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Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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Petroleum prices mechanism to be made fair

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Escalation intensifies

Trump announces US reinstating naval blockade of Strait of Hormuz

US aircraft, naval vessels and drones hit “dozens of targets at multiple locations with precision munitions to degrade Iran’s ability to continue attacking international shipping flowing through the Strait of Hormuz

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump has announced that the United States will be reinstating its naval blockade of Iranian ports in the Strait of Hormuz. “The Hormuz Strait is open, and will remain open, with or without Iran,” he writes on Truth Social. “We are reinstating the Iranian blockade, so named because it is only stopping Iran’s ships or customers from entering or leaving. All other countries will have fair and open use of the Strait,” he adds. Trump further says the US will be known as “the guardian of the Hormuz Strait” and that “as a matter of fairness, will be reimbursed, at the rate of 20 per cent on all cargo shipped, for any and all costs necessary to do the job of providing safety and security to this very volatile section of the world”. “The process and formation will begin immediately,” he concludes. The Middle East has been rocked by US and Iranian attacks of a scale unseen since an April ceasefire, as fighting over the strategic Strait of Hormuz threatened to derail efforts to permanently end the war. As the US attacks on Iran continued on Monday, Tehran said it would stop complying with a framework agreement signed in June to halt the fighting if Washington failed to meet its commitments. It also responded with attacks of its own targeting Gulf nations, with the powerful Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) announcing new strikes on Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait and Oman.

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US pressure on Oman a hurdle in Hormuz traffic

DNA

TEHERAN: Iran has said that U.S. pressure on Oman hinders efforts for joint Strait of Hormuz mechanism. Hormuz traffic slows to a multi-week low as renewed U.S. and Iran strikes raise safety risks. Iran claims a U.S. drone was shot down near Bandar Abbas. Tehran declares it will not honor the memorandum of understanding until Washington fulfills its commitments. The Iranian Foreign Ministry accuses the United States of obstructing Oman’s mediation role, saying American interference has delayed progress toward a shared maritime coordination system aimed at ensuring safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz. Shipping activity has dropped sharply, with vessel movements at their lowest in weeks, reflecting heightened regional tension.

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DOHAR: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday met Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and offered his condolences on the passing of his father and former emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. – DNA

Doctor shot dead in Karachi

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: A young doctor practicing at the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) was shot dead during a robbery near Clifton on Monday, according to police. South Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Syed Asad Raza told Dawn that the incident occurred near Teen Talwar, where a young doctor, identified as Akash Kumar, lost his life. He said Dr Kumar was present outside a bank along with his father and cousin when armed suspects attempted to rob them. “During the course of the incident, firing took place, resulting in fatal injuries to the doctor. It is reported that the bank security guard also opened fire, leading to a crossfire.” “The suspects fled the scene following the incident after looting approximately Rs2.5 million,” the South DIG said.

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Offers condolences

Shehbaz meets Qatari leader Sheikh Tamim

In his meeting with Sheikh Tamim, PM Shehbaz “conveyed heartfelt condolences on the sad demise” of Sheikh Hamad and “paid rich tribute to the late Father Amir’s visionary leadership, statesmanship, and enduring contributions to Qatar’s remarkable transformation as well as to regional peace, stability, and development

NEWS DESK

DOHA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday met Qatar’s emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and offered his condolences on the passing of his father and former emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. Sheikh Tamim received PM Shehbaz at Lusail Palace in Doha, where the latter extended his condolences on Sheikh Hamad’s demise, a statement released by the Qatari leader’s office said. PM Shehbaz, who reached Qatar on a one-day visit earlier on Monday, is accompanied by PML-N President Nawaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and For-

eign Minister Ishaq Dar and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar are also accompanying them. The Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) said the premier was in Doha to “personally convey condolences on behalf of the people and government of Pakistan to the leadership and people of the state of Qatar on the passing away of Sheikh Hamad”. In his meeting with Sheikh Tamim, PM Shehbaz “conveyed heartfelt condolences on the sad demise” of Sheikh Hamad and “paid rich tribute to the late Father Amir’s visionary leadership, statesmanship, and enduring contributions to Qatar’s

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Briefs

Nine killed in India waste plant blast

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: Nine workers were killed at a waste-to-energy plant in western India after a garbage heap collapsed onto an administrative building following heavy rains, the facility’s operator said Monday. Building and construction accidents are common during India’s June-to-September monsoon season, with old and rickety structures buckling after prolonged downpours. The accident occurred last Wednesday at the Antony Waste plant on the outskirts of Pune, when thousands of tonnes of waste from a nearby landfill gave way, trapping 23 people inside the building. “The incident, triggered by incessant rains causing thousands of tonnes of waste from an adjacent landfill to destabilise, severely damaged the structure where 23 personnel were present,” the company said in a statement.

OIC urged to work for women empowerment

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, has urged the OIC-member countries to move beyond declarations and translate their commitments into concrete action for socio-economic empowerment of women. Addressing the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women in Islamabad today, he welcomed the delegates from OIC member states in the conference. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani also called on OIC member countries to adopt measurable targets for girls’ education, women’s leadership, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and protection against gender-based violence.

Constitutional Court to ‘decide’ Imran Khan’s fate in all NAB cases

NAB amendment marks first major transfer of appellate jurisdiction from Supreme Court to FCC

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: A recent amendment to the National Accountability Bureau law has transferred the final appellate jurisdiction in NAB cases from the Supreme Court to the newly established Federal Constitutional Court, a development with far-reaching implications for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, The News reported. The National Accountability Bureau (Amendment) Act, 2026 inserts a new Section 32A, which identifies the newly established Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) as the forum for second appeals against High Court judgments in NAB cases. According to the sources, the PTI leadership knows that not only the most consequential £190 million (Al-Qadir Trust) case but also in any other case which falls under the NAB domain will finally go to the Constitutional Court. The said section reads as: “32A Second Appeal. Any person convicted or the Prosecutor General Accountability, if so directed by the NAB chairman, ag-

grieved by the decision made by the High Court under section 32, may prefer a second appeal to the Federal Constitutional Court within a period of thirty days.” The change means that if Imran’s conviction in any NAB reference, including the £190 million case, is upheld by the High Court, his final statutory appeal would not be heard by the Supreme Court but by the Federal Constitutional Court. The amendment marks one of the first major transfers of appellate jurisdiction from the Supreme Court to the FCC following the constitutional restructuring of Pakistan’s superior judiciary. PTI sources say the amendment is Imran Khan-specific and is significant because his legal future is closely tied to the outcome of pending accountability proceedings against him. The £190 million case is regarded as the most serious corruption prosecution against the former prime minister, and its eventual fate could determine not only his criminal liability but also his political future.

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117 terrorists eliminated since July 5: security sources

Operation Shaban will continue in Balochistan until last terrorist is neutralised, say security sources

NEWS DESK

QUETTA: At least 117 terrorists have been killed in Operation Shaban and other law enforcement operations across Balochistan since July 5, security sources said on Monday. The sources asserted that the ongoing Operation Shaban, a joint operation launched by the Pakistan Army, Frontier Corps (FC) and police, will continue in the province until the last terrorist is neutralised. India-backed terrorists are being targeted through air and ground operations, the sources added. Earlier in the day, the security sources confirmed that five more terrorists were gunned down during fresh operations in the province, raising the total number of militants killed in Operation Shaban to 76. A large cache of weapons and ammunition was also recovered from the killed militants, including M4 rifles, submachine guns, rocket launchers, mobile phones and other equipment, they added. It is pertinent to mention here that Operation Shaban was

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CDF Munir arrives in Turkiye on 2-day official visit: media

DNA

ANKARA: Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir on Monday arrived in Turkiye on a two-day official visit, state media reported. Citing security sources, state-run Radio Pakistan reported that CDF Munir received a “warm welcome” upon his arrival in Turkiye. During the visit, the CDF will hold “important” meetings with Turkiye’s military and political leadership, the security sources added. State-run Pakistan TV and APP also reported CDF Munir’s arrival in Turkiye and his expected meetings with the Turkish military and political leadership.

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Collaboration with UNICEF to be further strengthened

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Industries and Commerce, Chaudhry Shafay Hussain held a meeting with Rameez Behbudov, Chief of Field Office, UNICEF Punjab, to discuss UNICEF's ongoing programmes in the province relating to education, health, skill development, child welfare and other social sectors. The meeting, held at Punjab Skill Development Authority (PSIC) House on Monday, was also attended by UNICEF Education Specialist Sehar Raza Jafri and PSIC Director General Sarah Rashid. Both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in child welfare, clean drinking water, environmental protection, education, special education and other areas of mutual interest. Speaking on the occasion, Rameez Behbudov said that promotion of technical education for children had contributed to a reduction in child labour in Punjab. He added that UNICEF has been working in Pakistan since 1948 and is successfully implementing programmes in various cities across Punjab. He added that UNICEF plans to further expand the scope of its programmes in the province. Provincial Minister Chaudhry Shafay Hussain appreciated UNICEF's contribution towards child welfare, education, healthcare and other development sectors in Punjab. He said, the Punjab Government would take further steps to strengthen cooperation with UNICEF in skill development, clean drinking water, education, healthcare and other priority areas. The provincial minister said that brick kilns across the province are being shifted to zigzag technology as part of environmental protection initiatives. In line with the vision of Punjab Chief Minister, effective measures have been taken to eliminate child labour across the province. He added that children working at brick kilns are being removed from hazardous labour and provided with access to modern technical education.—APP

Pak, Fudan varsity map out AI, health, education coop

BEIJING :A high-level delegation of Pakistani university leaders, headed by Prof. Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar, Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, visited Fudan University on Thursday for wide-ranging talks on academic exchange, doctoral training, artificial intelligence, public health and cultural cooperation. Qiu Xin, Chairperson of the Fudan University Council, held a courtesy meeting with the delegation at the Handan Campus, while the working session was chaired by Vice President Chen Zhimin. The delegation comprised the heads of COMSATS University Islamabad, NUST, University of Sindh, BUITEMS Quetta, Bahria University, Kotli University, AJK, and UET Peshawar, University of Sargodha, along with senior HEC officials. HEC Chairman Prof. Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar showed keen interest in cooperating with Fudan University across priority areas, including joint research.—APP

APNS demands end to centralized government advertising policy

The Committee further urged that the regional offices of the Press Information Department in Karachi, Hyderabad, Quetta, Lahore, and Peshawar be empowered. The existing policy under which media recommendations made by these regional offices are altered at the central level should be withdrawn immediately



DNA

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Regional Press Committee of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) was held in Islamabad under the chairmanship of Mr. Muhammad Humayun Gulzar, Chairman of the Committee. Senator Sarmad Ali, President APNS, Mr. Muhammad Athar Kazi, Secretary General, and Mr. Shahab Zuberi, Vice President, attended the meeting as special participants. The members pointed out that newspapers are facing serious delays in receiving direct payments from clients, resulting in severe financial difficulties for the print media, particularly regional newspapers, due to the existing uncertain payment mechanism. They noted that substantial payments from various federal government departments

have remained outstanding for a considerable period. The members demanded that the policy of centralization of government advertising be abolished and that the previous policy allowing client departments to recommend their preferred media outlets for publication be restored. They stated that such a measure would significantly increase the volume of advertisements for newspapers while also providing the Press Information Department (PID) with greater flexibility in the placement of advertisements of various government organizations in the media. The Committee further urged that the regional offices of the Press Information Department in Karachi, Hyderabad, Quetta, Lahore, and Peshawar be empowered. The existing policy under which media recommendations made by these regional offices are altered at the central level should be withdrawn immediately.

The members also demanded that the procedure for the renewal of newspaper declarations and the transfer of declarations following the death of a publisher be simplified. They emphasized that unnecessary and cumbersome procedural requirements in this regard should be abolished. The Committee expressed profound grief over the demise of the sister of Mr. Munir Jillani, the son of Mr. Qazi Imtiaz, and the father of Mr. Noorullah Malik, and offered Fateha for the eternal peace of the departed souls. The meeting was attended by Mr. Muhammad Humayun Gulzar (Chairman, Sayadat Bahawalpur), Mr. Tanveer Siddiqui (Aaj, Peshawar), Mr. Mohsin Siyal (Aftab, Multan), Mr. Rao Nauman Aslam (Ibadat), Mr. Qazi Asad Abid (Ibrat), Mr. Syed Ayaz Badshah (Mashriq, Peshawar), Mr. Rao Amjad Iqbal (Har Lamha), and Mr. Shakir (Mashriq, Quetta).

