



Islamabad POST

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Govt to continue supporting print media, says Tarar

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Pakistan greatly values tie with Indonesia: CM

Detailed News On Page-07



Mango festival at Serena Hotel draws interest

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Friendly ties solidified

CDF discusses regional security with Turkish leaders

ISPR says meetings underscored shared vision for stronger strategic partnership amid evolving geopolitical challenges

DNA

ANKARA: Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir met Turkish President Recep Erdogan to discuss regional security and matters of mutual interest, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Tuesday. CDF Munir is currently on a high-level official visit to Türkiye to enhance the deep-rooted strategic and defence ties between the two brotherly nations, the military's media wing said in a statement. Upon his arrival in Türkiye, Field Marshal Munir was extended a warm reception reflecting the historic and brotherly relations between the two nations, read the statement. "During the visit, the field marshal held a series of high-level engagements with the Turkish political and military leadership," the ISPR said. Field Marshal Munir called on President Erdogan and Minister of National Defence, Yasar Guler, to discuss matters of mutual interest and regional security, it added. According to the ISPR, the high-level deliberations underscored the shared vision of both nations to foster a more robust strategic partnership in an evolving geopolitical environment. At the Turkish General Staff (TGS) headquarters, the army chief was welcomed with a guard of honour, after which he held a detailed meeting with Chief of the Turkish General Staff General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu. The two leaders discussed regional security dynamics and professional matters of mutual concern. General Bayraktaroglu bestowed the Turkish Armed Forces Distinguished Service Medal upon CDF Munir in recognition of his meritorious services and commitment to bolstering bilateral military cooperation. The field marshal also visited the Turkish Land Forces (TLF) headquarters, where he was received by Turkish Land Forces Commander General Metin Tokel.

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22 vehicles cross into Afghanistan

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Twenty-one of a total of 26 vehicles loaded with World Food Programme (WFP) aid items crossed into Afghanistan via the Torkham border on Tuesday. Since October 2025, the Torkham border — a key trade route between Pakistan and Afghanistan — has been closed due to the "escalating security situation" along the border. Torkham officials and agents said that all 26 vehicles carrying humanitarian assistance comprising food items for Afghanistan arrived in Torkham from Karachi on Monday. The vehicles then underwent the necessary electronic scanning and customs clearing process before these vehicles were issued gate passes for crossing over to Afghanistan. However, they were unable to cross the border on Monday evening due to the stipulated closure of the border at 8pm. The vehicles were taken to the Zero Point on Tuesday morning and later allowed to cross the border into Afghanistan. Officials said that the remaining five will also leave for Afghanistan later in the day. Custom clearing agents said that after the clearance of the first batch of vehicles, more such WFP containers were expected to arrive in Torkham and later proceed to Afghanistan. It is pertinent to mention here that a similar convoy of about 20 containers from

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ANKARA: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces visited Türkiye and held meetings with the civil and military leadership of Türkiye including the President of Türkiye Tayyip Erdogan. — DNA

US strikes on Iran continue

Iraq PM meets Trump in Washington

DNA

TEHRAN: The United States launched a third night of strikes on Iran as President Donald Trump planned to reimpose a blockade Tuesday on Iranian ports and floated a 20% fee on cargo in the vital Strait of Hormuz. Trump said a deal with the Islamic republic was still possible even as attacks were carried out, with Iran striking two ships in the strategic waterway and killing one crew member, according to the United Arab Emirates. The US military said its five-hour mission hit targets across Iran including coastal Bushehr and

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6 children die of HIV

DNA

KARACHI: Six children affected by the HIV outbreak linked to Karachi's Kulsoom Bai Valika Hospital have died, Sindh Labour and Social Protection Minister Saeed Ghani confirmed on Tuesday. Addressing a press conference in Karachi, Ghani said the government would not abandon the affected families and was working closely with medical experts, including specialists from the private sector, to address the situation.

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Condemns attacks

Pakistan reaffirms support for KSA

PM Shehbaz says Islamabad will continue supporting all sincere efforts aimed at promoting regional peace, stability

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday strongly condemned the blatant attacks carried out against Saudi Arabia last night as a violation of its "sovereignty and territorial integrity" and reiterated Islamabad's "unwavering support" for the Kingdom's security. The prime minister made the remarks in a X post, a day after Saudi Arabia said that its coalition forces had intercepted ballistic missiles fired by the Houthis from Yemen towards the Kingdom's southern region. Saudi Arabia intercepted missiles "launched by the terrorist Houthi militia toward the southern region," the spokesperson for a Saudi-led military coalition in Yemen had said.

