned for his pace, aggression and ability to make early breakthroughs, becoming a cornerstone of Afghanistan's progress from an Associate nation to an ICC Full Member. Born on 8 July 1987 in Logar Province, Zadran made his One-Day International (ODI) debut against the Netherlands in 2009, announcing himself with impressive figures of 4/24. During an international career spanning more than a decade, he represented Afghanistan in 44 ODIs and 36 Twenty20 Internationals, taking 43 ODI wickets and 37 T20I wickets. He featured in the 2010, 2012 and 2016 ICC Men's T20 World Cups, spearheading Afghanistan's pace attack in each tournament. One of his most memorable performances came during the 2010 edition, when he dismissed Indian openers Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir, underlining Afghanistan's growing presence on the world stage. Zadran's finest moment came at the 2015 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup in Australia and New Zealand. He finished as Afghanistan's leading wicket-taker with 10 wickets and struck the winning runs against Scotland to secure the nation's first-ever victory at a Cricket World Cup. – APP

Cabinet approved new Hajj policy

FROM PAGE 01

Regional Blood Centre (RBC), both in Islamabad, to ensure the provision of quality healthcare services to citizens. Following the decision, the Ministry of National Health Services will carry out the outsourcing process in accordance with applicable rules and regulations. The cabinet also received a briefing from Railways Minister Hanif Abbasi on the performance of Pakistan Railways (PR). The meeting was informed that PR's revenue increased from Rs95 billion in FY 2024-25 to over Rs115 billion in FY 2025-26, reflecting a 24.1 per cent increase. Freight revenue increased by more than Rs8 billion, property and land revenue by more than Rs6 billion, and other revenue by more than Rs7 billion. Passenger revenue recorded an increase of 3.37 per cent. The cabinet was also informed that significant improvements had been made in railway operations, particularly in freight cargo movement and operational efficiency. The cabinet appreciated Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi and his team for their performance.

The meeting also ratified the decisions taken during the meetings of the Cabinet Committee on Legislative Cases (CCLC) held on May 19, 2026, and the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) held on July 2, 2026. Addressing the meeting, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment to eradicating terrorism from the country, saying that security forces were working tirelessly and that the day was not far when "the menace would be completely eliminated". He paid tribute to Pakistan Air Force Group Captain Asim Tariq, who was martyred earlier this week in Islamabad while intervening to stop an assault on a woman. While offering prayers and expressing condolences to the officer's family, the prime minister said the accused had been arrested and would be brought to justice in accordance with the law.

Paolini ends Eala's dream run with fourth-round victory

LONDON: Italy's Jasmine Paolini ended Alexandra Eala's trailblazing Wimbledon run in the fourth round with a 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 victory on a baking hot Center Court on Monday. The 21-year-old left-hander Eala is the first player from the Philippines to go so far in a Grand Slam and she pushed the 2024 runner-up hard throughout an absorbing contest. Eala, seeded 29, has captivated Wimbledon crowds with her bubbly personality and the free-flowing game which accounted for defending champion Iga Swiatek on Saturday. But it was the equally popular Paolini who raised her game at key moments to reach the quarterfinals for the second time. "Grass is a weird surface," Paolini says. The 13th seed's participation at Wimbledon was in doubt with a foot injury that has dogged her season and meant she played just one grass-court match in her Wimbledon buildup. Her tournament began with her losing the first set of her opener against Robin Montgomery 6-0, but since that shaky start, the 30-year-old has rediscovered her bounce. "I came here without many matches in the last month and

after the first set in the first round, it was like 'okay I can only get better, it can't go worse'," Paolini said on court. "I'm feeling better point by point and game by game. Grass is a weird surface, sometimes you love it, sometimes you hate, but when you play well and feel good, it's the best surface." Paolini had some celebrity support, with compatriot Kimi Antonelli, the F1 championship leader, in the Royal Box alongside Roger Federer. Eala cheered on in Manila

Eala has become the darling of Wimbledon though and was also being cheered on by 8,000 fans at a PhilSports Arena watch party in Manila where her rise up the rankings has captured the public's imagination. She looked a little edgy to start with, however, as Paolini came out full of positive energy to lead 4-1. Eala soon settled and she broke back as Paolini served for the set, only to drop her own serve in the following game with a baseline error. With the mercury rising and some fans opting to leave the court in search of shade, Eala found more depth with her ground strokes in the second set as service breaks were swapped. As errors began to fly off the Paolini racket, Eala got another service break and this time made it stick as she took the match into a deciding set. The match was poised on a knife edge going into the third but Paolini's greater experience told as she piled on the pressure to break serve for 5-3 and then finished the job in the next game as Eala sent a return wide. – APP