Punjab CM, Portugal envoy for enhancing investment ties

DNA

LAHORE: Portugal's Ambassador to Pakistan, Paulo Domingues, called on Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif here on Monday. Matters of mutual interest, bilateral relations, trade, investment and cooperation in agriculture, livestock, tourism and other sectors were discussed during the meeting. Welcoming the ambassador, the chief minister thanked him for visiting Lahore and expressed Punjab's commitment to strengthening ties with Portugal. She invited Portuguese companies to explore business and investment opportunities in Punjab, saying there was vast potential for collaboration in the pharmaceutical sector, ener-

gy, water resources, healthcare and digital innovation. The two sides agreed to further strengthen Pakistan-Portugal bilateral relations and discussed a proposal to establish a Pakistan-Portugal Business Forum to promote commercial cooperation. They also held detailed discussions on developing sister-city relations between Lahore and Lisbon to enhance cultural and educational exchanges, while emphasizing the need to expand cooperation in tourism and other areas of mutual interest. CM Maryam Nawaz said Pakistan and Portugal enjoyed longstanding friendly relations with ample room for further expansion through institutional cooperation. She noted that promoting Portuguese culture, heritage, language and academic exchanges would help

strengthen people-to-people contacts. Referring to football icon Cristiano Ronaldo, she remarked that a large number of young Pakistanis were his admirers. Ambassador Paulo Domingues praised Pakistan's constructive diplomatic role in facilitating dialogue between Iran and the United States and acknowledged the country's efforts to promote lasting peace and stability in the Middle East. He also lauded the Punjab government's initiatives in the health sector, particularly the establishment of the province's first government cancer hospital, and invited Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to visit Portugal. The ambassador assured the chief minister that Portuguese authorities would continue to facilitate Pakistani investors and businessmen seeking business opportunities in Portugal.

KP CM concerned over unannounced load-shedding

PESHAWAR:Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Muhammad Sohail Khan Afridi on Monday expressed serious concern over unannounced power outages, low voltage, delays in electricity schemes, and the difficulties being faced by consumers, directing the authorities concerned to clear all pending electricity-related cases on a priority basis. Chairing a meeting on power supply and energy-related issues, the Chief Minister reviewed the performance of electricity distribution companies and the progress of ongoing power projects. Provincial Minister for Energy Nazir Abbasi, Members of the National Assembly Arbab Sher Ali

and Shandana Gulzar Khan, MPA Akbar Ayub Khan, and senior officials of the Energy Department, Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO), Tribal Electric Supply Company (TESCO), and Hazara Electric Supply Company (HAZECCO) attended the meeting. The meeting was informed that 1,638 electricity-related cases were pending with the power distribution companies. The Chief Minister directed PESCO, TESCO, and HAZECCO to dispose of all pending cases without delay, emphasizing that decisions should be based on public interest, merit, and fairness. Expressing concern over delays in the supply of poles, transformers, and other electrical equipment despite

the release of funds, he said such delays after receiving payments from government departments amounted to a waste of public resources. The Chief Minister directed the authorities to complete and operationalize all ongoing electricity schemes by September in the hottest areas and by December in the remaining parts of the province. He warned that if procurement delays despite the availability of funds resulted in cost overruns, the concerned department would be held responsible for the additional financial burden. He said administrative delays should not deprive people of electricity connections, adding that despite generating nearly twice its electricity requirements.—APP

Murad, Khichi discuss QMMB, National Library issues

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Division Aurangzeb Khan Khichi on Monday held a detailed meeting to review matters relating to the Quaid-e-Azam Mazar Management Board (QMMB) and the National Library of Pakistan's Regional Office in Karachi, with both sides agreeing to strengthen coordination for the preservation of national heritage institutions and the resolution of longstanding administrative issues. The meeting examined issues concerning the management, maintenance and security of Mazar-e-Quaid and its peripheral areas, including encroachments, illegal dumping of garbage and construction debris, security concerns arising from the presence of drug addicts and miscreants, and proposals aimed at improving public access to the national monument. The participants also discussed disputes involving the National Library of Pakistan's Regional Office housed within the Liaquat Memorial Library complex, including water supply, use of premises and future expansion plans. The meeting was attended by Commissioner Karachi Hassan Naqvi, Secretary to Chief Minister Asif Jameel, Secretary Culture Khair Muhammad Kalwar and other provincial officials. The federal minister was accompanied by Director General National Library of Pakistan, Resident Engineer and Secretary Quaid-e-Azam Mazar Management Board Aleem Khan and senior officers of the National Heritage and Culture Division. During the meeting, officials briefed the chief minister on the constitutional status and responsibilities of the Quaid-e-Azam Mazar Management Board, which oversees the protection, preservation, maintenance and development of the mausoleum and its surrounding 131.718-acre precincts. The chief minister directed Commissioner Hassan Naqvi to remove encroachments from the Mazar's peripheral areas adjoining Lines Area and Khudadad Colony, take measures to stop illegal dumping of waste on the roads surrounding the monument, enhance security arrangements, and provide financial support for the upkeep and maintenance of the mausoleum. The meeting was also informed about administrative and operational issues concerning the National Library of Pakistan's Karachi Regional Office located within the Liaquat Memorial Library complex. Officials briefed the meeting that the National Library had complained about the disconnection of water supply to its regional office. The CM directed Commissioner Karachi to resolve the water supply issue of the library.—DNA

NUML confers PhD upon MWL Secy Gen Dr. M Abdul Karim

DNA

Islamabad: The National University of Modern Languages held its 3rd Special Convocation 2026 to confer the prestigious Honorary Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree upon H.E. Dr. Mohammad AbdulKarim Al-Issa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to humanity, global peace, interfaith harmony, moderation, and the promotion of knowledge. The distinguished ceremony was attended by H.E. Nawaf Bin Said Al-Malki, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan; Dr. Wajih Qamar, Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training; Rector NUML, Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI(M) (Retd); Director General NUML, Brigadier Muhammad Rafiq Khan; Pro-Rector Research & Strategic Initiatives, Dr. Safer Awan; deans, faculty members, eminent scholars, students, and a large number of distinguished guests. Addressing the convocation after receiving the honorary degree, Dr. Mohammad AbdulKarim Al-Issa expressed his profound gratitude to NUML, stating that the conferment of the

honorary doctorate was both a great honour and a profound responsibility. He said he was delighted to visit Pakistan and appreciated the warmth and hospitality extended by the university and the people of Pakistan. Dr. Al-Issa lauded Pakistan's constructive role in promoting regional and global peace, describing it as a source of pride not only for Pakistan but for the entire Muslim world. He also appreciated the leadership of Pakistan, including the Field Marshal and the country's political leadership, for their efforts towards peace, stability, and unity. Thanking NUML for the distinguished honour,



he prayed for Pakistan's continued peace, progress, and prosperity. In his address, Rector NUML Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI(M) (Retd) congratulated Dr. Al-Issa on the conferment of the Honorary Doctor of Philosophy degree in recognition of his remarkable services to humanity, peace, and knowledge. The Rector remarked that "Universities are not merely centres where knowledge is transmitted; they are institutions where civilizations preserve their wisdom, societies cultivate their conscience, and future generations discover their purpose." He emphasized that academic collaboration, scholarly exchange, language education, and intercultural understanding are powerful instruments for bringing nations closer together. He said Dr. Al-Issa's presence at NUML symbolizes the enduring bonds between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and reflects a shared commitment to knowledge, moderation, dialogue, and constructive engagement with the wider world. Speaking on the occasion, Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training Dr. Wajih Qamar appreciated NUML for recognizing the exceptional services of Dr. Mohammad AbdulKarim Al-Issa through the conferment of an Honorary PhD degree.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY	
July 01/Japan Self Defence Day	
July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day	
July 01 / Canada National Day	
July 01/Somalia Independence Day	
July 04/USA Independence Day	
July 05/Algeria Independence Day	
July 09/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	
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July 26/Cuba National Day	
July 26/Liberia National Day	
July 30/Morocco National Day	

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Shifa International	4603666



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Potohar Town.....	9209224
Rawal Town.....	5773343
Water Tank	
Islamabad.....	0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Families visiting Dino Valley to witnessing life size dinosaur, prehistoric elephants and other animals in the Federal Capital.

Export growth depends on commercial diplomacy: ICCI

Tahir Ayub emphasized that Pakistani embassies and trade missions abroad should serve as proactive economic ambassadors, working closely with the business community to identify emerging market opportunities, facilitate business-to-business linkages, organize sector-specific trade events, and help Pakistani exporters establish long-term commercial partnerships

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Acting President, the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Tahir Ayub on Monday urged for placing commercial diplomacy at the heart of economic and foreign policy to achieve sustainable export growth, attract foreign investment, and strengthen its position in regional and global markets. Speaking to a delegation of visiting Industrialists including Zikria Zia, Iftikhar Sethi, Mian Waqas Masood and Mirza Mohammad Ali, he said that while Pakistan possessed immense potential in manufacturing, agriculture, informa-

tion technology, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, minerals, and services. He said that the country has yet to fully capitalize on these strengths due to the absence of a coordinated and results-oriented commercial diplomacy framework, said a press release. Tahir Ayub emphasized that Pakistani embassies and trade missions abroad should serve as proactive economic ambassadors, working closely with the business community to identify emerging market opportunities, facilitate business-to-business linkages, organize sector-specific trade events, and help Pakistani exporters establish long-term commercial partnerships. He noted that diplomatic missions should be eval-

uated not only on traditional diplomatic achievements but also on their contribution to expanding exports, attracting foreign direct investment, and promoting Pakistan's economic interests. The ICCI Acting President underscored the importance of exploring untapped markets in Africa, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe while consolidating Pakistan's presence in traditional export destinations. He said that reducing overdependence on a limited number of markets would enhance export resilience and create new opportunities for Pakistani businesses. He further called for greater engagement with the Pakistani

diaspora, describing overseas Pakistanis as valuable economic ambassadors who can play a pivotal role in promoting Pakistani brands, facilitating trade partnerships, attracting investment, and opening doors to international markets. On his part Vice President Irfan Chaudhry emphasized that regular interaction between Pakistani diplomats and the business community should become an institutionalized practice, enabling exporters to communicate market-specific challenges and receive timely support. He proposed establishing dedicated commercial facilitation desks at Pakistani missions abroad to assist exporters and investors more effectively.

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Sunday issued a power suspension programme for Monday in various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to an IESCO spokesperson, in Islamabad Circle, electricity supply will remain suspended from 8 am to 12 pm, Gharial, feeder. In Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, power supply will remain suspended from 5 am to 10 am, Ghazan Khan, feeder. In Attock Circle, electricity supply will remain suspended from 6 am to 10 am, Attock Rural, Teen Mela, Bagh Nela, People Colony feeders. Similarly, in Chakwal Circle, electricity supply will remain suspended from 6 am to 10 am, Abdullah Pur, Jala Pur, Sagharpur, CWO, from 6 am to 12 pm, Jamal Wal, Mengan feeders. In Jhelum Circle, power supply will remain suspended from 6 am to 10 am, Khai Kulia, Karyana, Metro City, Grand City, Bolani feeders. In GSO Circle, power supply will remain suspended from 09:00 am to 04:00 pm, 132kv AWC HMC Taxila and 132KV Sangjani-Burhan, from 08:00 am to 06:00 pm, 132-KV Chakwal- Bhagwal-Talagang, 132KV Kahuta City- Palandri, 132KV New Wah-Bahtmore along with related earth switch, and surrounding areas.—APP

CCP clears Lotte Group's restructuring involving Pak operations

ISLAMABAD: Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved a pre-merger application paving the way for an internal restructuring within the South Korean Lotte Group while finding no competition concerns in Pakistan's food and beverage markets. The transaction involves Japan's Lotte Co., Ltd. acquiring shareholding in Singapore-based Lotte Confectionery (S.E.A.) Pte. Ltd. from LotteWellfood Co., Ltd.—APP

AIOU, TANG China partners for skills edu

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) and TANG Chinese International Education & Technology (Pvt.) Ltd. have signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) to strengthen academic collaboration and promote skills- and technology-based education between Pakistan and China. The partnership will focus on launching joint academic programs, facilitating faculty and student exchanges, promoting the Chinese language, undertaking collaborative research, offering advanced skills training and strengthening university-industry linkages. The Letter of Intent was signed by Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood, Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University, on behalf of AIOU while Mr Song

Jianning, CEO of TANG Chinese International Education & Technology (Pvt.) Ltd., Pakistan signed on behalf of the Chinese organization. Speaking at the ceremony, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood said that young people equipped with modern technology and advanced skills are the true strength of the future. He emphasized that universities must prepare students to meet global challenges by providing them with quality education, practical competencies and internationally relevant skills. He stated that the collaboration would pave the way for introducing innovative, skills-oriented academic programs that align with rapidly evolving global workforce requirements. He also expressed hope that the partnership would lead to the establishment of a Chinese Language and Culture Centre at AIOU. He not-

ed that the University already operates successful centers for Turkish, Japanese and Russian languages and a Chinese language center would further strengthen educational, cultural and people-to-people ties between Pakistan and China. Highlighting the importance of bilateral relations, the Vice Chancellor said that the enduring friendship between Pakistan and China continues to grow stronger and education remains one of the most effective means of passing this friendship on to future generations. Addressing the gathering, Mr. Song Jianning, CEO of TANG Chinese International Education & Technology (Pvt.) Ltd., Pakistan said that Allama Iqbal Open University is an ideal partner for promoting technology-driven and skills-based education in Pakistan.