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Pakistan committed to advancing principles of UN Charter

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to advancing the objectives and principles of the UN Charter, and respect for international law and international treaties. He was talking to Michelle Bachelet Jeria, Candidate for UN Secretary-General, who called on him. While emphasizing the vital role of

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Asif slams Fazl for anti-military tirade

He said nobody lays down their life merely for a salary. The sacrifice of life, he said, is driven by ideology, faith, a sense of duty, and deep devotion to the homeland

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif strongly denounced the statement made by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUIF) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, terming it highly irresponsible and

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Briefs

AJK govt says blocked roads being reopened

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government on Tuesday said that an operation was under way in the region to clear obstacles created by the banned Jammu and Kashmir Awami Action Committee (JAAC) at entry and exit points, warning that the government would treat "blackmailers" with an "iron hand". "The clearance operation will continue until all routes are opened," AJK Home Secretary Chaudhry Guftar Hussain said during a press conference. Hussain also reaffirmed the government's commitment to protecting human lives and ensuring the continuation of economic and business activities in the region.

‘Mastermind’ behind Rangers camp attack arrested, say police

Police say attackers received training, weapons, and directions from Afghanistan

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The mastermind behind the June 27 attack on a Rangers camp in Karachi, along with smugglers who supplied weapons to the terrorists, has been arrested, Counter Terrorism Department SSP Irfan Bahadur said on Tuesday. Addressing a joint press conference at the Central Police Office in Karachi alongside Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hassan Lanjar, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Ghulam Nabi Memon, and senior Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) officials, the police officer said that Three Pakistan Rangers personnel were martyred and four others injured in the attack on the Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) camp in Karachi on June 27, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). Three attackers were killed, and one was arrested in an injured condition. SSP Bahadur said the attack had been planned in Afghanistan, from where instructions were issued. He added that the weapons and explosives used in the

assault had also been supplied from Afghanistan. According to the CTD official, Muhammad Bashir was the mastermind behind the attack and was taken into custody after the incident. He said Bashir had coordinated all logistical arrangements with the help of 13 facilitators. SSP Bahadur said the four-member terrorist group — identified as Janan, Hadi, Umar, and Usman — entered Karachi from Afghanistan. They were transported from Hub Chowki to Korangi, where they were housed before carrying out the attack. He said Janan was the suicide bomber who detonated explosives at the entrance of the Rangers camp, allowing the remaining three terrorists to enter the premises. The SSP said the injured terrorist, Usman, confessed during interrogation that the attackers had received training at different camps in Afghanistan. He added that investigators had recovered videos showing preparations for the attack and recorded statements from the Indian proxy group Jamaat-ul-Ahrar's training camp.

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Bastille Day message

French Ambassador highlights liberty, equality, and fraternity

Addressing ongoing conflicts from Ukraine to the Middle East, the Gulf, and Africa, Ambassador Galey reaffirmed France's commitment, alongside European partners, to multilateralism and the peaceful resolution of disputes in line with UN Charter

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Two hundred and thirty-seven years after the storming of the Bastille, the ideals of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity continue to guide France's actions in a world facing profound upheaval, said Nicolas Galey, Ambassador of France to Pakistan. He emphasized that respect for international law remains central to French foreign policy, while global challenges such as climate change demand greater solidarity among nations. Addressing ongoing conflicts from Ukraine to the Middle East, the Gulf, and Africa, Ambassador Galey reaffirmed France's commitment,



alongside European partners, to multilateralism and the peaceful resolution of disputes in line with the UN Charter. He praised Pakistan's diplomatic efforts in the Gulf, noting that they helped bring Iranians and Americans closer together and culminated in the Islamabad MoU last month. France, he said, stands ready to work with Pakistan toward lasting peace in the Middle East. Highlighting shared ambitions for a more peaceful, cooperative, and sustainable world, the Ambassador underscored France's collaboration with Pakistan in international forums and bilateral ties. He pointed to the 2015 Paris Agreement as a cornerstone of France's climate commitments, stressing that Pakistan is particularly vulnerable to global warming. France continues to promote cooperation on environmental issues, including initiatives on water and oceans. Building on the 2023 bilateral cooperation roadmap, France and Pakistan are expanding collaboration across diverse sectors: economy, science, technology, education, development, culture, tourism, and climate action. France remains a significant economic partner, with around twenty French companies operating in Pakistan.



JOINING HANDS FOR JOURNALISM

Daily Islamabad POST / DNA News Agency & DUNYO News Agency Sign Historic MOU



H.E. Ambassador Alisher Tukhtaev, Ambassador of Uzbekistan (L) and Mr. Ansar Mahmood Bhatti, Chief Editor Daily Islamabad POST / DNA News Agency (R) exchange MOU documents marking a landmark media partnership between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

Daily Islamabad POST/Diplomatic News Agency (DNA) and Uzbekistan's Official News Agency DUNYO have joined hands in a historic Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen bilateral media ties and promote diplomatic journalism between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