Nine cops martyred, 5 abducted

FROM PAGE 01

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi strongly condemned the attack by India-sponsored terrorists and paid tribute to the cops who embraced martyrdom. The interior minister extended his condolences and sympathies to the families of the martyred policemen and prayed for them to be granted patience and strength. "Those who sacrificed their lives for peace are the pride of our nation," Naqvi said, adding that the sacrifices of the martyrs would never be forgotten. He also said such cowardly attacks could not sabotage peace or weaken the country's resolve against terrorism. The attack also triggered widespread protests in Ziarat, where local tribes, transporters and relatives of the martyred police personnel staged demonstrations at Ziarat Cross and other locations. The

protesters blocked key national highways linking Balochistan with Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, police said. The N-50 highway connecting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the N-70 linking Punjab remained closed, leaving hundreds of passenger buses and freight vehicles stranded. The attack comes amid a renewed wave of terrorism in Pakistan, particularly in the provinces of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – bordering with Afghanistan. On May 24, at least 14 people, including three Frontier Corps (FC) personnel, were martyred and several others injured in a blast near the railway track at Chaman Phatak in Quetta. On June 25 and 26, security forces killed eight India-backed Fitna al-Hindustan terrorists during separate intelligence-based operations in Balochistan's Kharan and Mastung districts, according to the Inter-Services Public Rela-

tions (ISPR). Pakistan has witnessed a sharp rise in militant attacks since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021, with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan remaining the worst-affected provinces. In response, Pakistan launched Operation Ghazab lillah, targeting terrorist hideouts across the border. The operation reportedly killed scores of Afghan Taliban operatives and allied militants and injured hundreds more. Border tensions escalated further in October 2025 after the Afghan Taliban and affiliated militants launched what Pakistan described as unprovoked attacks on its border posts. Despite multiple rounds of talks, Islamabad and Kabul have yet to reach an understanding, with Pakistan maintaining that the Afghan Taliban authorities have failed to take effective action against terrorists groups operating from Afghan territory.

Belgium beat US 4-1 to reach World Cup quarterfinals
Second-half substitute Romelu Lukaku added Belgium's final goal in the third minute of stoppage time

SEATTLE: The United States' hopes for a deep World Cup run at home ended when Charles De Ketelaere scored twice and assisted on another goal, helping Belgium expose the Americans' defensive liabilities in a 4-1 win Monday night that earned a quarterfinal berth. While the US were boosted by the presence of star forward Folarin Balogun, whose one-game red-card suspension was controversially lifted by FIFA, American defenders were at fault in a pair of first-half goals and goalkeeper Matt Freese's gaffe gave the Red Devils a third early in the second half. Second-half substitute Romelu Lukaku added Belgium's final goal in the third minute of stoppage time. Seeking its first World Cup title, Belgium knocked the US out in the round of 16 for the second time in 12 years and extended its unbeaten streak to 18 games. The Red Devils play 2010 champion Spain on Friday at Inglewood, California, for a semifinal berth against France or Morocco. Malik Tillman tied the score 1-1 midway through the first half with his second free

kick goal of the tournament, but the Americans conceded just 61 seconds after the ensuing kickoff. US coach Mauricio Pochettino showed his frustration by kicking a rack in front of the bench, sending four water bottles flying. American star Christian Pulisic could only watch from the bench after injuring his right foot when he hit a boot of Belgium captain Youri Tielemans on a 52nd-minute shot attempt. Pulisic favored his foot after that and was replaced seven minutes later. After winning three games in a World Cup for the first time in this expanded 48-nation tournament, the US failed in its quest to reach the quarterfinals for the first time since 2002 and lost to Belgium for the seventh straight time since a victory at the initial tournament in 1930. The Americans have dropped 11 of their last 12 games against European opponents, winning only their round of 32 match against Bosnia-Herzegovina. A heralded generation led by Pulisic, Weston McKennie and Tyler Adams only partially accomplished their goal of lifting soccer's

stature closer to that of the NFL, MLB and the NBA. De Ketelaere put Belgium ahead in the eighth minute, the first time in this year's World Cup the US conceded first. Tillman's goal in the 31st minute energized a largely red-white-and-blue crowd of 66,925 at Lumen Field, but De Ketelaere damped that and assisted on Hans Vanaken's 57th-minute goal after Freese lost control of the ball in front of his net. All six CONCACAF nations have been eliminated, with the co-hosts US, Mexico and Canada all falling in the round of 16. All quarterfinalists will all come from Europe, South America and Africa, reinforcing the weakness of CONCACAF and Asia. Belgium, which left stars Jérémy Doku and Kevin DeBruyne on the bench, pressed from the start and exposed a defense that was regarded as the Americans' weak spot. Dodi Lukébakio made a long diagonal pass to the opposite corner, leading to the opening goal. Leandro Troussard controlled the ball and his cross was blocked by Alex Freeman and popped into the air.

Freeman headed the ball into the penalty area and Timothy Castagne charged after it and hooked a centering pass around Chris Richards. De Ketelaere split Tim Ream and Antonee Robinson and with his right foot redirected the ball into an open net. Pochettino held out his arms, as if to ask: What was going on? Tillman scored after Brandon Mechele knocked down Balogun about 25 yards from goal. Tillman's kick deflected off Vanaken's head and deflected to the left of goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, who had dived right. Troussard got around Sergi Dest for a cross and De Ketelaere outjumped Ream and headed the ball past Freese in the 33rd minute for his eighth international goal. Belgium built a two-goal lead when Mechele lofted a long ball that Freese chested after two hops. Freese hesitated with a touch, then scrambled and kicked the ball off De Ketelaere. Vanaken one-timed a shot from 35 yards that deflected in off Ream, who tried for an off-balance clearance. Lukaku entered in the 67th minute and scored after Belgium stripped the ball from Richards. – APP

Govt committed to root out terror...