SC advances digital transformation to boost Justice delivery

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan has achieved a major milestone in its ongoing programme of institutional modernization by integrating technology across its judicial and administrative functions to build a comprehensive digital justice ecosystem. Through a series of interconnected reforms, the Court is transforming the way cases are managed, judicial services are delivered and institutional processes are administered, with the objective of making justice more accessible, transparent, efficient and responsive. A cornerstone of this transformation is the successful completion of the digitization of all pending case records. A total of 44,995 pending case files have been scanned in searchable OCR format, barcoded, digitally catalogued and integrated with the Court's Case Information Management System (CIMS). Significantly, the digitization exercise was completed alongside the Court's regular judicial work, during which 11,999 of these digitized cases have already been decided, demonstrating the seamless integration of technology into the Court's day-to-day judicial operations. Complementing the digitization initiative, the Supreme Court has also completed, for the first time in its history, the categorization of all pending cases under a structured case categorization framework developed by a Committee of Judges. Supported by a dedicated Categorization Cell, every pending case has been systematically classified according to its jurisdiction and subject matter, creating the foundation for smarter case management, data-driven planning, efficient scheduling and priority-based allocation of judicial resources. The Court's digital transformation extends well beyond the digitization of records. A range of technology-enabled services have been introduced, including electronic filing of cases, QR-authenticated certified copies, online applications for judicial services, digital enrollment of advocates, electronic payment of court fees through OneLink and the State Bank of Pakistan, institutionalized video-link hearings, and a Public Facilitation Centre offering 35 citizen-centric digital services through an integrated online platform.—APP

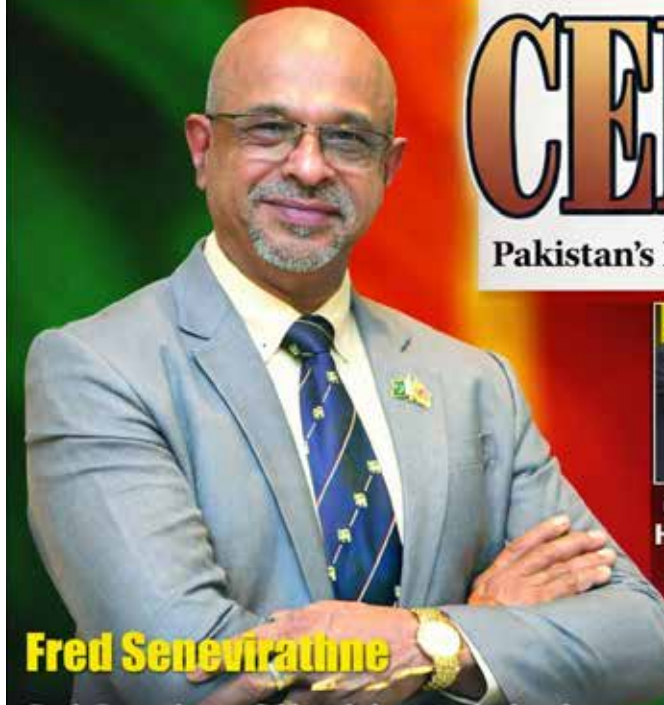
FGEHA board meeting decisive step for Green Enclave-I

ISLAMABAD: Allottees of the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority's (FGEHA) Green Enclave-I housing scheme have urged the authority to convene its Executive Board meeting at the earliest, expressing hope that approval of the agenda related to the project would pave the way for the resumption of the remaining infrastructure development work after nearly 17 years of delay. According to the allottees, the Executive Board meeting has now become the most crucial stage in determining the future of the long-delayed project. Their optimism was based on a series of recent meetings with senior FGEHA officials, who assured that efforts were being made to remove the legal, administrative and contractual hurdles that had slowed down the project over the years. Last month, a delegation of Green Enclave-I allottees met Director General FGEHA, Capt. (Retd.) Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, who informed them that the authority was working to resolve all outstanding issues before placing the Green Enclave-I case before the Executive Board. According to the allottees, the Director General also expressed confidence that they would hear "good news" regarding the project in early August. A few weeks later, representatives of the allottees again met Project Director Green Enclave-I, Mohsin Sardar, to seek an update on the implementation of the assurances given by the Director General. —APP

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Briefs

Kamal vows to eliminate preventable rabies deaths

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Syed Mustafa Kamal reviewed the rabies situation in country on Monday and reaffirmed government's commitment to eliminate preventable rabies-related deaths through close collaboration with provincial governments and technical partners. He made these remarks during meeting with a delegation led by Chief Executive Officer of The Indus Hospital and Health Network, Dr Abdul Bari Khan, where they discussed urgent national measures for the prevention and effective control of rabies in Pakistan. During the meeting, the delegation briefed the minister on the country's current rabies situation, emphasizing the importance of development of proper national rabies surveillance system for the effective management of the disease. Minister was apprised that according to available estimates, nearly 5,000 people die from rabies each year in Pakistan, while a large number of dog bite cases are reported annually in children and people living in rural areas and underserved urban communities, which are among the most affected segment. Expressing deep concern over the growing burden of rabies, Mustafa Kamal gave in-principle approval for the development of a National Rabies Prevention and Control Framework, saying that a National Technical Working Advisory Group would soon be constituted to lead the preparation of the framework.—APP

Naqvi reaffirms Pakistan's support for Kashmir cause

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday marked Kashmir Martyrs' Day, describing July 13 as a historic day of truth, sacrifice, and steadfastness, and paid tribute to the 22 Kashmiris who were killed during the 1931 uprising against Dogra rule. In a statement, Naqvi said the 22 martyrs who sacrificed their lives in protest against the oppression of the Dogra regime remained a symbol of courage and resistance. He said the martyrs of July 13, 1931, gave new direction to the struggle for justice and truth through their sacrifice. The interior minister said the memory of those who lost their lives while the call to prayer was being made continued to inspire the resilience, determination, and perseverance of the Kashmiri people.—APP

Pak-Vietnam PTA to boost bilateral trade to US\$ 1b

Vietnamese envoy noted that the agreement would pave the way for reducing trade barriers and strengthening commercial cooperation across a wide range of sectors.



DNA/APP

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan, H.E Pham Anh Tuan on Monday expressed optimism that Pakistan and Vietnam would soon sign a bilateral Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), describing the proposed accord as a key milestone for promoting trade liberalization and unlocking the untapped economic potential between the two countries. Speaking to media, besides a dinner hosted by him in honor of senior journalist here, the Vietnamese Ambassador said that negotiations on the proposed PTA had made significant progress, with four rounds of talks already completed. Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan, H.E Pham Anh Tuan The Ambassador expressed confidence that the agreement would be finalized in the near future and formally signed by the top leadership of both countries. He said the bilateral PTA would provide a strong institutional framework

for expanding bilateral trade, encouraging investment, and facilitating greater market access for businesses in both countries. Vietnamese envoy noted that the agreement would pave the way for reducing trade barriers and strengthening commercial cooperation across a wide range of sectors.

Tuan said bilateral trade between Pakistan and Vietnam has already reached approximately US\$ 900 million, reflecting the growing economic partnership between the two friendly countries. Once the PTA came into implication, he expressed hope that bilateral trade would surpass the US\$ one billion mark in the near future. The envoy emphasized that Pakistan and Vietnam possess considerable untapped trade and investment potential. He said both economies were complementary in several sectors, including textiles, agriculture, fisheries, information technology, pharmaceuticals, food processing, and light manufacturing. A comprehensive trade agreement, he added, would help businesses capitalize on these

opportunities and further diversify bilateral trade. Highlighting the importance of private-sector engagement, the ambassador stressed that closer cooperation between the business communities, chambers of commerce, and industry representatives of both countries is essential for achieving sustainable growth in bilateral trade. He said business-to-business contacts, trade delegations, exhibitions, and investment forums would play a pivotal role in creating new commercial partnerships and enhancing mutual confidence. The envoy further observed that the proposed PTA would not only facilitate increased trade volumes but also encourage joint ventures, technology transfer, and greater investment flows between Pakistan and Vietnam. Such cooperation, he said, would contribute to stronger economic integration and create mutually beneficial opportunities for entrepreneurs and exporters. The Vietnamese ambassador also underscored the importance of raising public awareness about the growing relationship between Pakistan

and Vietnam. He said stronger people-to-people contacts and enhanced understanding of each other's economic strengths would further reinforce bilateral ties. In this regard, he highlighted the significant role of the media in promoting bilateral relations, saying that responsible and constructive media coverage can help increase awareness of trade, tourism, cultural exchanges, and investment opportunities between the two countries. Greater media engagement, he noted, would contribute to fostering closer friendship and deeper economic cooperation. Pakistan and Vietnam have witnessed steadily expanding diplomatic and economic relations in recent years, with both governments expressing a shared commitment to enhancing trade, investment, and regional connectivity. The proposed 'Preferential Trade Agreement' was widely viewed as an important step toward strengthening economic collaboration and achieving the ambitious target of increasing bilateral trade beyond the one-billion-dollar threshold.

First Lady greets Pakistani student on becoming HCBC champion

ISLAMABAD: First Lady Asifa Bhutto Zardari on Monday congratulated Pakistani student Jayant Kumar on becoming Global Champion at the Harvard Crimson Business Competition (HCBC), one of the most prestigious pre-college business competitions in the world judged by C-suite executives from Fortune 500 companies. Competing against more than 1,000 teams from around the world, most fielding teams of up to four members, Jayant from Karachi Grammar School competed entirely solo and made history as the first Pakistani student to ever qualify for the Global Final of this competition.—APP

Weekly plan for high risk UCs to eradicate polio

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner Captain (R) Nadeem Nasir on Monday directed health authorities not to restrict evaluation to end-of-campaign results but to formulate a regular weekly follow-up plan for high-risk union councils to ensure continuous reach to every child. Chairing a health department review meeting, the Deputy Commissioner evaluated the public health situation, anti-dengue measures and the polio eradication campaign along with World Health Organization (WHO) Polio Coordinator Dr. Shumaila and District Health chief, Dr. Ehsan Ghani. He instructed that highly experienced medical officers be deployed to sensitive areas and that field monitoring framework efficiency be upgraded significantly. The meeting also thoroughly reviewed anti-dengue protocols in light of the monsoon season. The Deputy Commissioner ordered the acceleration of indoor and outdoor surveillance for timely identification and destruction of dengue larva. He emphasized that continuous hotspot monitoring and inter-departmental coordination must be maintained, stating that negligence regarding stagnant water elimination will not be tolerated.—APP

Chinese company, Hangeng exports \$195,425 donkey meat & hides to China

ISLAMABAD: In a major development, Chinese Company "Hangeng" operated in Gwadar North Free Zone has finally exported donkey meat and hides valuing \$195,425 through two consignments to China after fulfilling all inspections, criteria, certifications and regulations from Pakistan and China. The first consignment valuing \$ 66,060 with net weight of 27.5 MT was sent to China on July 5. Second consignment valuing \$129,356 with net weight of 67.07 MT was shipped on July 9. A Hangeng official told Gwadar Pro that both export activity came to happen after formal lifting of ban on the export of donkey hides to China by the government of Pakistan. All donkey meat was dispatched in frozen condition through ships. Under the agreed protocols, the Hangeng facility operates within a strictly controlled "only exit by air or sea" policy in the Gwadar Free Zone to ensure no by-products enter the local Pakistani market. Pakistan's first China-led top-notch construction of modern slaughterhouse for donkey meat and hide was completed at a cost of 50 million dollars last year. Groundbreaking took place on 4th May 2024 by Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh during the unveiling ceremony of the Agriculture Industrial Park in Gwadar Free Zone. In China, there is a significant market demand for donkey meat and hides, particularly as donkey hides serve as a crucial raw material for Ejiao, a traditional Chinese medicinal product. Pakistan, the world's third-largest donkey-owning country, has a population of approximately 5.8 million donkeys. Through this partnership, China aims to leverage its expertise in the Ejiao industry to assist Pakistan in formulating a development plan for the donkey industry. This includes establishing a breeding demonstration base, training livestock professionals, setting up a scientific research laboratory for technological innovation, advancing donkey product processing projects, and promoting the export of related products.—DNA