Islamabad, Pakistan | www.dailyislamabadpost.com | DNA News Agency

Govt committed to promoting Sikh religious tourism: Arora

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Minorities Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, during his visit to Australia, visited Glenwood Gurdwara Sahib and the Sikh Museum in Sydney, where members of the Australian Sikh community appreciated the Punjab government's initiatives for minority welfare and the preservation of Sikh religious heritage. The management of Glenwood Gurdwara Sahib presented the minister with an honorary Siropa, while he also recorded his remarks in the visitors' book, said a handout issued here on Tuesday. During the visit, he held discussions with members of the Sikh community on promoting religious, cultural and people-to-people ties between Pakistan and the global Sikh diaspora.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Punjab government remained committed to strengthening engagement with the global Sikh community. He said the provincial government had undertaken landmark initiatives for the restoration and conservation of gurdwaras, promotion of religious tourism and provision of international-standard facilities at the Kartarpur Corridor, Nankana Sahib, Gurdwara Aman Ashan and other sacred Sikh sites. Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora said protecting minority places of worship and promoting inter-faith harmony were central to the Punjab government's vision. He added that practical measures were being taken to provide safe, dignified and convenient pilgrimage facilities for Sikh devotees, making Punjab a model of peace, religious tolerance and interfaith harmony.—APP

Minister vows enhanced healthcare, edu for workers

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Labour and Human Resource Muhammad Manshaullah Butt on Tuesday assured labour representatives from Gujranwala that workers' issues would be addressed on a priority basis, saying the government was committed to improving their welfare, healthcare, education and working conditions. The assurance came during a meeting with a delegation of labour representatives from Gujranwala, who discussed workers' welfare, residential and medical facilities, and other issues facing the labour community, here. The delegation also presented suggestions for improving services and facilities for workers. The minister said that the prosperity of workers and resolution of their problems were among the Punjab government's top priorities. He added that various welfare projects were being implemented at a fast pace under the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. Muhammad Manshaullah Butt said the government was taking concrete steps to provide better healthcare, education and other essential facilities to workers. He announced that the PESSI Nursing School at Manga Social Security Hospital would be launched soon, while a proposal to establish a PESSI Medical College was also under consideration. He said Workers Welfare Schools were providing quality education in line with modern requirements to equip workers' children for a better future.—APP

APNS delegation meets info minister to discuss key issues facing print media

The APNS delegation pointed out that the Prime Minister's commitment to increase government advertising rates for the print media has yet to be implemented, despite the severe economic challenges confronting the newspaper industry



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Executive Committee of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) held a meeting with the Mr. Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting to discuss a wide range of issues relating to the newspaper industry, government advertising policy and regulatory reforms. During the meeting, the Federal Minister agreed in principle and directed the officials of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to incorporate the digital websites of newspapers into the Federal Government's print advertising campaigns. The APNS delegation pointed out that the Prime Minister's commitment to increase government advertising rates for the print media has yet to be implemented, despite the severe economic challenges confronting the newspaper industry. APNS proposed that government advertising rates for print media should be delinked from the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) and that the existing rates should remain frozen until a new mechanism for determining newspaper advertisement rates is developed. The APNS further expressed

the view that the authority to fix government advertisement rates should be transferred from the Cabinet Division to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, in line with the existing policy applicable to other media. The meeting also discussed the need to reform and restructure the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) and the office of the Registrar. APNS emphasized that the registration rules should be simplified in consultation with all stakeholders. The Federal Minister directed the Secretary Information to constitute a joint committee comprising representatives of the Ministry of Information and APNS to formulate proposals and recommend a comprehensive policy framework on these matters. APNS also pointed out that the existing government advertising policy is largely based on the 1964 framework and requires a comprehensive review to meet present-day media requirements. The Society proposed that client departments should be empowered to prepare media plans according to their communication objectives and target audiences. The APNS delegation also expressed concern over the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NC-CIA) taking action against content published in newspapers. It maintained that the content published in newspapers and on news-

paper websites does not fall within the jurisdiction of the NCCIA, as it lacks the locus standi to entertain complaints relating to newspapers and their websites. APNS maintained that the Press Council of Pakistan is the only competent statutory forum to deal with such matters. Issues relating to the taxation of newsprint also came under discussion. The Federal Minister assured the APNS delegation that efforts would be made to resolve these issues at the earliest. The Federal Minister was accompanied by Mr. Ashfaq Khalil, Federal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, and Ms. Raisa Adil, Principal Information Officer (PIO). The APNS delegation was led by Senator Sarmad Ali, President APNS and attended by Mr. Mujib ur Rehman Shami, Daily Pakistan Lahore, Shahab Zuberi Vice President, Mohsin Bilal Joint Secretary, Mohsin Seyal Daily Aftab, Bilal Farooqi Daily Aghaz, Ansar Mahmood Bhatti Monthly Centre Line, Kazi Asad Abid Daily Ibrat, Syed Akbar Tahir Daily Jasarat, Mr. Shakoor Shah Daily Mashriq Quetta, Sardar Khan Niazi Monthly Naya Rukh, Mohammad Faruq Daily Pakistan, Mr. Faisal Zahid Malik Daily Pakistan Observer, Mohammad Irfan Daily Ummat, Humayun Gulzar Daily Sayadat, Mr. Rao Amjad Ali, Daily Har Lamha.