FROM PAGE 01

against terrorism, referring to the recent killing of 15 terrorists in Balochistan. He said the armed forces and law enforcement agencies were continuing operations day and night to restore lasting peace across the country. The cabinet offered Fateha for the martyrs on the prime minister's request. Highlighting his recent foreign engagements, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif referred to his visit to Turkey, where he attended a comprehensive business conference featuring presentations on the privatization of Pakistan's power distribution companies, renewable energy, transmission losses, and investment opportunities in the mines and minerals sector. He said a large number of Turkish investors and business leaders attended the conference and expressed keen interest in Pakistan's economic potential. The prime minister said extensive preparations by both sides had helped present Pakistan's investment prospects effectively, including opportunities in the maritime sector and other key areas. He expressed confidence that the visit would further strengthen bilateral economic cooperation, adding that productive discussions were held with Turkish leadership on expanding collaboration in multiple sectors.

PM says Pak to be made polio free soon

FROM PAGE 01

Dr Hanan Balkhy, Regional Director of WHO EMRO; and representatives from UNICEF, Gavi, and other partners supporting Pakistan's polio eradication efforts. The prime minister welcomed the delegation and thanked all partners for their continued cooperation with the Government of Pakistan in the fight against polio. He directed that special attention be given to polio hotspots in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and called for the adoption of an effective strategy to address the challenge. The prime minister expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Rotary International, the Gates Foundation, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSRelief), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and all other partners for their valuable contributions to Pakistan's polio eradication campaign. He also commended the Federal Minister for National Health Services, the Minister of State for Health, the Prime Minister's Focal Person on Polio Eradication, the National Polio Coordinator, and all members of the government team for their dedicated efforts in combating polio. The delegation praised the Government of Pakistan's effective measures toward achieving a polio-free Pakistan and lauded the Prime Minister for the significant progress made.

Italy arrests two over spying for Russia

FROM PAGE 01

The main suspect is accused of taking money to pass on to a Russian agent information obtained from his sources who include four serving members of the Italian military. The Russian operative allegedly involved is protected by diplomatic immunity in Italy. There was no immediate comment from the Russian embassy in Rome. Italian Defense Minister Guido Crosetto said the investigation helped to reveal Russia's true attitude to Italy, where the government has provided military and civilian aid to Ukraine since it was invaded by Russia in 2022. "This hybrid war is the tip of a gigantic iceberg, comprising external enemies and internal traitors who are prepared to sell out their nation for money, power or personal gain." Crosetto wrote on X. In 2021, Italian navy captain Walter Biot was arrested while caught handing over documents to a Russian embassy employee in a Rome car park, and was later sentenced to almost 30 years in prison.

Briefs

Kazakhstan to develop 30 new oil and gas fields

ASTANA: Kazakhstan plans to develop 30 new oil and gas fields as part of efforts to expand its commercial gas resource base, Qazinform News Agency quotes Energy Minister Yerlan Akkenzhenov as saying at a Government's meeting. He said the Government has approved the Comprehensive Gas Industry Development Plan for 2025-2029 and the Hydrocarbon Field Development Plan through 2035 to increase the country's commercial gas resources. According to Akkenzhenov, the key objective of these strategic documents is to establish a systematic framework for developing new oil and gas fields, ensuring sustainable growth of Kazakhstan's hydrocarbon resource base while meeting the rising demand for natural gas from both the economy and the population. "The plan covers 30 subsoil areas designated for development. To date, nine contracts have been signed with QazaqGaz, including six projects currently at the exploration stage and three already in production. Between 2023 and 2025, the national companies QazaqGaz and KazMunayGas brought the Anabay, Barkhannaya, Rozhkovskoye, and Western Prorva fields into commercial operation," Akkenzhenov said. Earlier, Qazinform News Agency reported that China led global offshore wind with 78% of new capacity in 2025.—APP

UAE 6th world's most popular Muslim-friendly destinations

BAKU: Mastercard and CrescentRating released the 11th edition of the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI), revealing how AI, digital trust, regional mobility and destination readiness are reshaping the next phase of Muslim-friendly travel, according to WAM. The report projects international Muslim arrivals to increase to 208 million this year, compared to 196 million in 2025, and reach 262 million by 2030, commanding an estimated annual expenditure of \$310 billion. GMTI 2026 evaluates 150 destinations, representing more than 98% of global Muslim visitor arrivals, across the Access, Communications, Environment and Services (ACES) framework. The latest edition introduces a stronger focus on AI readiness, digital visibility, smart destination infrastructure, traveler confidence and resilience planning amid a more volatile global environment. The UAE ranked sixth among the top travel destinations for Muslims with a score of 75, reinforcing its strength across halal tourism, Muslim-friendly services and destination marketing. The report placed the country in the Trailblazers quadrant that consists of 27 destinations leading the way in accommodating Muslim travelers. The UAE has retained its top position as one of the most accessible destinations.—APP

China deploys measures against typhoons, flood risks

BAKU: China has deployed flood-control and emergency response measures as Typhoons Maysak and Bavi are expected to bring heavy rainfall and heighten flood risks in several river basins across the country, Xinhua reported citing the Ministry of Water Resources on Tuesday. The ministry held a consultation to analyze the development and potential impact of the two typhoons and arrange measures for flood prevention and handling potential emergencies. Recent extreme rainstorms triggered by Typhoon Maysak, the 10th typhoon of the year, have caused severe flooding in parts of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in the Pearl River basin. Continued rain and flooding could pose further threats, the ministry said. Earlier on Tuesday.—APP