Gwadar Port completes 1st commercial ship bunkering operation

GWADAR: Gwadar Port has completed its first commercial ship bunkering (marine fuel supply) operation. The operation was carried out from 9 to 11 July through the joint efforts of the Gwadar Port Authority (GPA), the National Logistics Cell (NLC), Gwadar International Terminals Limited (GITL), and global energy company Vitol Asia, according to a Gwadar Pro's report on Monday. During the operation, the LNG carrier LNG ENUGU, jointly owned by QatarEnergy, ADNOC, and Vitol, was supplied with 2,500 metric tons of Very Low Sulphur Fuel Oil (VLSFO) at Gwadar Port. The 285.4-meter-long vessel received the fuel from the bunkering barge Marine Ista. Customs authorities, port officials, and local shipping agent Pak Traders Gwadar also played a vital role in ensuring the safe and efficient execution of the operation. According to maritime experts, this development will create new sources of foreign exchange earnings and revenue for Pakistan while strengthening international confidence in Gwadar Port's operational capabilities, modern infrastructure, and security standards Port authorities stated that the operation marks the formal launch of commercial bunkering services at Gwadar Port.—APP

The price of carelessness: Why documentation protects your rights

UZAIR RAZZAQ

In our society, criticizing lawyers, blaming the courts, and cursing the government has almost become a national pastime. It is easy to point fingers at the "system" and declare it broken. But before we condemn the machinery of justice, we must ask ourselves a harder question: are we fulfilling our own responsibilities as citizens and businesspeople? Every day, disputes arise between buyers and sellers, service providers and clients, landlords and tenants. And when these disputes reach a lawyer's desk, one pattern repeats itself with depressing regularity: the aggrieved party has no evidence to support their claim. They may have been wronged, but they cannot prove it. Ask a client whether there was a written agreement. The answer, more often than not, is: "No, it was just verbal." Ask how payment was made. The reply: "Cash." Receipts? Bank transfer slips? Cheques? Any record at all? Silence. Even when a contract exists, it is often a flimsy, copy-pasted template worth a few hundred rupees, used to cover transactions worth millions. Such documents fail to spell out rights, obligations, remedies, or dispute resolution mechanisms. When fraud occurs, these papers are useless. This negligence is not limited to one profession. Event planners, caterers, decorators, photographers, freelancers, online sellers, and even property investors routinely enter into high-value deals without proper documentation. They trust verbal assurances, ignore receipts, and skip legal

safeguards. And when things go wrong, they discover that the law does not operate on emotions it operates on evidence. Consider the case of an event planner. She organized a lavish function, received an advance, and delivered all agreed services. After the event, the client raised objections about items never included in the package, using those complaints as an excuse to withhold payment. When asked whether she had a written contract, invoice, or even a WhatsApp confirmation of agreed terms, she admitted she had none. She knew she had been cheated, but without proof, her case was weak. Another client purchased property. He paid a large sum, only to discover later that the land did not exist. Shockingly, he had not even visited the site before handing over the money. No agreement, no verification, no safeguards just blind trust. His loss was not caused by the courts or the lawyers; it was caused by his own carelessness. These are not isolated incidents. They represent a widespread culture of negligence in financial dealings. Thousands of professionals across Pakistan conduct business daily without contracts, receipts, or verification. And when fraud occurs, they blame the system instead of their own lack of precaution. What makes this negligence even more tragic is that our own religious tradition emphasizes documentation. The longest verse in the Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 282 commands believers to record financial transactions: "O you who believe! When you contract a debt for a fixed period, write it down." Fourteen centuries ago, divine guidance laid down principles of written agreements, witnesses,

and honesty in financial dealings. What modern lawyers call "legal documentation" and "safety protocols" were taught to us long before the invention of paper contracts. Yet we ignore these teachings, preferring shortcuts and verbal promises. The courts are not weak. The law is not powerless. What weakens a case is the absence of evidence. Judges cannot decide based on feelings; they decide based on proof. Documentation is not a bureaucratic nuisance it is your shield. Written agreements clearly define rights, obligations, deadlines, and remedies. Receipts and invoices provide undeniable proof of payment. Bank transactions create a verifiable trail that cannot be disputed. Verification ensures that the product, property, or service exists as promised. These are not mere pieces of paper. They are the armor that protects your rights in court. Without them, even the strongest claim collapses. We often demand that the system change. We want faster courts, stricter laws, harsher punishments. But systemic reform is meaningless if individuals continue to act carelessly. A society improves not only through legislation but also through responsible behavior. If you truly want justice, start with yourself. Never enter into a major financial transaction without a written contract. Always insist on receipts or bank transfers. Verify before you pay. Keep records safe. The cost of precaution is always less than the cost of regret. A few thousand rupees spent on a proper agreement can save millions later. A few minutes spent verifying a property can prevent lifelong loss. Responsibility is not optional it is the mark of a mature citizen. For

the ordinary person, legal language may seem intimidating. But protecting yourself does not require a law degree. It requires discipline. Think of documentation as insurance: you hope you never need it, but when trouble comes, it is invaluable. A freelancer delivering a project should have a signed scope of work. A caterer should issue invoices and receive payments through traceable channels. A property buyer should demand title documents and verify ownership before paying. Even small businesses should maintain receipts and contracts. These practices are not luxuries; they are necessities. They transform fragile trust into enforceable rights. It is easy to curse the courts and condemn the lawyers. It is harder to admit that our own negligence often creates the very problems we complain about. Fraud thrives not only because of dishonest people but also because of careless victims. If we want a better society, we must change our habits. We must embrace documentation, verification, and precaution. We must remember that the Qur'an itself commands us to write down our transactions. And we must understand that justice is built not only in courtrooms but also in the daily discipline of responsible citizens. The law is not weak. Our carelessness makes us weak. Courts decide on evidence, not emotions. If you want your rights protected, preserve your documents. Written agreements, receipts, bank records these are not scraps of paper. They are your shield, your proof, your defense. In the end, precaution is not just legal advice. It is the hallmark of a responsible citizen. And responsibility, more than criticism, is what truly strengthens a society.

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Kashmir: Memory, Martyrdom, and an Unresolved Question

EVERY year, Kashmir Martyrs' Day is observed on 13 July to commemorate the indiscriminate killings of Muslims under the Maharaja Hari Singh's rule. For Kashmiris, it symbolises a sustained struggle for rights, recognition, and independence. On this day, Kashmiris stood up against injustice and paid with their lives. That legacy of resistance, along with the demand for political and civil rights, continues to endure. This day is not just about remembering those sacrifices but also understanding why the struggle still continues. The story of the 13 July 1931 Kashmir uprising starts outside the Central Jail of Srinagar. Thousands of Kashmiris gathered to witness the trial of freedom activist Abdul Qadeer Khan, who was accused of sedition for delivering a fiery speech against Dogra occupation. Tension rose when one man stood to deliver the "Azan" in an act of defiance toward Dogra rule, but was shot dead by state forces. Dogra police martyred 22 people as, one after another, individuals rose to complete the Azan. This act of defiance against tyranny transformed into a defining symbol of collective resistance, and it firmly embedded martyrdom into Kashmir's political consciousness. This act started the organised struggle against the rule of oppression that continues to this day in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). In the past 95 years, this organised struggle against systemic repression has produced multiple martyrs, including Burhan Wani, Abdul Ahad Guru, Ashfaq Majeed, Tuffail Ahmed, Ghulam Mohammad Lone, and others. Many peaceful political activists, like Yasin Malik, Asiya Andrabi, Shabbir Ahmad Shah, Khurram Parvez, Masarat Alam Bhat, and others, are also detained under the draconian laws of India. This shows that the issue is not episodic but structural. Across generations, the Kashmiri political resistance has faced indiscriminate killings, detentions, and torture. Since the abrogation of Article 370 by the Indian Hindutva regime in 2019, the government has imposed severe restrictions such as lockdowns, communication blackouts, detentions, and targeted operations against freedom fighters. The oppressive regime has also stopped the public remembrance of the 13 July martyrs by removing the holiday from the official calendar. This is a blatant attempt to erase historical memory. Authorities have also blocked visits

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to the Srinagar graveyard, where those martyrs are buried. This shows that the Indian regime is afraid of the people of Kashmir. In the Kashmiri struggle against occupation, mourning is seen as a political act of resistance, not just a cultural or religious activity. The Indian regime has systematically restricted the mourning of Kashmiri political activists. For example, one of the most influential freedom activists, Syed Ali Gillani, who died under Indian illegal detention, was buried in a tightly controlled, pre-dawn ceremony in 2021, just hours after his death. Police snatched his body and forced his burial without the presence of his family. Authorities implemented a strict security crackdown and communication blackout across IIOJK to prevent mass gathering, fearing his death would trigger large-scale anti-India protests. Commemorating Kashmir Martyrs' Day, in this sense, becomes a day of resisting historical erasure and reinterpretation. Kashmir's long history of struggle and martyrdom is a continuation of legitimate political demands for rights, recognition, and dignity, which remain unaddressed. Kashmir Martyrs' Day also reminds the world that the core political question of the future of IIOJK remains open and unanswered. The sacrifices made over generations will continue to shape the collective memory and identity of the Kashmiri people. The people of Pakistan share in the grief and stand in solidarity with their Kashmiri brethren. The Pakistani government also continues to play its part by consistently highlighting, at all relevant international forums, that Jammu and Kashmir is an unresolved international dispute. This has been reflected in multiple United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) like UNSCR 47, 51, 80, 91, and others. Pakistan will continue to support the Kashmir cause politically, morally, and diplomatically, and will not let the blood of Kashmiri martyrs go to waste. On this Kashmir Martyrs' Day, there is a need for renewed commitment to support Kashmir's struggle for self-determination and justice. Pakistan will also continue to raise this issue at all forums to ensure a peaceful and just resolution in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people. Kashmir Martyrs' Day is not just about the past, but also about the present, where the core question remains unresolved, and the future is still being contested. The memory of the martyrs of the 1931 massacre and the decades that followed continues to shape the political consciousness of the people of Kashmir to keep the demands for rights and self-determination alive. Attempts by oppressive Indian authorities to suppress the freedom struggle, silence the remembrance of martyrs, and redefine history cannot erase the lived experience of the Kashmiri people. As long as these grievances remain unaddressed, the call for justice will continue across generations that refuse to forget.

– Abdul Wassay

USA and Israel: From Support to Accountability

Qamar Bashir



Simultaneously, younger Americans—particularly those under 35—are asking increasingly difficult questions about the role of lobbying organizations, campaign financing, and the influence of foreign-policy advocacy groups in shaping American decisions in the Middle East. Critics argue that elected officials often hesitate to criticize Israel because of domestic political pressures, while supporters of the U.S.-Israel relationship respond that the alliance reflects shared democratic values, longstanding security cooperation, and strategic interests rather than undue influence

THE renewed U.S.-Iran conflict has once again entered a dangerous phase. American strikes on Iranian targets have been followed by Iranian retaliation on Sunday 12th July, raising fears that the region may be entering a prolonged cycle of attack and counterattack. Yet while missiles dominate headlines in the Middle East, an equally consequential battle is unfolding inside the United States—one over America's relationship with Israel and the political costs of that alliance. One significant development has been the passing of Senator Lindsey Graham, who for years was among Israel's most outspoken supporters in the U.S. Senate. Graham consistently advocated maximum pressure against Iran, arguing that Tehran's military capabilities, regional proxies, missile programs, and nuclear ambitions posed an existential threat to Israel and a broader danger to American interests and regional allies. He defended Israel's military campaigns in Gaza, Lebanon, and elsewhere by drawing historical parallels to Allied actions during World War II, including the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, arguing that overwhelming force can sometimes bring wars to an end. His death removes one of Israel's strongest voices in Congress at a time when American policy toward the Middle East is facing unprecedented scrutiny. At the same time, a different narrative has emerged from Congressman Ro Khanna following his visit to Israel and the occupied West Bank. Khanna described witnessing the realities of occupation firsthand and recounted an incident in which he said Israeli settlers and Israeli security forces temporarily detained his delegation. He argued that the experience fundamentally changed his understanding of conditions faced by Palestinians and intensified his criticism of Israeli policies in the occupied territories. Khanna's remarks resonate strongly with a younger generation of American lawmakers and voters who increasingly view the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the lens of human rights, equality and international law. Drawing on his own visit to the occupied West Bank, Khanna described what he regarded as an apartheid-like system marked by the arrogance of armed Israeli settlers, the detention of an American delegation, and the willingness of the IDF to side with those settlers rather than protect visiting Americans. He argued that Israel has enjoyed near-total impunity despite the devastation and alleged genocide in Gaza, and warned that American politicians who remain silent in the face of such injustice are morally compromised. Khanna therefore called for a fundamental moral repositioning of U.S. policy—a serious reassessment of Washington's support for Israel and of Israel's actions across Gaza, the West