Session on 'India's sea-based nuclear capabilities: implications for Pak' held

ISLAMABAD: The Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a high-level roundtable discussion titled "India's Sea-Based Nuclear Capabilities: Implications for Pakistan." The event brought together prominent strategic experts, diplomats, and military analysts to examine the qualitative shift in South Asia's deterrence architecture following the operational deployment of India's sea-based nuclear arsenal.

In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mehmood, Chairman of the Board of Governors ISSI, emphasized the gravity of the evolving regional security dynamics. Highlighting the critical strategic challenges, he stated that the operationalization of India's sea-based

nuclear deterrent marked a qualitative and structural shift in regional security. He further added that these developments demand a clear-eyed reassessment of both deterrence postures and diplomatic frameworks to safeguard regional peace and stability. Earlier, Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director of ACDC, opened the session by outlining the scope of the discussion and welcoming the participants. He highlighted that the profound disruption to South Asian strategic stability would require a rigorous evaluation of the potential doctrinal and technological posture adjustments necessary for Pakistan to maintain a credible deterrent. Setting the agenda for the roundtable, Ms. Ghazala Yasmin Jalil, Research Fellow at ACDC, highlighted the profound

structural turning points confronting the region – from recessed deterrence to mated warheads. She raised vital questions regarding how Pakistan can preserve robust, Full Spectrum Deterrence without slipping into an expensive, open-ended naval arms race, suggesting that ultimate security lies in negotiating robust maritime Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs). The event featured detailed thematic evaluations from a panel of distinguished strategic thinkers. Vice Admiral (Retd.) Dr. Ahmed Saeed HI(M), former President of the National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA), highlighted the growing strategic imbalance in the Indian Ocean driven by India's massive investment in acquiring advanced conventional and nuclear submarines (SSBNs).—APP

KP PA panel concludes review of KP Digital Payment Act

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Standing Committee on Finance chaired by Arbab Muhammad Usman Khan here Tuesday conducted a detail review of KP Digital Payment Act 2026. The meeting was attended by committee members including Anwar Zeb Khan, Munir Hussain Laghmani, Sher Ali Afridi, Gurpal Singh, Farah Khan, Shazia Tamas Khan, Madina Gul Afridi, Amina Sardar and Sobia Shahid besides Additional Secretary Finance and relevant officers. The committee conducted a detailed review of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Digital Payments Act, 2026 that was aims to promote digital payment systems across the province, ensure their effective implementation and establish a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework for digital payments. The committee thoroughly examined the proposed amendments presented during previous meeting by members of the standing committee and MPs. On the occasion, chairman, Munir Hussain Laghmani and Sher Ali Afridi expressed their concerns and put forward suggestions regarding various provisions of the bill. Participants of the committee emphasized the need of incorporating clear and effective legal provisions relating to penalties and enforcement to strengthen compliance and ensure effective implementation of the proposed law. It was decided that further consultations and detailed deliberations on the bill would continue in the next meeting. The key features of the bill included defining the responsibilities of digital payment service providers; making the display of QR codes mandatory for business establishments; requiring businesses to accept digital payments; promoting facilitation and capacity building; outlining the obligations of authorized service providers; providing for business registration and licensing; specifying the powers of designated officers; establishing an effective monitoring mechanism; promoting financial inclusion; ensuring consumer protection and data protection; creating an effective complaint redressal mechanism; empowering the government to frame rules; providing for transitional and protective measures and granting powers to address any implementation-related challenges. At the conclusion, chairman of the committee directed finance department to incorporate all practical and feasible recommendations put forward by the committee into the bill so that the proposed law is transparent, effective and aligned with contemporary requirements in every respect. He further directed that the revised draft of the bill be presented before the committee at its next meeting where it would undergo final deliberation before the committee formulates its recommendations.—DNA

Growing Hazara spurs demand for more trains from Havelian

HAVELIAN, (Abbottabad) : For more than a century, Havelian Railway Station has been Pakistan's northern rail gateway, linking millions of passengers, tourists and traders from Hazara, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the rest of the country. Today, the historic terminal is struggling with aging infrastructure, limited passenger services and the absence of freight trains despite rapid population growth and expanding business activity across the region. Despite its strategic importance, the station struggles with aging infrastructure and limited rail services. While Havelian generates an estimated Rs 800 million to Rs 1 billion in monthly revenue for Pakistan Railways, passengers and businesses continue to face hardships. Local industries face similar challenges. Trade Union President Khurshid Azam and mining trader Muhammad Aslam talking to said Hazara Division has abundant reserves of minerals, marble, granite and industrial stone supplied to markets across Pakistan. However, the lack of dedicated freight trains has forced businesses to depend on costly road transport, raising freight expenses and reducing competitiveness. Business leaders said Havelian's location makes it an ideal logistics hub for northern Pakistan. They urged