Ahsan Iqbal explores Illinois varsity

Sharing the Prime Minister's vision for the Jinnah Medical Complex, Minister Ahsan Iqbal said the Government of Pakistan is committed not only to developing state-of-the-art healthcare infrastructure but also to building international academic and clinical linkages that will help the institution emerge as one of the leading medical centres in the region

DNA

CHICAGO: As part of his visit to the United States, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal visited the University of Illinois Chicago to explore opportunities for academic, research and healthcare collaboration between Pakistan and the United States. During the visit, the Minister held detailed discussions with the University's Provost, Vice Provost and Dean of the medical faculty on potential areas of cooperation between the University of Illinois Chicago, the Prime Minister's proposed Jinnah Medical Complex and Research Centre (JMCRC) and the Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute and Research Center (PKLI). The discussions focused on future collaboration in medical education, research, innovation and advanced healthcare. Sharing the Prime Minister's vision for the Jinnah Medical Complex, Minister Ahsan Iqbal said the Government of Pakistan is committed not only to developing state-of-the-art healthcare infrastructure but also to building international academic and clinical linkages that will help the institution emerge as one of the leading medical centres in the region. The Minister highlighted that PKLI is advancing towards cutting-edge robotic surgery and expressed Pakistan's interest in learning from UIC's globally recognized expertise in robotic surgery, medical research and innovation. To initiate institutional engagement, he connected PKLI President



Professor Dr. Saeed Akhtar virtually with the University's leadership and medical faculty, enabling an initial discussion on possible areas of cooperation and future engagement. The two sides exchanged views on expanding collaboration under the US-Pak Knowledge Corridor by incorporating medical sciences alongside higher education. Potential areas discussed included faculty and student exchanges, scholarships, joint research initiatives, advanced surgical training and institutional partnerships. Minister Ahsan Iqbal also shared Pakistan's intention to benefit from internationally recognized

models of academic medicine and integrated healthcare systems, noting that such experiences could provide valuable insights for the development of Pakistan's emerging medical institutions. Recalling Pakistan's successful academic partnership with the United States, the Minister highlighted that during his previous tenure he played a key role in expanding the Pakistan-USEFP Fulbright Scholarship Programme by securing Pakistan's financial contribution, helping make it one of the largest Fulbright programmes in the world. He said this reflects Pakistan's enduring commitment to investing in

human capital and strengthening international academic cooperation. The leadership of the University of Illinois Chicago welcomed the exchange of ideas and expressed interest in maintaining dialogue with Pakistani institutions to explore future collaboration in medical education, research and healthcare innovation. During the discussion, the University shared its Brazilian model of integrated healthcare and medical education, which Minister Ahsan Iqbal said could serve as a valuable model for the development of the Prime Minister's Jinnah Medical Complex in Pakistan.

Japan says Chinese ships expelled from near disputed islands

Beijing condemned her comments, and has since urged its citizens against traveling to Japan as well as tightened trade restrictions on some Japanese firms

TOKYO: Japan said Tuesday it expelled two Chinese coast guard ships from waters near disputed islands also claimed by Beijing. The Chinese ships were approaching a Japanese fishing vessel operating in the area, Japan's coast guard said. The two countries have a long-running territorial dispute over the Senkaku Islands — known as the Diaoyu in China — which lie between Taiwan and Japan's Okinawa. They have figured for decades in bilateral tensions, which have worsened since Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi made comments about Taiwan in November that angered Beijing. Chinese ships last entered waters Japan claims as its territory on June 10, but it is rare for vessels to approach Japanese fishing boats. The coast guard "issued orders to leave ... successfully forcing the Chinese coast guard vessels to leave Japanese territorial waters by approximately 9:20 am (0020 GMT) today," it said in a statement. In addition, the coast guard "was deployed around the Japanese fishing vessel to ensure its safety." There were four Chinese ships sailing around the area before two of them entered Japanese waters, the statement said. It added that the activities of the Chinese coast guard vessels constituted "a violation of international law." "The Japan coast guard will continue to respond calmly and resolutely in accordance with international and domestic law, and will take every possible measure to ensure the security of our territorial waters," it said. China routinely deploys its coast guard ships around the disputed islands, prompting dangerous maritime standoffs with its Japanese counterpart. China has also sent boats to other disputed waters in the East China Sea, which is believed to hold possible deposits of energy reserves, despite repeated protests by Japan to stop. Takaichi said in November that Tokyo could intervene militarily in any attack on self-ruled Taiwan, which China views as its territory and has not ruled out taking by force. Beijing condemned her comments, and has since urged its citizens against traveling to Japan as well as tightened trade restrictions on some Japanese firms.—APP