Bank and the wider Middle East. Beyond elected officials, prominent commentators have also intensified the debate. In a widely watched interview, Tucker Carlson and his guest argued that U.S. foreign policy has increasingly subordinated American strategic interests to Israeli priorities. They alleged that missile-defense and interceptor systems originally deployed to protect U.S. bases and Gulf allies were diverted to defend Israel, leaving American installations and partner nations more vulnerable to Iranian retaliation. The discussion went further, portraying the United States as a power in relative decline—one whose military stockpiles have been significantly depleted, whose capacity to sustain a prolonged conflict is increasingly constrained, and which no longer possesses the capability to undertake a large-scale ground invasion of Iran. Carlson also questioned whether Washington was allowing itself to be "led around the nose" by Israel, arguing that American policy had become excessively aligned with Israeli regional objectives rather than guided primarily by U.S. national interests. Simultaneously, younger Americans—particularly those under 35—are asking increasingly difficult questions about the role of lobbying organizations, campaign financing, and the influence of foreign-policy advocacy groups in shaping American decisions in the Middle East. Critics argue that elected officials often hesitate to criticize Israel because of domestic political pressures, while supporters of the U.S.-Israel relationship respond that the alliance reflects shared democratic values, longstanding security cooperation, and strategic interests rather than undue influence. Another issue drawing attention is the expanding military cooperation between the United States and Israel. Supporters view deeper integration as essential for regional security, intelligence sharing, missile defense, and technological innovation. Critics, however, worry that increasingly integrated military planning could blur the distinction between American and Israeli strategic priorities, potentially drawing the United States into conflicts that originate from regional disputes rather than direct threats to the American homeland. Many Americans are therefore asking a fundamental question: What direct threat does Iran pose to the United States itself? Successive U.S. administrations have argued that Iran's support for armed groups, ballistic missile development, and nuclear activities threaten American forces, regional partners, and international stability. Critics counter that the primary confrontation remains between Iran and Israel, with the United States increasingly assuming the costs of a

conflict driven largely by regional dynamics. Another contentious issue concerns nuclear policy. Iran has long maintained that if it is expected to accept intrusive inspections, limits on uranium enrichment, and international oversight, then similar standards should apply to Israel. Many analysts note that Israel is widely believed to possess nuclear weapons while maintaining a policy of deliberate ambiguity and remaining outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Now the world is waking up to the reality that Israeli nukes pose a greater threat to humanity than the combined military of the entire Muslim world. Now an increasingly vocal group of politicians, military analysts, commentators, and independent media figures argues that the relationship has reached a point where Washington is no longer acting with complete strategic independence. They contend that American foreign policy has become disproportionately oriented toward advancing Israel's regional objectives, often at the expense of U.S. national interests, the security of American personnel, the economic well-being of its citizens, and the country's broader global standing. This creates a profound paradox: the world's most powerful nation increasingly appears to be shaping its policies around the security priorities of a much smaller regional ally, thereby eroding perceptions of American strategic autonomy and sovereignty. Such an approach not only burdens American taxpayers and military resources but also weakens the United States' image as an independent global leader capable of pursuing a foreign policy guided primarily by its own national interests rather than those of any external partner. This growing acceptance in mainstream political discourse marks one of the most significant developments in the evolving American debate over Israel and the Middle East. History demonstrates that foreign policy ultimately follows domestic political evolution. As American society reexamines its priorities, Washington may eventually recalibrate its approach—not necessarily by abandoning Israel, but by seeking a relationship that balances security cooperation with greater emphasis on diplomacy, accountability, regional stability, and equal application of international norms. The future of the Middle East may ultimately depend not only on what happens on the battlefield, but also on how the US reassess the principles guiding their alliances in an increasingly complex and polarized world.

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

Neighbours by Destiny

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Good relations between neighbours are indeed desirable, yet they cannot flourish on words alone. A knife in the side and a greeting on the lips will never mend what is broken. For any lasting improvement, India must abandon its policy of proxy warfare, its interference in Pakistan's internal affairs, its support for terrorists and separatists, and its attempts to use...

IN the teachings of Islam, the bonds of human society are held in the highest regard, alongside the duties of worship. The rights of neighbours, in particular, have been emphasised time and again in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. It is related that the Archangel Jibreel (AS) counselled the Prophet so persistently concerning the obligations owed to neighbours that the Messenger of Allah came to believe he might soon be instructed to make them partners in inheritance. Such is the profound importance attached to neighbourly conduct. At the level of individuals, a man who finds himself at odds with his neighbour may, if he chooses, change his dwelling and settle elsewhere. Nations, however, enjoy no such liberty. Geography has bound them together, for better or for worse, and no amount of wishing can alter the map. This truth was brought home to me with particular force during an international conference held in Malaysia in 2008. Representatives from some thirty countries had gathered, including delegations from India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. At the opening ceremony, as participants exchanged greetings, a certain coolness was evident between the Pakistani and Indian delegates. Yet through repeated interaction, the natural spirit of neighbourliness began to stir. During the proceedings, a participant from Singapore approached me directly with a question that seemed to carry the weight of the entire gathering. "Why," he asked, "has Pakistan not been able to develop as much as it should, given its vast potential in skills, resources, and human talent?" The query, posed in that international forum, visibly astonished many, particularly the Indian participants. By the grace of Allah, I found myself able to reply with composure. I told the questioner that

his inquiry was of genuine importance. "Consider," I said, "your own neighbours – Malaysia and Indonesia. Now imagine if, instead, you had a neighbour like India. How would your development fare then? We in Pakistan are compelled to devote enormous sums to defence because of persistent hostility from that quarter. Were those resources freed for constructive purposes, we should doubtless have advanced far beyond our present state. My response appeared to satisfy many while displeasing some, as is often the case when plain truths are spoken. Yet the underlying reality remains beyond dispute; neighbours cannot be changed. Pakistan has, on numerous occasions, extended the hand of friendship toward India, only to meet with little or no positive response. It is therefore heartening to note that, in recent days, more than a hundred prominent personalities from both India and Pakistan have jointly appealed through an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif according to the media report. They urge the two leaders to take concrete and permanent steps toward restoring peace, dialogue, and normal bilateral relations. The letter rightly observes that the long-standing tension between the two countries is depriving millions of young people of opportunities, prosperity, and a secure future. Among the practical measures proposed are the restoration of full diplomatic relations, the reappointment of high commissioners, the resumption of visa services, the reopening of airspace for commercial flights, and the reopening of the Attari-Wagah border for trade and movement. The signatories also call for the revival of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service and other cross-border connections. India and Pakistan together are home to nearly one-fifth of humanity, the greater part of which is young.

The appeal wisely recommends the reactivation of confidence-building measures, including the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor, access to religious sites such as Sharda Peeth, and comprehensive bilateral talks on all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir. It further suggests a review of the framework agreed between 2004 and 2007, a reduction in military tensions, and the addressing of legitimate security concerns on both sides. The letter concludes by inviting both governments to choose connectivity over isolation, dialogue over hostility, and cooperation over confrontation, for the sake of the welfare and aspirations of nearly two billion people. Good relations between neighbours are indeed desirable, yet they cannot flourish on words alone. A knife in the side and a greeting on the lips will never mend what is broken. For any lasting improvement, India must abandon its policy of proxy warfare, its interference in Pakistan's internal affairs, its support for terrorists and separatists, and its attempts to use water as a weapon. A just and honourable resolution of the Kashmir dispute remains essential. Pakistan has shown, through its efforts to bring even distant powers such as America and Iran to the negotiating table, that it possesses both the will and the capacity for diplomacy. Surely, then, the path to reconciliation with its closest neighbour is not beyond reach. Ultimately, India must alter its attitude in a fundamental way. Trade agreements and occasional air corridors may offer temporary relief, but they cannot substitute for genuine goodwill. Only by confronting the core issues with honesty and courage can the two nations move forward. The future of South Asia need not be defined by division and conflict. With wisdom and sincerity on both sides, it may yet be shaped by peace, shared prosperity, and the common hopes of their peoples.

Briefs

Trump announces US reinstating naval...

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 "There is no doubt that this document is in crisis," foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding. "Each time that the other party has failed to meet its obligations, we did not uphold ours," he added. "We will continue to act in this manner." He nonetheless added that Tehran was continuing talks with mediators from Qatar, Pakistan and Oman in an effort to prevent any further escalation. The US Central Command (Centcom) said its forces had completed their latest barrage, which began overnight, on dozens of Iranian targets. US aircraft, naval vessels and drones hit "dozens of targets at multiple locations with precision munitions to degrade Iran's ability to continue attacking international shipping flowing through the Strait of Hormuz". The latest salvo by US forces began at 2am PKT on Sunday, Centcom said on X. The fresh strikes came less than 24 hours after a previous wave in which Centcom said 140 Iranian military targets were hit. Iranian state media reported two deaths in the latest US strikes that it said targeted large areas across the south and west. One person was killed and four wounded at a water pumping station in the southwestern city of Mahshahr, state news agency IRNA said.

US pressure on Oman a hurdle...

FROM PAGE 01
 The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps reports retaliatory attacks on U.S. positions in Bahrain, Kuwait, and Oman, while the U.S. Central Command confirms strikes on Iranian radar and missile sites. Energy analysts warn that continued instability could disrupt global oil supply, as the Strait of Hormuz handles nearly one-fifth of world crude shipments. Oman's diplomatic balancing act faces increasing strain, and Tehran insists that no further cooperation will occur until the U.S. meets its obligations under the June agreement. The number of vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz fell to multi-week lows on Sunday, shipping data showed, as renewed strikes between the US and Iran and attacks on ships in the Middle East heightened safety concerns. Six vessels transited the strait on Sunday, ship-tracking data from Kpler showed, the lowest number in five weeks. There were no liquefied natural gas tankers that entered the strait over the weekend that were visible on ship-tracking data. One tanker controlled by the Abu Dhabi National Oil Co exited the strait between July 10 and July 12, Kpler data showed. The vessel is heading for Dahej port in India.

Shehbaz meets Qatari leader...

FROM PAGE 01
 remarkable transformation as well as to regional peace, stability, and development", the PMO statement said. It added that PM Shehbaz "recalled with deep appreciation the Father Amir's warmth, kindness, and abiding affection for Pakistan, and his many memorable visits to the country over the years". "The prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast solidarity with the leadership and people of Qatar during this period of profound grief" and prayed for the highest ranks in paradise for Sheikh Hamad, the statement said. It added that he also prayed for strength for the royal family and the Qatari nation to bear this "irreparable loss". According to the statement, Sheikh Tamim thanked PM Shehbaz, Nawaz, Dar and others part of Pakistan's delegation "for the special gesture of travelling to Doha to personally offer condolences, describing it as a reflection of the deep-rooted fraternal bonds between the two brotherly countries and peoples".