Pakistan Railways to introduce regular freight trains to major industrial centres, saying the move would reduce transport costs, facilitate exports, attract investment and create jobs. They added that expanded freight services would also support the region's growing agricultural, manufacturing and construction sectors. The daily struggle is evident as scores of passengers use the station each day. An Assistant Station Master, requesting anonymity, talking to APP said the station serves only two passenger services: the local train to Rawalpindi, arriving at 11:00 a.m., and the Hazara Express from Karachi, which reaches Havelian at 7:00 p.m. The rail corridor connects northern Pakistan with Taxila, Jhelum, Sargodha, Multan and Hyderabad. Shamaem Bhatti, a student at the Institute of Arts and Culture Lahore who regularly travels from Abbottabad to Lahore and vice versa, told APP that he now prefers buses over trains. Bhatti further said the lack of a direct Lahore-Havelian train makes rail travel inconvenient, forcing passengers to change trains during the journey. He added that despite the higher cost of bus travel, he prefers paying more to avoid a hectic, uncomfortable and time-consuming train journey. Travelling from Havelian has become difficult due to the poor condition of the cen-

tury-old track beyond Haripur, forcing trains to run at low speeds. Commuters Ikram and Muhammad Yousaf said journeys of a few hours often stretch into day-long trips and urged authorities to rehabilitate the track. Residents said demand for more trains has risen with Hazara Division's growing population and economy. Rapid urban growth in Abbottabad, Haripur and Mansehra, along with expanding universities, industries, tourism and businesses, has increased daily travel, making existing rail services insufficient. They said additional trains would provide affordable transport and ease pressure on roads. Basic safety at the station remains a concern. A Security guard at station said personnel maintain round-the-clock vigilance despite the lack of CCTV cameras, a boundary wall and reliable lights. Frequent outages leave platforms in darkness, while railway colony families must cross active tracks due to the absence of a pedestrian bridge, putting children and women at risk. The unrealised potential of Havelian is reflected in the proposed Havelian Dry Port. Conceived as a flagship CPEC project worth around \$65 million, it was planned as an international cargo terminal to handle trade from the Khunjerab Pass through the Karakoram Highway.—DNA

Energy sector key to industrial uplift: Qaiser

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Board of Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh on Tuesday underscored the need to prioritise the energy sector, saying it was the key to accelerating industrial growth, increasing exports and strengthening the national economy. Addressing the 2nd Sindh Energy Diversity Conference 2026 as the chief guest at a local hotel, the Minister described the conference as highly significant, saying it would contribute to addressing the country's energy challenges. He said the energy sector remained the biggest hurdle to industrial development and export growth, adding

that Pakistan had recently witnessed an increase in exports for the first time, while the country's industries possessed immense untapped potential. Qaiser Sheikh said nations across the world were focusing on energy security and diversification, stressing that Pakistan must also accord the highest priority to the sector to achieve sustainable economic growth and raise its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Highlighting indigenous resources, he said Thar coal had emerged as a valuable national asset. Although its potential had initially been underestimated, its importance had now become

evident, he added, noting that Sindh, being the country's leading industrial province, had the greatest demand for energy. Referring to investment initiatives, the Minister said there were 44 Special Economic Zones (SEZs) across the country. He said the Sindh government had allocated the former Pakistan Steel Mills land to the federal government, where an International Monetary Fund (IMF)-approved SEZ would be established over 6,000 acres. The plots would be offered at nominal prices, and advertisements inviting both local and foreign investors would be issued shortly, he added.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY

July 01/Japan Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada National Day

July 01/Somalia Independence Day

July 04/USA Independence Day

July 05/Algeria Independence Day

July 09/Argentina Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

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RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Pak, Turkiye to enhance coop in social protection sector

The minister said Pakistan is keen to benefit from Turkiye’s experience in digital social protection systems, family-centred welfare models and programmes promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Turkiye have agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in social protection, family welfare and poverty alleviation, besides expediting the finalisation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the relevant ministries of the two countries. The understanding was reached during a meeting between Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection Syed Imran Ahmad Shah and Turkiye’s Minister of Family and Social Services Mahinur Özdemir Göktaş on the sidelines of the 9th Ministerial Conference on Women of the Organisation of Islamic

Cooperation (OIC). During the meeting, Syed Imran Ahmad Shah said Pakistan and Turkiye enjoy a historic relationship founded on mutual trust, shared values and unwavering support for each other in difficult times. He briefed the Turkish minister on Pakistan’s social protection framework, highlighting the role of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund and other institutions in supporting vulnerable segments of society and reducing poverty. The minister said Pakistan is keen to benefit from Turkiye’s experience in digital

social protection systems, family-centred welfare models and programmes promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities. He also described the ongoing collaboration between Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal and the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), particularly the Ramadan Food Programme and the Centralised Kitchen Project, as successful examples of bilateral cooperation. Mahinur Özdemir Göktaş appreciated Pakistan’s social protection initiatives, especially the Benazir Income Support Programme, and said it is playing an effective role in supporting deserving families and eco-

nomically empowering women. The two ministers agreed to expedite the signing of the MoU to expand cooperation in social protection, social welfare, community development, capacity building, staff training and the exchange of best practices. Turkiye’s Ambassador to Pakistan, Irfan Neziroglu, and senior officials from both countries also attended the meeting. Later, Syed Imran Ahmad Shah presented the Turkish minister with a traditional Pakistani dupatta and a commemorative ministerial shield, while Mahinur Özdemir Göktaş presented him with a souvenir on behalf of Turkiye.—DNA