Kenya, Tanzania shut down protest anniversaries

NAIROBI: Kenya and Tanzania both deployed a massive police presence on Tuesday to prevent protests as the east African nations increasingly take a zero-tolerance approach to demonstrations. The two countries have both faced major bouts of public unrest in the last two years and have responded with brutal police repression. In Tanzania, rights groups and the opposition say thousands were killed by security forces during election unrest in October over alleged rigging and attacks on critics. And at least 127 Kenyans were killed during protests over economic hardship, corruption and police brutality in June-July 2024 and the same period in 2025, according to a police watchdog. Activists called for peaceful demonstrations on July 7 — known as

"Saba Saba" ("seven seven") — which happens to mark historic protests in both countries. But massive security deployments have deterred any action, with Tanzania recently banning all political gatherings, and Kenyan police refusing to accept any notifications of protests from rights groups. Meanwhile, citizens are increasingly scared of raising their voices. "I'm not ready to risk my life," Hussein Matimbwa, 33, a resident of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, told AFP. "The deaths that occurred last October are scary. Demonstrating is legal, but here in Tanzania you can be eliminated simply for participating," he added. Police and military were stationed across Dar es Salaam, an AFP journalist saw, and the busy trading area of Kariakoo was largely deserted, with many stalls closed. One man

said he had hoped to protest but could not find support. "Many people are afraid to die. Police and soldiers are everywhere with guns," he said. "Undercover teams" — In Kenya's capital Nairobi, police shut down roads and swarmed on a tiny group of protesters that had managed to gather in the city center. AFP saw at least three bundled into an unmarked car and police wagon. "Why should they deploy security like this? We have a right to protest," said one of the group, Collins Otieno. A police spokesman later told AFP that he was unaware of the details but it may have been "an arrest by our undercover teams." It was a similar pattern used to prevent unrest on June 25, marking the anniversary of Kenyans storming parliament to oppose unpopular new taxes in 2024.—DNA

India, Indonesia sign deals on missile systems

NEW DELHI: India and Indonesia signed agreements on missile systems on Tuesday, marking an expansion of Indian defense exports and closer security cooperation as Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto in Jakarta. Modi arrived in the capital of Southeast Asia's largest economy on Monday afternoon and was welcomed by Subianto at the airport. Indonesia is the first stop of his week-long Indo-Pacific tour, before Australia and New Zealand. Among the 14 memoranda signed during the Jakarta trip are contracts between Indonesia's Ministry of Defense and the Indian-Russian defense corporation BrahMos Aerospace for the purchase of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, and between Bharat Dynamics and Indonesian defense company Republikorp for Astra air-to-air missile systems. Other pacts included cooperation in minerals, steel supply chain technology, and space exploration. While the terms of the agreements were not disclosed, Modi said during a joint press conference with Subianto that relations with Indonesia have been gaining "renewed energy, greater confidence, and deeper strategic depth" since the establishment of a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2018. "We are making significant strides across every domain of cooperation, including development, security, technology, culture, and education," he said. "I am confident that today marks the beginning of a golden new chapter in the India-Indonesia partnership." The agreements to supply BrahMos and Astra missiles to Indonesia mark a major expansion of India's defense exports in a region where it competes for influence with China. "A deal with Southeast Asia's largest economy also gives India's defense industry greater legitimacy in the Indo-Pacific," Vanshika Saraf, geostategy research analyst at the Takshashila Institution, told Arab News. "The purpose of the visit, apart from taking a stock of the relationship, is to operationalize India's role as an important security partner and economic anchor in Southeast Asia." Cooperation in metals with a country that produces nearly 60 percent of the world's nickel supply would be a gain in terms of economic security, she said. "India possesses virtually no domestic reserves and relies on Indonesia for nearly all of its ferronickel imports, which are essential to the steel industry. Since the island nation requires nickel to be processed domestically for export, India is looking to set up processing and manufacturing plants within Indonesia, and this visit will help in advancing that conversation." Subianto decorated Modi with Bintang Republik Indonesia Adipurna, the highest state honor, in recognition of his leadership and contributions to strengthening Indonesia-India relations. The same honor was previously conferred on Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, in 1961.—APP

Video games might modestly sharpen your memory, other cognitive skills

BAKU: Because video games are a regular part of many people's everyday lives, researchers have spent a lot of time trying to determine whether they are beneficial or detrimental to brain health, according to Medical Xpress. A new study, published in Acta Psychologica, has compiled 20 years of research on how video games affect cognitive abilities into a single systematic review and meta-analysis. This comprehensive study indicates that video games may provide some helpful cognitive benefits to gamers. Years of conflicting evidence On the face of it, it might seem like video games fall into the "brain rot" category of entertainment, similar to endless social media scrolling or watching television. Yet most gamers would agree that video games involve at least some degree of skill, and many researchers would agree, too. In fact, the interactive nature of video games has positioned them as a potential tool for cognitive training, helping to exercise core mental skills like memory, attention, self-control, spatial reasoning and broader problem-solving. Much research has been done over the years to determine whether video games are useful for cognitive training and which cognitive abilities they might either hinder or help. Results have been mixed, with some studies showing benefits and others finding little to no real-world improvement. Differences in methodological, demographic and game-related factors may also play a role in the conflicting results. Meta-analyses focused on action games have often found gamers outperform non-gamers on attention-related and