Messi set for long-awaited first England clash in World Cup semi-final

"It's special because they're a great team, a powerhouse, and it's always nice to play a team like that," says Argentinian legend

KANSAS CITY: Lionel Messi has spent over two decades carving a path through international soccer, facing every World Cup-winning nation from Brazil to France, but one notable opponent has always been missing from the list: England. That will change on Wednesday when Argentina meet the European side in a World Cup semi-final in Atlanta, a heavyweight clash that Argentina's FA (AFA) described on its website as "the match fate owed Messi." The 39-year-old Messi has played Brazil, Uruguay, Germany, Italy, Spain and France during his career, yet never crossed paths with England. The closest he came was a friendly in Geneva in November 2005, the last time the two sides faced each other. Argentina lost 3-2 as Wayne Rooney and Michael Owen, who scored twice, overturned goals from Hernan Crespo and Walter Samuel. Messi, however, missed out after being sent off on his international debut against Hungary earlier that year. "It's special because they're a great team, a powerhouse, and it's always nice to play a team like that, a match of this kind," Messi told reporters after Argentina's 3-1 quarter-final victory over Switzerland in extra time on



Saturday. "We need to rest because we come from a lot of wear and tear, which the group obviously feels, and arrive in the best possible condition to keep doing what we've been doing: competing," he added. Argentina survived a third consecutive dramatic knockout match, after defeating Cape Verde 3-2 in extra time in the round of 32 and staging a comeback to beat Egypt 3-2 in the last 16 after trailing 2-0 with 11 minutes remaining. Messi contributed with an assist for Alexis Mac Allister's opening goal against Switzerland, but it was the first World Cup match since Argentina's 2-0 group-stage win over Poland at Qatar 2022 in which Messi did not score. "England can outrun Argentina but they just have that little genius Messi. They all play for him. Everyone should be excited," BBC pundit Micah Richards said. "Marking him is impossible because he doesn't run back." The England clash will add another chapter to one of soccer's most emotionally charged rivalries, shaped by decades of sporting drama and political tension, while giving Messi a place in a fixture that has produced some of Argentina's most enduring soccer memories. - APP

Global winners of ICC Development Awards announced

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council has announced the winners of the ICC Development Awards 2025, celebrating the outstanding programs, initiatives and performances driving the game's growth around the globe. This year's winners were selected from the regional nominees announced in June, recognizing excellence across seven categories spanning development and participation, female cricket initiatives, team performances, digital engagement and social impact. The Emirates Cricket Board had a successful year in 2025 and won three prizes. The first honor was the Marriott Bonvoy ICC Development Initiative of the Year, for the board's landmark Girls U15 Academy League. For a second year in a row, the Emirates ICC Female Cricket Initiative of the Year was shared by two countries as both the Emirates Cricket Board and Turkiye Cricket collected the honor. In the UAE, the lega-

cy of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 inspired a nationwide movement to grow girls' cricket through the Interschool Criccio Gulf Cup and the emirates' Get into Cricket - Girls Only program. The initiatives took cricket into schools, communities and emirates where opportunities for girls were previously limited or non-existent. Turkiye Cricket were rewarded for delivering the largest celebration of ICC Women's Cricket Week across Europe in 2025, with more than 3,000 young girls from 20 provinces across the country participating in the festivities. The program included softball festivals, ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 watch parties and a coaching webinar for female coaches, which served as inspiration for everyone from schoolgirls to the national team. The Emirates Cricket Board also received the ICC Associate Member Women's Team Performance of the Year award af-

ter the national side made history against Zimbabwe. In their first-ever series in the 50-over format after gaining ODI status, they played out a 2-2 series draw against Zimbabwe before winning the subsequent T20I series 2-0 to secure a maiden series victory against a higher-ranked Full Member nation on foreign soil. In the equivalent men's category, Federazione Cricket Italiana lifted the ICC Associate Member Men's Team Performance of the Year award due to Italy's historic qualification for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026. With Scotland and the Netherlands among the favorites to progress from the Europe Qualifier in Rotterdam, Italy upset the odds by defeating Scotland in the decisive match to seal a spot at their first-ever ICC Men's T20 World Cup. The Japan Cricket Association received the ICC Digital Fan Engagement of the Year award for an innovative campaign that connected physical visibility with

digital growth. The campaign included a cricket-themed rebrand of the station closest to the Sano International Cricket Ground created with Tobu Railway, and a content and distribution partnership with CricTracker that amplified stories to new audiences. The digital campaign had 61 million views, with 98 percent from non-followers, and over 9,000 new followers in a month. The Confederaçao Brasileira de Cricket emerged victorious in the ICC Cricket 4 Good Social Impact Initiative of the Year category, earning the award for its Women's University Program. The initiative financially supported 42 young participants from the Cricket Brasil development project to access university education, many of whom are the first in their families to do so. It also helped increase female leadership from 25 percent to 50 percent, with women now representing 52 percent of all program participants. - APP

Sinner retains Wimbledon title with victory over Zverev

LONDON: Jannik Sinner retained his Wimbledon title by beating Alexander Zverev 6-7(7) 7-6(2) 6-3 6-4 in the final on Sunday to claim his fifth Grand Slam crown and extend his dominance over the German to 10 straight victories. The win placed Sinner in rare company as the 10th man in the professional era to successfully defend the title, strengthening his credentials as one of the dominant players of his generation while he chases down big rival Carlos Alcaraz's seven majors. "There's no better place, honestly, to play tennis," Sinner said as he cradled the pineapple-topped Challenge Cup. "I'm standing here. You can feel the nerves on a Sunday morning when you wake up, that this is a very special day, and you never know how many times you can come back. So I never take things for granted." "Playing in front of very special people throughout the two weeks. It's been amazing. Thanks for the support. You're always amazing to me and you gave me the most special feeling a tennis player can ever feel." Both finalists slugged it out for 12 games in a high-octane first set on a warm and windy afternoon, before Zverev moved up a gear and hit a powerful forehand winner to clinch a gripping tie-break, yelling and crouching down in celebration. The clean ball-striking continued but Zverev began to show signs of frustration late in the second set, where a much more animated Sinner gained the upper hand in the tie-break and went on to level the contest at one set apiece. Zverev brought up his first break point midway through the third set after more than 2-1/2 hours, but slipped and fell to the ground after being wrong-footed by a Sinner drop shot. With Zverev screaming out in agony, the Centre Court crowd gasped when he rolled onto his back clutching his right knee. - APP

Constitutional Court to 'decide'...

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 Although the amendment does not alter the substantive law governing corruption offences or the grounds available to challenge a conviction, it fundamentally provides the Federal Constitutional Court as the final authority in NAB convictions. Under the previous legal framework, a litigant could challenge a High Court decision before the Supreme Court. For Imran, however, the immediate consequence is clear. If the High Court upholds any conviction or does otherwise in a NAB case, including the £190 million reference, his final legal battle will no longer be fought before the Supreme Court but before the Federal Constitutional Court. Given the political significance of the pending NAB cases against the PTI founder, the amendment is likely to shape not only the future course of accountability litigation but also the broader political landscape in the months and years ahead.

117 terrorists eliminated since July...

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 launched in the aftermath of a deadly attack on the Mangi Dam police station in Ziarat. 42 people, including security personnel and civilians, were martyred in three recent terrorist attacks in Balochistan. ISPR Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry had said last week that India-backed terrorists attacked the checkpoint but police personnel fought bravely, killing 15 militants in the initial engagement. Nine police personnel had embraced martyrdom in the initial fighting, while militants also took police personnel hostage before security forces reached the area. Pakistan has witnessed a surge in terrorist activities, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, since the Afghan Taliban came to power in 2021. In response, Pakistan launched Operation Ghazab lil-Haq, targeting terrorist hideouts across the border, killing scores of Afghan Taliban operatives and injuring hundreds more.

Doctor shot dead in Karachi

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 He further said that Dr Kumar was unmarried and had been serving at JPMC for the past two years. His body was shifted from JPMC to the Chhippa morgue after completion of legal formalities. The senior police official added that CCTV footage from the vicinity had been obtained to help identify the suspects. Additionally, coordinates from the route and the place of occurrence had been acquired for geo-fencing analysis. DIG Raza said that during the initial probe, it was determined that the bullet causing the fatal injury was fired by the bank security guard, who had been arrested following the incident. "A spent bullet casing from the guard's pistol has also been recovered," he said. Elaborating on the incident, DIG Raza said Dr Kumar had withdrawn Rs5 million from a private bank near Dilpasand Sweets at around 12:03pm. He also made purchases amounting to Rs50,000 from there.

CDF Munir arrives in Turkiye on 2-day...

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 Last month, General Metin Tokel, commander of the Turkish Land Forces, met CDF Munir during his visit to Pakistan. The two had discussed regional security dynamics and avenues for enhanced bilateral defence cooperation, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. General Tokel had also met with the naval and air chiefs during the visit. Earlier this month, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paid a visit to Turkiye, focused on economic and trade cooperation.

PMYP Joins Hands with CFP to Promote Chess

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) and the Chess Federation of Pakistan (CFP) on Monday signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) to promote chess across the country through grassroots development and youth engagement. The signing ceremony, held at the Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad, was attended by Chairman PMYP Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, President of the Chess Federation of Pakistan Syed Zeeshan Naqvi, Vice President Malik Rehan Azam and other dignitaries. Under the agreement, the two organizations will work together to develop chess at the grassroots level, launch a nationwide talent hunt program, identify and nurture promising young players, and facilitate the participation of national players in international competitions. The partnership also includes the organization of the "Maarka-e-Haq Chess Series." Addressing the ceremony, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan said the government was fully committed to promoting sports and would extend every possible support to the Chess Federation of Pakistan. He described chess as a game that enhances intellectual and analytical abilities and said talent identification would begin at the grassroots level to discover and groom young players from across the country. He said Pakistani youth were making the nation

proud in different fields around the world, adding that the Prime Minister's Youth Programme was supporting young athletes alongside initiatives in education and other sectors. He also termed the current year as a landmark year for sports development in Pakistan and announced that the country's first-ever Hockey League would be launched soon. Speaking on the occasion, Chess Federation of Pakistan President Syed Zeeshan Naqvi said



the federation was taking practical steps to expand and strengthen chess across the country. He thanked the Prime Minister's Youth Programme and the Pakistan Sports Board for their continued support, expressing confidence that the partnership would provide a major boost to the game and create greater opportunities for emerging chess players to excel at the national and international levels.

Yamal aims to steal Mbappe's World Cup thunder in semi-final showdown

So far Mbappe has eight defeats and just two wins in 10 games against Yamal with club and country

ARLINGTON: Lamine Yamal is hoping to emulate Kylian Mbappe by winning the World Cup as a teenager, but first his Spain side will have to get the better of France and their superstar captain in Tuesday's semi-final. When Mbappe scored in France's win over Croatia in the deciding match of the 2018 tournament, he was just 19 years and 207 days old. He therefore became only the second teenager to score in a World Cup final after a 17-year-old Pele in 1958. Mbappe's love affair with the World Cup began then, while this is Yamal's first experience of the competition. He has already had his big breakthrough in a major tournament, however - Yamal's stunning goal in the Euro 2024 semi-final against Mbappe's France helped Spain to a 2-1 victory. That came four days before he turned 17. His birthday was the day before the final. Spain beat England, and Yamal was named young player of the tournament. This time his 19th birthday comes on the eve of the semi-final in Arlington. Such a young player with his best years to

come. But he is clearly eager to leave a firm mark on this World Cup. Perhaps too eager, having at one point been a doubt for the tournament after missing the end of the season with Barcelona due to a hamstring injury. "I was afraid it might be serious and, above all, that even if it wasn't serious, I could suffer a setback and end up missing the World Cup," Yamal admitted in late May. After coming off the bench in Spain's opening 0-0 draw with Cape Verde, Yamal started against Saudi Arabia and scored before being replaced at half-time in a 4-0 victory. He has started every game since, without adding to that solitary goal - that might be getting to him. "I think Lamine needs to calm the anxiety he sometimes has because he wants to show how important a player he is for us," Spain captain Rodri said Sunday. "Given he was able to show that level of maturity at that European Championship, when he is two years older you are not so impressed by what he is able to do," he added. With Yamal not as decisive, Spain have

lacked the deadly verticality that made them so hard to stop at the Euros. France, meanwhile, have rediscovered a cutting edge that evaded them at the Euros, and have the most thrilling attack at this World Cup. Mbappe, now 27, is the talisman and seems intent on leaving a legacy as an all-time World Cup great. With eight goals here, he is level with Lionel Messi in the golden boot race and is one behind the Argentine's all-time World Cup record of 21 goals. Having won the trophy in 2018 and scored a hat-trick in the 2022 final, Mbappe has a third straight final in his sights. He can therefore match the achievement of the great Brazil full-back Cafu, who played in three in a row from 1994 to 2002. Pele and Diego Maradona each only graced two finals. His apparent obsession with the World Cup may explain why he missed a chunk of the second half of the season with Real Madrid. As he nursed injuries, some supporters questioned his commitment to their club. "I know people talk about the

stats. I watch the TV too. But my only focus is on helping the team and getting us back here on July 19," he said after beating Sweden in the last 32 at the MetLife Stadium, the venue for the final. "I have won a World Cup and been a runner-up. This team has done neither of those things, but it is the team with the greatest potential," he added after defeating Morocco in the quarter-finals. Yamal and Mbappe are already icons in their home countries and beyond, two young men representing the modern face of multicultural Europe. Mbappe has the greater experience, has already won the World Cup and is confident speaking publicly in English - those factors help make him one of the faces of this tournament in the US. The dazzling Yamal is still catching up off the field, but his record against Mbappe on the pitch is impressive. They have met frequently across the Clasicos divide in the last two years - so far Mbappe has eight defeats and just two wins in 10 games against Yamal with club and country. - APP