CUI partners with SZABM to spearhead digital transformation

ISLAMABAD: COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) has formally entered a strategic partnership with Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University (SZABM) to spearhead the digital transformation of medical examination systems in Pakistan. This collaboration reinforces CUI’s position as a national leader in higher education, recognized for its excellence in information technology, computer sciences, engineering, management sciences, and research. Leveraging its profound technical capacity to design, develop, implement, and maintain secure digital examination management systems and associated infrastructure, CUI aims to modernize the evaluation framework for SZABM. Under this landmark agreement, CUI will provide comprehensive end-to-end services, starting with the provision of fully functional digital examination centres at its campuses, which can handle a diverse range of assessments. The university will also oversee the deployment and operation of a robust Digital Examination Management System (DEMS) to ensure real-time monitoring, data security, and operational efficiency throughout the testing cycle. Furthermore, CUI is committed to the implementation of standardized, transparent, and accountable assessment processes designed to eliminate bias and ensure the highest levels of academic integrity. To support these operations, the university will provide expert technical staff, IT support, and invigilation management.—APP

MoU inked to boost conservation Dolphin

Aligned with Zong’s sustainability pillars of Green and Low Carbon Operations and Inclusive Growth, the partnership reflects the company’s commitment to biodiversity protection and community empowerment, demonstrating that environmental stewardship and socioeconomic development can advance hand in hand towards a more sustainable future for Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Zong, Pakistan’s leading technology services enterprise, has partnered with WWF-Pakistan to strengthen conservation efforts for the endangered Indus River Dolphin (Platanista minor), one of the world’s rarest freshwater dolphin species and an iconic symbol of Pakistan’s natural heritage. Through its support for WWF-Pakistan’s ongoing Indus Dolphin Conservation Programme, Zong is contributing to enhanced rescue operations, ecological monitoring, community engagement and environmental awareness to help safeguard the species and its fragile river ecosystem. The partnership was marked by the inauguration of the Indus Dolphin Rescue and Mobile Awareness Ambulance at the WWF-Pakistan office. The ceremony was attended by Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Malik, Zong Chairman and CEO Huo Junli, WWF-Pakistan Director General Hammad Naqi Khan, Yang Guangyuan of the Chinese Embassy, and senior representatives of the partner organi-

zations. Speaking on the initiative, Zong Chief Regulatory Officer Kamran Ali said, “It is a great honour to be part of this moment. For Zong, the Indus Dolphin Rescue Ambulance is a concrete expression of our commitment to inclusive growth and environmental stewardship—a meaningful initiative rooted in the enduring friendship between China and Pakistan. “For nearly two decades, Zong has established deep roots in Pakistan, remaining dedicated to bridging the digital divide and serving Pakistani society through cutting-edge technologies. We hope this project marks a new beginning, enabling us to better protect the environment and contribute to building an even closer China-Pakistan community.” WWF-Pakistan Director General Hammad Naqi Khan said Pakistan is home to an estimated 2,000 Indus River Dolphins, describing it as a remarkable conservation success story. He said WWF-Pakistan has, since 1992, worked closely with the provincial wildlife departments—particularly those of Sindh and Punjab—alongside other partners and the private sector to rescue and release more than 200 stranded dolphins. “The addition of this dedicat-

ed dolphin ambulance will significantly strengthen our emergency response and monitoring capacity, helping ensure that stranded animals receive timely assistance. This partnership demonstrates how businesses can move beyond conventional corporate philanthropy to invest in practical, measurable conservation solutions,” he added. Found exclusively in the Indus River system, the Indus River Dolphin has faced decades of habitat fragmentation, shrinking freshwater flows and accidental canal stranding, making it one of the world’s most endangered cetaceans. The initiative will deploy a specialised mobile rescue and awareness unit covering the largest global population of the Indus River Dolphin between the Guddu and Sukkur barrages in Sindh. The ambulance will enhance monitoring of stranded dolphins, support timely rescue and safe translocation efforts, engage more than 1,500 fisherfolk and riverine community members as frontline conservation partners, and deliver 50 awareness sessions across remote settlements. Aligned with Zong’s sustainability pillars of Green and Low Carbon Operations.