perceptual tasks. Some meta-analyses have argued effects are small or may reflect methodological choices rather than true cognitive gains. Also, differences in what counts as "action," and whether studies include exergames or "brain training" tools, have contributed to conflicting conclusions. The authors of the new study explain, "Some researchers remain skeptical about the positive cognitive effects of playing video games, arguing that video game play typically produces only 'near-transfer' effects. This means improvements are largely confined to the video game itself or highly similar contexts, with limited evidence supporting the enhancement of 'far-transfer' cognitive abilities applicable to everyday life. A unified, up-to-date analysis of the effects of video games To provide a more up-to-date and comprehensive look at the cognitive effects of video games, the researchers conducted three meta-analyses on correlational studies, gamer vs. non-gamer comparisons, and controlled trial studies published between January 2005 and August 2025. In total, 133 studies were included, comprising a total sample of 14,245 participants. The team assessed the quality of these studies using the Joanna Briggs Institute Critical Appraisal Checklist. Most of the studies were rated medium (69.93%), while 25.56% were rated high and 4.51% were rated low. The researchers grouped cognitive outcomes into five domains: memory, spatial ability, visual attention, cognitive control and intelligence. They found that video game play was linked to small but statistically significant

cognitive advantages overall. Correlational studies showed a small overall link, with the biggest effects on memory. Comparisons between gamers and non-gamers showed a small overall advantage for gamers, especially in spatial ability, visual attention, cognitive control and intelligence. Controlled trials for cognitive training showed the smallest but most causal effects, with memory being the only domain showing a clear significant improvement. "In the meta-analysis of correlational studies, the findings revealed a statistically significant, yet weak, positive correlation between video game play and overall cognitive ability. This indicates that a longer duration of video game play may be associated with higher scores on cognitive assessments," the study authors write. "When examining specific cognitive domains, a significant association was found only for memory, suggesting that video game play may have a more consistent association with skills related to memory. One possible interpretation of this association is that individuals who invest more time in gaming engage in frequent and sustained recruitment of memory-related skills during gameplay." The team also conducted moderator tests to determine whether demographics or other factors made a difference. They found little evidence that results depended strongly on gender, age group, culture (categorized as Eastern or Western), health status, intervention duration or game type.—DNA

Lebanon must remove Hezbollah threat from south

JERUSALEM: Germany's foreign minister on Tuesday urged Lebanese authorities to confront Hezbollah and reassert state control over the country's south, where the militant group has been engaged in hostilities with Israeli forces. During a visit to Jerusalem, Johann Wadepuhl, who backed Israel's ground invasion of southern Lebanon earlier this year, also praised the US-brokered agreement between Israel and Lebanon, pledging Germany's support for what he described as a "historic" initiative. "What is crucial is that Lebanon now needs determination on its side, to assert itself and ensure that Hezbollah no longer actually exercises control in southern Lebanon," Wadepuhl said at a joint press conference with his Israeli counterpart. Lebanon must "in particular ensure that no danger whatsoever to Israel emanates from Lebanese territory," he said. Hezbollah dragged Lebanon into the Middle East war on March 2, when it fired rockets at Israel in retaliation for the killing of Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei in joint US-Israeli airstrikes.—APP

Turkiye accuses Israel of F-35 'disinformation'

ANKARA: Turkiye on Tuesday rejected as "disinformation" Israel's claim that the sale to Ankara of US F-35 fighter jets and components would upset the regional power balance Ahead of a NATO summit in Turkiye, Ankara's foreign ministry slammed the claim made Monday by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "The baseless allegations recently circulated by Israeli officials in a coordinated manner and with calculated timing are part of a disinformation campaign," the ministry said. "Netanyahu and his partners in crime deliberately distort any criticism directed at them and seek to divert attention through a systematic propaganda effort." Netanyahu had Monday urged the United States not to sell the jets to NATO ally Turkiye, arguing it would "upset the power balance" in the region. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was due to receive his US counterpart Donald Trump ahead of the summit starting Tuesday evening. Last month, Trump promised to make Erdogan "very happy" when asked about Turkiye looking to secure F110 jet engines and regaining access to the F-35 program. Analysts say Turkiye wants to secure the new engines for use in its flagship KAAAN stealth fighter project, as Ankara seeks to join the exclusive club of nations producing fifth-generation combat aircraft, which notably includes the United States, China and Russia. In 2019, Washington expelled Turkiye from the F-35 program two years after Ankara acquired a Russian S-400 missile defense system.—APP

Samsung's profit soars 1,800%

ASTANA: Samsung Electronics expects to deliver the strongest quarterly results in its history after surging demand for artificial intelligence memory chips fueled a nearly 1,800% jump in operating profit, according to the company's preliminary earnings guidance released Tuesday. The South Korean technology giant forecast second quarter operating profit of approximately 89.4 trillion won (US\$58.8 billion) for the April to June period, up about 1,810% from 4.68 trillion won a year earlier. Quarterly sales are projected to reach 171 trillion won, compared with 74.57 trillion won in the same period of 2025, representing an increase of roughly 129%. The company will release its full earnings report, including net profit and a business segment breakdown, later this month. If confirmed, the results would mark Samsung's third consecutive quarter of record revenue and operating profit. The surge was driven by robust demand for advanced memory chips used in AI data centers. As technology companies continue expanding AI infrastructure.—APP

Briefs

Three more airports 'added' to govt's revised privatisation plan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has added Pakistan's three largest international airports to its revised five-year privatisation programme alongside seven power distribution companies, as part of a plan to divest or restructure 25 state-owned entities in three phases. According to the updated privatisation plan, the Jinnah International Airport Karachi, Islamabad International Airport, and Allama Iqbal International Airport Lahore have been added to the list of state-owned assets earmarked for private sector participation. The three airports were not part of the government's earlier privatisation programme. The revised roadmap, prepared under the federal government's five-year privatisation strategy, envisages the divestment or restructuring of 25 state-owned entities (SOEs) in three phases. Under the plan, 11 entities will be taken up during the first phase over the next year, 13 entities in the second phase spanning one to three years, and one entity in the final phase over three to five years.