Briefs

PSX sheds
over 2,314
points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) closed on a bearish note on Monday, losing 2,314.73 points, a negative change of 1.27 percent, to settle at 179,927.05 points against 182,241.78 points on the previous trading day. During the session, the ready market recorded a trading volume of 845.279 million shares with a traded value of Rs35.551 billion, compared to 948.776 million shares valuing Rs38.413 billion in the previous session. The market capitalization declined to Rs20.290 trillion from Rs20.503 trillion a day earlier. Out of 497 active companies in the ready market, 128 advanced, 335 declined, and 34 remained unchanged. Nergiyco PK led the volume chart with 158.523 million shares, followed by F. Nat. Equities with 64.234 million shares and Blue-Ex Limited with 43.874 million shares. The top gainers included Khairpur Sugar Mills Limited, which surged by Rs201.34 to close at Rs2,282.89, and PIA Holding Company Limited, which gained Rs123.68 to settle at Rs17,801.01. On the losing side, Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited declined by Rs445.00 to close at Rs25,268.00, while Sapphire Textile Mills Limited fell by Rs64.04 to settle at Rs1,436.85. In the futures (DFO) market, turnover stood at 189.239 million shares with a traded value of Rs8.530 billion, compared to 186.207 million shares worth Rs8.065 billion in the previous session. Out of 302 futures-market companies, 41 advanced, 258 declined, and three remained unchanged.—APP

Rupee gains
03 paise
against Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 03 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.02, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 278.05. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 279.25 and Rs 279.80, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 0.17 and closed at Rs 317.72 from the previous day's closing of Rs 317.89, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paise and closed at Rs 1.71, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of Rs 0.53 and closed at Rs 372.42 compared to the previous day's Rs 372.95. The exchange rates of the Emirate Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 01 paise each, closing at Rs 75.70 and Rs 74.05, respectively.—APP

Petroleum Pricing body mulls reforms for market stability

The committee reviewed various options of pricing mechanism. As an immediate step the committee recommended that OGRA publish daily Platts pricing data on its website so that the public has access to the benchmark used for petroleum pricing in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Fourth meeting of the Committee constituted by the Prime Minister to review the petroleum pricing mechanism was held under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik. The committee reviewed international best practices and prevailing market conditions. Speaking on the occasion, Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik said the committee's work had assumed greater significance in view of the renewed closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the resulting uncertainty in global energy markets. He noted from KPMG study that petrol prices in Pakistan remain lower than in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Türkiye, while being broadly comparable to those in India. He added that the government



has proposed amendments to the Refinery Policy to increase domestic diesel production and reduce reliance on imported diesel, thereby strengthening the country's energy security. The committee reviewed various op-

tions of pricing mechanism. As an immediate step the committee recommended that OGRA publish daily Platts pricing data on its website so that the public has access to the benchmark used for petroleum pricing in Paki-

stan. The committee agreed that recently established petroleum price stabilization fund should operate under a fully rule-based framework, with clearly defined mechanisms for both funding and disbursements, ensuring that

its operation remains transparent and free from whimsical decision-making. Digitization of the oil supply chain was stressed by all members of the Committee. Chairing the meeting, Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik directed that the next meeting would be the committee's final meeting, after which its recommendations would be submitted to the Prime Minister for consideration. The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, Chairman OGRA Mr Nabeel Awan, KPMG team, other committee members, representatives of the Finance Division, and senior officials from Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), Pakistan State Oil (PSO), the Ministry of Law and Justice, and the Petroleum Division.

Standard
Chartered
gets new CEO

ISLAMABAD : Standard Chartered Pakistan today announced the appointment of Adil Salahuddin as its Chief Executive Officer & Head of Coverage, sub-



ject to regulatory and statutory approvals. Commenting on the appointment, Rola Abu Manneh, Chief Executive Officer, UAE, Middle East and Pakistan, Standard Chartered, said: "Pakistan is an important market for Standard Chartered and one of our long-established franchises, supported by deep client relationships, a strong local presence and the strength of our international network. This appointment reflects our continued commitment to the market and our confidence in its long-term potential. Adil brings a deep understanding of our clients, our business and the markets we serve, combined with a strong track record of leadership across Pakistan and the wider region." She added: "As our clients continue to navigate evolving trade, investment and capital flows, our international network remains a defining advantage in connecting them to opportunities across markets. I am confident that, under Adil's leadership, we will continue to build on our strong foundations, deepen our client relationships and support Pakistan's continued economic growth." Adil is a seasoned banking leader with more than three decades of experience, including 25 years with Standard Chartered. He brings deep institutional knowledge, strong client insight and extensive regional experience across Pakistan, the UAE and Saudi Arabia.—DNA

Top UN official accuses Hamas of Gaza aid obstruction

JERUSALEM: A senior UN official on Monday accused Hamas of interfering with humanitarian deliveries in Gaza and intimidating aid workers, warning that the group's actions were making relief operations increasingly dangerous. Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas continues to control parts of Gaza, even after Israeli forces expanded their presence across more than 60 percent of the territory. In a statement, UN Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Ramiz Alakbarov, said he "strongly" condemns the obstruction of humanitarian operations by Gaza's de facto authorities, referring to Hamas. Hamas's actions "endangered humanitarian personnel, intimidated workers delivering life-saving food assistance and disrupted life-saving humanitarian operations," he said. Armed men linked to Hamas allegedly on Saturday forced their way into a food distribution point in Jabalia, in the northern Gaza Strip, the UN statement said. Militants "also entered a WFP (World Food Programme) warehouse and reportedly assaulted two truck drivers who were delivering humanitarian supplies," it added. Alakbarov said "these incidents are not isolated" and "reflect an increasingly dangerous pattern of intimidation, violence and obstruction, including smuggling attempts, targeting and abusing humanitarian operations." He warned that such actions were hampering the delivery of life-saving assistance at a time when civilians across Gaza faced severe hardships. A ceasefire was reached in Gaza between Israel and Hamas in October following two years of war, which was sparked by the Palestinian militants' unprecedented attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. The second phase of the ceasefire, which was to involve Hamas's disarmament and a gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, has been stalled for months. Israeli forces have expanded their presence in recent months, taking control of more than 60 percent of the territory. Hamas still exerts control over the remaining area, but last week announced it was dissolving its 15-member body that had governed the strip for nearly two decades. Violence continues in Gaza despite the ceasefire. At least 1,098 Palestinians have been killed since the truce took effect, according to the territory's health ministry, which operates under Hamas authority and whose figures are considered reliable by the United Nations. The Israeli military says it has lost five soldiers in Gaza over the same period, as well as one civilian contractor.—APP

Pakistan turns the corner Ahsan tells Pakistani diaspora, macroeconomic stability restored

Ahsan Iqbal spoke of Pakistan's armed forces' gallant performance, under the leadership of Field Marshal Asim Munir, during the four-day military conflict with India in May 2025, and also underscored Pakistan's successful diplomatic mediation that established the Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Iran leading to the cessation of hostilities

NEW YORK: Visiting Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal has told Pakistani-Americans in New York that Pakistan has achieved critical macroeconomic stability, controlling inflation and boosting exports. In a speech, he highlighted the robust turnaround of Pakistan's economy under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif following periods of immense financial distress. The minister said that the present government had successfully stabilized the macroeconomic framework, increasing development spending to historic levels, and stabilizing the currency. The meeting, arranged by Pakistan's Consulate General, was attended by a large number of Pakistani community members, businessmen and students. Umar Sheikh, acting Consul General, moderated the event. Also attending were: Former Defence Minister Khurran Dastgir and Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Rizwan Saeed Sheikh. Ahsan Iqbal spoke of Pakistan's armed forces' gallant performance, under the leadership of Field Marshal Asim Munir, during the four-day military conflict with India in May 2025, and also underscored Pakistan's successful diplomatic mediation that established the Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Iran leading to the cessation of hostilities. Those achievements, he said, boosted Pakistan's prestige in the international community, adding that they will remain a proud chapter in "our nation's history." "Pakistan now has tailwinds," Ahsan Iqbal said. But, he warned that "we must not be complacent. The minister said that having won the "Markas" in the military and diplomatic fields, the country must accomplish "Marka-i-Trarraqi" with determined hardwork to usher in prosperity. In the past, Ahsan Iqbal said what truly ruined Pakistan's trajectory is political instability and the inconsistency in policies. When governments change, successor regimes abandon previous projects on political grounds. With great effort, he said, the present government has been able to promote a measure of stability. The time for political long marches and agitation is over. What Pakistan now needs is a march forward in the economic field. "We must prioritize policy continuity to attract foreign investment and put the country on the road to prosperity." The minister urged the gathering to sink differences, strengthen unity and make their voice heard in this country. He urged them to avoid activities that tarnish the image of Pakistan, and urged businessmen to invest in Pakistan. Earlier, Khurram Dastgir in his remarks also said that Pakistan was moving forward. "The country is on the upswing," he said, noting that the breakthrough in US-Pakistan relations was something unforeseen before the May clash in South Asia. Ambassador Rizwan Sheikh delivered an address of welcome.—DNA

Bangladesh monsoon death toll hits 50, thousands displaced

DHAKA: Flash floods and landslides triggered by monsoon rains have killed at least 50 people in Bangladesh in the past week, officials said on Sunday, with tens of thousands displaced from their homes. Bangladesh, a low-lying delta nation criss-crossed by rivers, is highly vulnerable to floods and landslides during the monsoon season, but scientists say climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. For the last few days, army and border guard personnel have been ferrying food, drinking water and other essential supplies by boat to communities cut off because of heavy flooding in the country's southeastern districts. As many as 50 people have died in the worst-affected Chattogram district in the past week, including 29 who were buried by landslides, divisional commissioner Mohammed Ziauddin told AFP by phone. "Two individuals are still missing," he said. Some 35,000 people have been forced to seek shelter in government-run centers, he added. Among those caught up in the disaster in Chattogram was Mohammed Forkan, whose family could not fulfil his wish to be buried beside his parents because the local cemetery was submerged under chest-deep water. "We placed my uncle's body on a bamboo raft and swam alongside it in search of a piece of land that was not underwater," his nephew Nizam Uddin told AFP. "Finally, we managed to bury him on government land and held a small funeral prayer.—APP

China's 'Green Great Wall' tames desert growth

KUBUQI DESERT, China: For half a century, millions of workers have repeated a task across the deserts in northern China: inserting forearm-length sticks into shifting sand, first in a row, then in an intersecting line, gradually forming a grid. Then saplings are planted at the center of each small square. The technique, known as "straw checkerboards," is a simple yet widely used method to stabilize sand dunes against the wind and help plants take root by using water supplied through an irrigation system. The widespread lattice it created across the sand has become the iconic image of China's decades-long campaign against the spreading of desert conditions, known as the Three-North Protective Forest Program or the Green Great Wall. The generations of work have yielded measurable progress, but scientists caution that preserving the gains will require decades of continued effort. For a long time, drought, overgrazing and farming removed vegetation, harmed the soil and made areas vulnerable to wind and sandstorms. That kind of degradation of the land over time is known as desertification. The area of desertified land in northern China peaked in 2000, and it has been reduced by over 1,000 square kilometers (400 square miles) each year since then, according to data published by state media. The Chinese government said the initiative launched in 1978 has played a crucial role in transforming vast regions covering nearly half of China from "the desertification advancing and people retreating.—APP

Syrian Civil Defense teams deal with 20 crashes, 147 fires in 24 hours

LONDON: Two people were killed and 23 others injured in 20 road accidents across Syria over the past 24 hours, state news agency Sana reported on Sunday. The Syrian Civil Defense said its teams provided first aid to the injured before transferring them to hospitals, while also securing crash sites and clearing roads. In the same period emergency crews tackled 147 fires in residential and commercial properties, crop fields, grasslands and garbage sites, the report said. All were brought under control, with damage limited to material losses and no injuries reported. On Friday emergency teams responded to 14 traffic accidents and 155 fires, in which 17 people were injured, the report said.—APP

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Briefs

Huge fire rages near Paris

ARBONNE-LA-FORET, France: French officials rushed two firefighting planes to the Paris region Sunday, after a fire erupted south of the French capital, disrupting traffic during a busy summer travel weekend and piling more misery on a region sweltering through its latest heatwave. The fire, which officials described as "very virulent" and of "exceptional scale," began late afternoon in the sprawling Fontainebleau forest about 60 kilometers (40 miles) south-east of the capital, a onetime royal hunting preserve that today is dotted with quiet villages. It had raced across 800 hectares and was still spreading, officials said early Monday, causing the partial closure of the A6 highway, the country's main north-south artery. And with nightfall, firefighting aircraft had been forced to suspend their operations. Around 15 homes had been evacuated in the nearby village of Vaudoué and firefighters were defending several other towns in the area, said the local Seine-et-Marne fire service. Residents anxiously gathered in the village, watching emergency vehicles race past and making calls to try to find out if their homes were still at risk. Evacuated residents Valerie and her husband Daniel described the moment authorities and firefighters told them to leave their home. – APP