Pakistan, Sudia vow to educational, cultural coop

The ceremony concluded with renewed commitment from participants to further strengthen educational cooperation, intercultural dialogue, and collective efforts towards building peaceful, inclusive, and resilient societies

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Dr. Wajihah Qamar, on Tuesday said that education remained one of the strongest instruments for building tolerant, inclusive, and progressive societies. She emphasized that educational institutions have a critical responsibility to cultivate values of compassion, critical thinking, mutual respect, and responsible global citizenship among future generations. Minister said these remarks while attending the prestigious ceremony held at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), where an Honorary Doctorate was conferred upon His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Hassa Secretary-General of the Muslim World League (MWL), in recognition of his outstanding global contributions to interfaith harmony, moderation, peaceful coexistence, and the promotion of the true values of Islam. The ceremony was attended by Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, senior government officials, diplomats, academics, and distinguished guests. Addressing the ceremony, Dr. Wajihah paid rich tribute to Dr. Al-Hassa’s remarkable leadership in promoting dialogue, mutual respect, and understanding among diverse faiths and cultures. She said his unwavering commitment to education, justice, moderation, and human dignity has earned him worldwide respect and established him as one of the most influential voices advocating peace and coexistence in the contemporary Muslim world. The Minister stated that the conferment of the honorary doctorate by NUML reflected Pakistan’s recognition of distinguished global leaders who have rendered exceptional services to humanity through knowledge, dialogue, and peaceful engagement. She further noted that Pakistan deeply valued its historic and brotherly relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which continued to expand across education, culture, human resource development, and broader strategic cooperation. She expressed confidence that the longstanding partnership between the two countries would continue to flourish through greater academic collaboration and people-to-people exchanges. Congratulating Dr. Al-Hassa on receiving the honorary doctorate, the Minister said that the recognition was a tribute not only to his distinguished personal achievements but also to his lifelong dedication to strengthening unity within the Muslim Ummah and promoting dialogue among nations and civilizations. Earlier, Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Hassa expressed his gratitude to NUML for the honour, describing it as both a privilege and a greater responsibility. He also praised Pakistan’s leadership for its constructive role in promoting regional peace and reaffirmed the Muslim World League’s commitment to advancing moderation, interfaith harmony, and international cooperation. The ceremony concluded with renewed commitment from participants to further strengthen educational cooperation, intercultural dialogue, and collective efforts towards building peaceful, inclusive, and resilient societies.—DNA

AIOU offers free matric edu for tribal districts

ISLAMABAD Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) under its social welfare mission is providing free Matric education to students from the Tribal Districts, Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). The initiative aims to ensure equal access to quality education for children living in remote, underserved and underprivileged areas, enabling them to become active contributors to the country’s development. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood said that no child should be deprived of education because of financial hardship or geographical barriers. He emphasized that this vision is at the heart of AIOU’s educational and social mission, under which quality learning opportunities are being extended to students in the country’s far-flung regions. He said the University has been implementing special initiatives for several years to support students from areas where educational opportunities are limited. Providing free Matric education to students from the Tribal Districts, Balochistan and GB is a key part of these efforts, helping thousands of students continue their education without financial burden. He further said that this initiative represents one of AIOU’s most significant contributions to the nation by promoting educational equity and social inclusion. He noted that investing in the education of children from remote and underserved areas is an investment in Pakistan’s future. The University remains committed to ensuring that no deserving child is denied the opportunity to pursue education because of financial or geographical challenges.—APP

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Briefs

Rawalpindi police install Pink Button QR codes

RAWALPINDI: The City Traffic Police Rawalpindi has installed Pink Button QR Codes at the Maar-ka-e-Haq Square Campus of Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU), enabling female students to instantly seek emergency police assistance through a single scan.

Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Farhan Aslam on the occasion said that the technology-driven initiative, launched under the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, aims to provide a safer and more secure environment for female students.

He explained that scanning the QR code instantly alerts the relevant police team, minimizing response time and ensuring timely intervention during emergencies. He added that the facility would gradually be extended to other educational institutions and key public locations across the district. City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Hassan Mushtaq Sukhera emphasized that the co-ordinated efforts of the traffic and district police would strengthen public confidence by ensuring prompt emergency response. He urged students and parents to utilize the digital safety facility without hesitation to help the police provide immediate assistance in any unusual situation.—APP

Khokhar, two others get life terms

RAWALPINDI: An Additional District and Sessions Court on Tuesday sentenced three convicts, including Farrukh Khokhar, to life imprisonment after finding them guilty in the high-profile Majid Satti murder case. The court convicted Farrukh Khokhar, Amir Hamza and Haidar Ali in the case registered at Sadiqabad Police Station. All three were awarded life imprisonment under murder and other relevant charges, along with a fine of Rs 1 million each as compensation. Meanwhile, another accused, Waseem, was acquitted after being given the benefit of doubt. Following the verdict, police personnel present in the courtroom took Farrukh Khokhar into custody as he had been appearing in court on bail. The other two convicts, who were brought from jail for the hearing, were sent back to prison to serve their sentences. The high-profile case relates to the assassination of Majid Satti, a prominent transport union leader and political activist, in August 2022. Satti was targeted and shot dead by armed assailants within the jurisdiction of Sadiqabad Police Station. Following the murder, police nominated Farrukh Khokhar and his associates for allegedly planning and executing the killing over personal rivalries. A police spokesperson termed the conviction a testament to the department's effective policing, robust investigation and diligent prosecution. "Securing severe punishments for culprits in such high-profile cases represents a major victory for truth and justice.—APP