Passport home delivery service being improved

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to facilitate diaspora, the federal government is mulling further streamlining passport home delivery services to overseas Pakistanis. In line with the directives of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, DG Immigration and Passports Muhammad Ali Randhawa, chaired a meeting with representatives of Nadra, and DHL to enhance passport home delivery services for overseas Pakistanis. The meeting discussed measures to make passport home delivery service for overseas Pakistanis faster, easier, more reliable. The huddle agreed to finalise procedure for passport home delivery.

Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan reaffirm commitment to strong co-op

President Zardari, Kyrgyz counterpart pledge closer trade, connectivity and regional cooperation

DNA

BISHKEK: President Asif Ali Zardari and Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov on Tuesday reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening bilateral ties, expanding economic cooperation, and enhancing regional connectivity. Speaking at the delegation level talks with the Kyrgyz President, President Zardari said Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan share deep-rooted brotherly relations based on common faith, shared history, and cultural links. President Zardari, who is on a four-day official visit to Kyrgyzstan, stressed the need to further deepen cooperation by increasing trade, improving connectivity through more direct flights, and exploring new avenues of collaboration. This is the first visit by a Pakistani president to the Kyrgyz Republic in 21 years, marking a historic milestone in the bilateral relationship. The visit follows the successful trip of President Zhabarov to Pakistan in December 2025 and reflects the sustained upward trajectory of high-level engagement between the two countries. The president said both countries should work together to achieve shared progress, noting that neighbours must strengthen cooperation for mutual prosperity. He also congratulated Kyrgyzstan on its election as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the 2027-2028 term, describing it as a reflection of the international community's confidence in the coun-



try's constructive role in promoting peace, security, and multilateral cooperation. President Zardari said Pakistan stands forward to working closely with Kyrgyzstan on regional and international issues. He highlighted the historic links between the two countries through the ancient Silk Route and expressed confidence that the long-standing relationship could be strengthened further. He said Pakistan is keen to expand trade by supplying quality products to Kyrgyzstan at competitive prices and called for enhanced cooperation in industry, research, innovation, and modern technology. He emphasised the importance of investing in the younger generation and creating a peaceful and prosperous future through joint efforts. Speaking on the occasion, President Sadyr Japarov said Kyrgyzstan attaches great importance to its brotherly relations with Pakistan and is committed to taking bilateral ties to new heights. He reaffirmed his country's resolve to implement the CASA-1000 project and enhance cooperation in the energy sector. President Japarov also said the two countries would expand collaboration in agriculture, textiles, mines and minerals, the halal industry, healthcare, information technology, science, education, and tourism. Pakistan and the Kyrgyz Republic enjoy warm and fraternal relations, anchored in shared history, faith, culture and common aspirations for peace, connectivity and prosperity in Central and South Asia, the Foreign Office said on Monday.

NAB may prevent closure of many graft cases

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) is considering an innovative legal interpretation aimed at preventing the closure of a large number of corruption cases that may otherwise fall outside its jurisdiction because of the inflation-linked increase in the bureau's financial threshold. The proposal seeks to apply the same inflation adjustment mechanism – which has effectively raised NAB's jurisdictional threshold from Rs500 million to over Rs800 million – to the value of the alleged loss suffered by the victim, whether an individual, a public institution or the national exchequer. Under this interpretation, if an accused seeks to benefit from the amended law by arguing that the alleged corruption amount now falls below the revised inflation-adjusted threshold, the value of the allegedly embezzled or misappropriated amount would also be recalculated after applying the same inflation formula. This could substantially increase the present-day value of the alleged loss, potentially bringing the case back within NAB's jurisdiction. Sources said the proposal is based on the principle that the inflation-linked amendment should not operate exclusively for the benefit of the accused while ignoring the erosion in the value of the money allegedly lost by the victim due to inflation.

Finance Minister Announces Task Force for SME finance

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, today announced the establishment of a dedicated SME Finance Task Force to expand access to finance for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Speaking at the Pakistan Banking Summit 2026 in Karachi, he called for an industry-wide effort to increase private sector lending and outlined the Government's broader agenda for banking sector reforms and sustainable economic growth. The Task Force will be led by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) with senior representation from the Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), chambers of commerce and industry, and the Ministry of Finance. It will recommend practical measures to improve SME financing and broaden access to credit across the banking industry. Emphasizing the banking sector's role in driving economic growth, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said that increased lending to SMEs, exporters, agriculture, manufacturing, construction, housing, and the information technology sector is a mission critical for achieving sustainable economic growth. He stressed that access to finance for SMEs must become an industry-wide effort rather than the responsibility of only a few institutions. He also mentioned the required budgetary allocations for these sector that has already been done in the Budget FY27. Highlighting Pakistan's improving macroeconomic outlook, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb noted that the econ-