German hospital treats Ebola patients

BERLIN: A United States citizen infected with the Ebola virus in the Democratic Republic of Congo was admitted to Frankfurt University Hospital early on Monday, officials said. The patient arrived at the hospital's special isolation unit at around 3 a.m. local time (0100 GMT) after contracting the Bundibugyo variant of the Ebola virus in Congo, the hospital said. The US CDC said on Friday that a US citizen working for a humanitarian organization in Congo had tested positive for the Bundibugyo Ebola virus. "The patient's condition is currently stable," said Timo Wolf, head of the special isolation unit. The hospital said there was no risk to the public or other patients, as the individual is being treated in complete isolation in a unit that is structurally and organizationally separated from the rest of the facility. The admission comes as the number of confirmed Ebola cases in Congo rose to 1,926, including 702 deaths, with the outbreak spreading to two new provinces, Haut-Uele and Tshopo, the country's public health institute said on Monday. In June, a US citizen treated in Berlin after contracting Ebola in Congo was discharged from Charité hospital. – APP

How fiber-optic drones are changing the modern warfare

LONDON: Israel is scrambling to counter a new battlefield threat after Hezbollah's growing use of fiber-optic drones – a weapon many experts say has fundamentally changed modern warfare – exposed a dangerous gap in its defenses. Cheap, difficult to detect and immune to electronic jamming, the drones have become one of the defining weapons of the war in Ukraine and are now appearing in conflicts elsewhere, including southern Lebanon. On April 26, the Israel Defense Force suffered its first known fatalities from a fiber optic drone when one soldier was killed and six others wounded after their position in southern Lebanon was struck. Hezbollah later released footage of the attack filmed by the drone. A screengrab taken from a video released by Hezbollah says to show an Israeli tank and soldiers gathered next to it moments before being hit by an FPV drone attack, in Taybeh, Lebanon, with the date of the video given as April 26, 2026. (Hezbollah military media/Handout via Reuters) According to reports, at least a dozen Israeli soldiers have since been killed by the drones after fighting in Lebanon resumed in March. Unlike conventional first-person-view drones, fiber-optic versions are connected to their operators by an ultra-thin cable that reels out behind them as they fly. The cable acts as an umbilical cord between the operator's control console and the drone, carrying commands and high-definition video without relying on radio signals that can be jammed. A screengrab taken from a video released by Hezbollah says to show an Israeli D9 armored bulldozer moments before being hit by an FPV drone attack, in Bint Jbeil, Lebanon, with the date of the video given as April 15, 2026. Some can carry up to 50 kilometers of cable. Flying low, fast and almost silently, they are exceptionally difficult to

Pride of Islamabad to be back soon

Constitutional Court declares Monal demolition as illegal

According to the bench, the then apex court's swift order had denied the management and its employees their fundamental right to due process. Most notably, the bench pointed out that the previous ruling bypassed standard legal channels by completely denying the restaurant administration the right to appeal, a cornerstone of any democratic judicial framework

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark decision that has sent shockwaves through the country's legal and political landscape, the newly formed Constitutional Court of Pakistan has declared the previous demolition of the iconic Monal Restaurant illegal. The Constitutional Court, headed by Justice Azhar Hassan Rizvi, ruled that the prior Supreme Court judgment ordering the closure and dismantling of the famous eatery violated basic principles of natural justice and procedural law. The court has directed that the lower courts should now decide the entire case fresh, strictly on its legal merit. In its detailed ruling, the Constitutional Court sharply criticized the manner in which the case was originally handled. Jus-

tice Azhar Hassan Rizvi observed that the Supreme Court did not properly treat the complex matter, failing to provide a fair hearing to the aggrieved parties involved. According to the bench, the apex court's swift order denied the management and its employees their fundamental right to due process. Most notably, the bench pointed out that the previous ruling bypassed standard legal channels by completely denying the restaurant administration the right to appeal, a cornerstone of any democratic judicial framework. The legal battle dates back to a high-profile verdict delivered by the Supreme Court, which was then headed by the former Chief Justice, Qazi Faez Isa. That bench had declared Monal, along with several other neighboring establishments operating in the picturesque Margalla Hills National

Park, to be completely illegal structures, ordering their immediate closure and subsequent demolition to preserve the local environment. While framed as an environmental preservation effort, the sudden destruction of the premier tourist destination triggered widespread public backlash. For over a decade, Monal served as a primary cultural ambassador for the capital city. Situated high above Islamabad, it was an iconic venue where state guests, foreign dignitaries, and international delegations were routinely hosted to experience Pakistani hospitality. Following its demolition, overseas Pakistanis and international visitors heavily criticized the move on various global platforms, slamming the decision as short-sighted and detrimental to Pakistan's struggling tourism sector. Many argued that instead of complete demolition, sustainable regulato-

ry frameworks could have been introduced to address environmental concerns without destroying a multi-million-dollar asset and displacing hundreds of workers. News of the Constitutional Court's intervention has brought a wave of immense relief across the capital and among food and hospitality industry stakeholders. Citizens have taken to social media to celebrate the judgment, viewing it as a correction of an overreached judicial mandate. Legal experts note that by sending the case back to the lower courts to be heard strictly on merit, the Constitutional Court has restored the traditional hierarchy of the judiciary and guaranteed the right to a fair trial. With this major legal hurdle cleared, local residents and regular patrons are expressing renewed optimism that the iconic landmark will soon rebuild and return to its former glory.

Drone kills three in Russia

MOSCOW: Drone attacks killed three people and wounded five in the Moscow region, the governor said on Monday, as Ukraine intensifies its strikes in response to Russia's barages. Ukraine has been striking Russia, particularly energy targets, which Kyiv says is fair retribution for Moscow's more than four-year barrages against its territory. "In the settlement of Pionersky in Istra, three people were killed and three more wounded as a result of a drone falling," Governor Andrey Vorobyov posted on Telegram on Monday. Two more people had been wounded in another part of the region, he added. Air defenses shot down 81 drones over the region, Vorobyov said. Drones also attacked southern Stavropol, sparking a fire at an industrial zone, the region's governor said on Monday. "The attack has caused a fire in the industrial zone in ... Vyzniki, Shpakovsky district," Governor Vladimir Vladimirov posted on Telegram. – APP

Stocks fall as US-Iran war heat up

DNA

KARACHI: Stocks fell sharply in intraday trade on Monday, as renewed US-Iran hostilities, worsening Middle East tensions and a jump in global oil prices triggered selling pressure at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX). The benchmark KSE-100 Index touched an intraday low of 179,448.52, down 2,793.25 points, or 1.53%, from previous close of 182,241.77. Its intraday high stood at 180,597.14, still down 1,644.63 points, or 0.90%. "PSX slid over 1% owing to Iran escalation and worsening Middle East tensions," Ahsan Mehani, Managing Director and CEO of Arif Habib Commodities, told Geo.tv. Mehani said investor fears over inflation amid a surge in global crude oil prices and the potential impact on Pakistan's external account played a catalyst role in the selling pressure. Ismail Iqbal Securities also expected the market to remain under pressure as geopolitical tensions continued to escalate alongside rising oil prices. "Sentiment is likely to remain sensitive to any fresh developments on the geopolitical and macroeconomic fronts," the brokerage said. "The market opened lower as renewed US-Iran hostilities drove oil prices higher, prompting investors to adopt a cautious

stance," said Huzaifa Riaz, Director at Mayari Securities (Pvt) Limited. "Despite the prevailing geopolitical uncertainty, support emerged at lower levels in anticipation of renewed diplomatic negotiations once the escalation subsides," he added Oil prices jumped more than 4% on Monday after another flare-up between the United States and Iran threatened their already fragile truce. The renewed hostilities followed last week's exchange of fire and came as negotiators struggled to reach a lasting peace deal to keep the Strait of Hormuz open. The US military launched a new wave of strikes on Sunday after renewed fighting over the waterway saw several of Washington's Gulf allies targeted by incoming fire. Both main oil contracts spiked as much as 4.5%, fanning fresh concerns that inflation could force central banks to raise interest rates. The renewed fighting followed an Iranian attack early Sunday on a commercial ship in the strait, with the crew forced to abandon it after it went up in flames. Iran's Revolutionary Guards said after the incident that "the Strait of Hormuz will be closed until further notice and until the end of American interventions in this region," according to state news agency IRNA. United States Central Command, however, said on X that the strait was "open to all vessels seeking to lawfully transit".

Thailand Pub fire kills over 27

Thailand has seen similar tragedies in the past. In 2022, 14 people were killed by a fire at a music pub in the eastern part of the country

BANGKOK: A huge fire engulfed a pub in Bangkok early on Monday morning, killing at least 27 people before firefighters brought the blaze under control, officials said. Footage shared online by first responders shows a huge blaze raging and plumes coming out of the front door of the Na Ladprao pub in the northern part of the Thai capital. People are seen trying to flee as thick black smoke billows into the sky. Rescuers said the fire was reported around midnight. Thailand Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul told reporters at the scene that 27 people died and that several of the injured have been taken to the hospital. He said the cause of the fire is under investigation. Anutin said a musician who was performing at the pub told him that he saw smoke com-

ing out of a circuit breaker near the stage before the power went out, then an explosion was heard and thick smoke quickly filled the place. Many of victims were found in the restrooms, at the back of the pub, Anutin added. Firefighters took about half an hour to bring the fire under control. Photos of the aftermath show charred tables and chairs, and the damaged interior of the pub. Thailand has seen similar tragedies in the past. In 2022, 14 people were killed by a fire at a music pub in the eastern part of the country. And more than a decade before that, 66 people were killed and more than 200 injured in a fire during a Jan. 1, 2009 New Year's Eve celebration at the Santika nightclub in Thailand's capital. That blaze was apparently sparked by an indoor fireworks display. – APP

15 Indian tourists killed in Vietnam

DNA

HANOI: The bodies of 15 Indian tourists who were killed when a speedboat capsized off southern Vietnam last week were being returned home Monday. The speedboat was carrying 32 Indian tourists and four Vietnamese crew members when it overturned near the shore Saturday afternoon, shortly after leaving Hon May Rut Ngaoi island near Phu Quoc, Vietnam's largest island, authorities said. The boat's captain, Nguyen Hong Hai, 57, is under investigation for alleged violations of waterway transport safety regulations, state media reported. The flight carrying the remains from Ho Chi Minh City would arrive in Mumbai late Monday, the Indian Embassy in Hanoi said on social media. It said the home states were asked to coordinate further travel. Ten of the dead were from Tamil Nadu state, three from Andhra Pradesh and two from Kerala. The group was on a company trip organized by Lava International, a smartphone and consumer electronics manufacturer, for its employees, distributors and retail partners, the company said. The embassy previously said 16 survivors were released from the hospital and were returning to India. One remained in critical condition in a Vietnamese hospital. Hon May Rut island is about 10 kilometers (6 miles) south of Phu Quoc, one of Vietnam's most popular beach destinations. Both are known for their white sandy beaches and clear waters, drawing millions of domestic and foreign tourists each year.

EU mulls curbing trade with Israel

"I think what you will see is a discussion on the options, and we will get a bit of a picture of where everybody is," said the diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss confidential internal deliberations

BRUSSELS: European Union foreign ministers on Monday explored whether there is enough support for new measures to curb trade with Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, according to diplomats and officials. The discussion was based on a confidential paper by the European Commission that floats three different options – an import licensing system, prohibitive tariffs or a ban, a senior EU diplomat and a European official said. The EU has long struggled to take major decisions on Middle East policy because of deep and longstanding divisions among its 27 member countries, particularly on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But pressure from member governments to take action on settlements has grown in recent months because of increasing violence by Israeli settlers and frustration with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, which has expanded settlements. In May, the EU imposed sanctions on four entities and three individuals over what it described as serious and systematic human rights abuses against Palestinians in the West Bank. In a July 2024 advisory opinion, the International Court of Justice said Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories and settlements in the West Bank are illegal and that states should take steps to prevent trade or investment relations that help maintain the situation. Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar last year described a push by some European governments to implement the advisory opinion as "shameful". UN bodies and most countries have found Israel's settlements in the West Bank to be illegal. Israel rejects this, viewing the territory as disputed and saying a Jewish presence has existed there for thousands of years. "I think what you will see on Monday is a discussion on the options, and we will get a bit of a picture of where everybody is," said the diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss confidential internal deliberations. Diplomats said they did not expect a formal decision on any particular measure on Monday. Divisions over the issue also extend to how any decision could be taken. Some diplomats say banning trade with the settlements would require a qualified majority – at least 15 EU states, representing 65 percent of the bloc's population. But the Commission's paper suggests it believes a ban could require unanimous support, a bar that would make a decision highly unlikely. – APP

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