omy had concluded the last fiscal year on a strong footing, supported by a primary surplus, the lowest fiscal deficit in recent years, improved debt indicators, sustained current account performance, record remittance inflows, growing foreign exchange reserves, and renewed access to international capital markets through successful sovereign debt issuances, including Pakistan's inaugural Panda Bond. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said the Government remained committed to translating macroeconomic stability into sustainable, export-led growth through structural reforms and policy consistency. He noted that the Federal Budget FY27 had introduced significant taxation and financing measures to improve competitiveness, encourage investment, support exporters, agriculture and manufacturing, and provide relief to the salaried class. He further reaffirmed the Government's commitment to introducing a Medium-Term Tax Strategy to provide greater certainty and predictability for businesses. The Finance Minister also highlighted the Government's efforts to modernize tax administration through a technology-driven operating model aimed at minimizing human intervention, enhancing transparency, and strengthening trust between taxpayers and the tax administration. The Finance Minister reaffirmed the Government's commitment to expanding risk-sharing and partial credit guarantee schemes, particularly for SMEs and small farmers, while continuing targeted financing support for export-oriented sectors. He also emphasized the need to diversify Government borrowing through non-bank financing channels and deepen domestic debt capital markets to reduce reliance on the banking sector and create greater space for private sector lending.

Govt keeps gas prices unchanged despite Ogra reduction

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Consumers will not receive lower gas tariffs in FY2026-27 after the federal government decided to retain existing rates despite the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) reducing prescribed prices for Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC). The government has formally informed the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that it will maintain existing consumer gas tariffs, opting not to pass on the reduction in prescribed prices determined by the regulator. According to a senior Petroleum Division official, Ogra has reduced the average prescribed price for the two gas utilities to Rs1,705 per MMBtu from Rs1,793 per MMBtu. The regulator fixed SNGPL's prescribed price at Rs1,719 per MMBtu and SSGC's at Rs1,691 per MMBtu. Despite the lower prescribed prices, the government has decided against reducing consumer tariffs, allowing both utilities to remain in surplus. SNGPL is projected to post a surplus of around Rs44 billion, while SSGC is expected to remain in surplus by approximately Rs2.5 billion. The reduction in prescribed prices stems largely from the exclusion of LNG diversion costs after QatarEnergy declared force majeure on LNG supplies to Pakistan on March 4, 2026. As a result, the cost of diverting imported RLNG to the domestic sector was not factored into Ogra's determination. Officials said the gas utilities are expected to file revised tariff petitions once LNG shipments from Qatar normalise.

Zelensky wants to discuss air defenses with Trump

KYIV: President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Tuesday he plans to discuss Ukraine's desperate need for systems to defend against Russia's deadly ballistic strikes when he meets US President Donald Trump at the NATO summit in Türkiye. "We see the weakness of Russia – we feel it. But it's not enough. We need more pressure, more anti-ballistic and more sanctions on Russia," Zelensky told reporters as he spoke alongside NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte in Ankara. Zelensky and Trump are expected to meet on Wednesday following months of Ukraine's stepped-up attacks on Russia's energy sector. – APP

Iran fires missiles at commercial ships in Strait of Hormuz

Two commercial ships suffered significant damage but no casualties, reports Axios

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Iran's Revolutionary Guards fired at least two missiles at commercial ships transiting through the Strait of Hormuz on Monday night, Axios reported, citing two US officials. Two commercial ships suffered significant damage but had no casualties, the report said, citing a US official. Separately, Britain's maritime security agency said a tanker caught fire after being hit by an unknown projectile east of Oman's Limah early on Tuesday. The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations agency (UKMTO) said early on Tuesday that the tanker was struck on its port side while travelling southbound about 8 nautical miles (15 km) east of Limah, causing a fire. No casualties or environmental impact had been reported. Reuters could not immediately verify the Axios report or determine whether the ships described in that report included the tanker cited in the UKMTO advisory. US Central Command did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The reports underscored the risks to shipping around the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway between Iran and Oman through which about a fifth of global oil consumption passes. Commercial vessels have come under attack during the war that began with US-Israeli strikes on Iran, despite an interim agreement that included safe-passage provisions. Indirect US-Iran talks ended last week without any public sign of headway toward a lasting peace, despite a 60-day ceasefire intended to create space for diplomacy following the US and Israeli strikes that triggered the conflict. President Donald Trump said on Monday the US would either reach a deal with Iran or "finish the job," renewing his threat of military action as Tehran projects defiance following the funeral of former Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned ships via maritime radio over the weekend that "our missiles and drones are ready to fire at you," the Wall Street Journal reported on Monday, quoting from a recording it obtained. One of the vessels under attack appeared to be Al Rekayyat, a liquefied natural gas tanker owned and managed by Nakilat, also known as Qatar Gas Transport Company Ltd, which operates one of the world's largest LNG shipping fleets, the WSJ said, adding that the ship had been hit on the port side, at the top of the engine room. "Engine room fire and full of smoke. Unable to assess further damage. All crew are safe and mustered on the starboard side," the WSJ quoted from a recording.