Houthi ballistic missile attack on Saudi Arabia condemned

Reaffirming their unwavering support for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Pakistan Ulema Council and the International Tazeem-e-Haramain Sharifain Council declared their full solidarity with the Saudi leadership and people in safeguarding the country's defence, security and stability



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Ulema Council and the International Tazeem-e-Haramain Sharifain Council on Tuesday strongly condemned the ballistic missile attack launched by the Houthi

group against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, describing it as an unacceptable act of aggression that threatens regional peace and security. In a statement issued by Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council and Secretary General of the International Tazeem-e-Haramain Sharifain Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, the two organizations praised the Saudi Armed Forces for successfully intercepting and neutralizing the missile, saying the swift response demonstrated the Kingdom's robust and highly effective defence capabilities.

The organizations urged the Houthis to immediately cease all hostile actions against the land of the Two Holy Mosques and refrain from any aggression that could endanger the security, stability and sanctity of Saudi Arabia or threaten the safety of the Two Holy Mosques. Reaffirm-

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Chinese, Australian firms sign MoU

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China's Hangeng Trade Company (SMC-Private) Ltd and Australia's Master Lap Group Pty Ltd signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop a seafood-processing industrial park in Gwadar Free Zone, the companies said. The proposed investment is estimated at about \$50 million, as per the agreement. The park would include seafood-processing facilities, individual quick-freezing systems, refrigerated warehouses, packaging units, quality-test-

ing laboratories and cold-chain logistics, according to the MoU. Hangeng Chief Executive Andy Liao told Gwadar Pro that construction could begin within six months, with the first phase expected to start operations around June 2028. The companies plan to conduct feasibility studies, establish a joint venture and seek financing for the project. They said the park would target exports to China, Australia, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Europe. The MoU also outlines plans for sustainable seafood sourcing, environmental safeguards, local recruitment, vocational training and long-term procurement from fishermen.

IRSA releases 268,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 268,800 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 340,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1501.53 feet, which was 99.53 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 213,600 cusecs and 157,600 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1172.40 feet, which was 122.40 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 56,900 cusecs and 27,600 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 213,200, 179,800, 139,300, and 67,700 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 42,300 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 27,600 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Safe City, CDA partner to improve traffic management

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Director General Safe City/Deputy Inspector General (DIG), Traffic Muhammad Haroon Joiya chaired a high-level meeting to review measures aimed at improving parking facilities and traffic management across the federal capital. An official told APP on Tuesday that the meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations, Safe City Capt. (R) Hamzah Humayun, Chief Traffic Officer (CTO), Kainat Azhar, and officials of the Cap-

ital Development Authority (CDA). He said participants discussed allocating designated parking spaces at public places in collaboration with the CDA to address parking-related issues in the city. The meeting also reviewed matters relating to traffic signals, road signboards and lane markings to improve enforcement of traffic laws and facilitate road users. DG Haroon Joiya directed the relevant departments to strengthen coordination and expedite measures to improve traffic infrastructure and ensure smoother traffic flow. The official added that the initiative would help promote better traffic discipline, reduce congestion and provide greater convenience to citizens across Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding promotion of cashless economy and digital payments.—DNA

President Zardari felicitates French leadership

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday extended felicitations to the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, and the people of France on their National Day. President Zardari, in his message, conveyed that Pakistan highly values its long-standing friendship and multifaceted partnership with France, founded on mutual respect, shared values and a steadfast commitment to peace, sustainable development and international law. He expressed confidence that the close cooperation between the two countries will continue to grow and expand in areas of mutual interest, further strengthening the bonds of friendship and advancing the shared prosperity and well-being of the people of both nations. The president reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further deepening bilateral relations and enhancing cooperation in multilateral forums on issues of mutual interest.

Bangladesh women, social welfare minister calls on Dar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare of Bangladesh Dr. A. Z. M. Zahid Hossain called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. During the meeting, the deputy prime minister welcomed Dr. Hossain to Pakistan for the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women held in Islamabad. He appreciated Bangladesh's participation in the Conference and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to advancing cooperation on women's empowerment within the OIC framework and beyond.

Recalling his visit to Dhaka last August, DPM Dar also reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations and underscored its readiness to expand cooperation across diverse fields of mutual interest. The two leaders exchanged views on enhancing bilateral cooperation in trade, education, social welfare, and people-to-people contacts.—APP

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Martyrdom and National Rebirth: The Iranian People’s Enduring Struggle

MUHAMMAD MOHSIN IQBAL

THE history of Iranian civilisation unfolds as one of the grandest tapestries in the story of mankind, spanning more than two thousand five hundred years of recorded glory and endurance. From the sunlit heights of the Achaemenid Empire, founded by Cyrus the Great in 550 BCE, Persia emerged as a beacon of enlightened governance. Cyrus forged a vast, multi-ethnic realm stretching from the verdant plains of the Indus to the shores of the Mediterranean and the hills of the Balkans. Renowned for his wisdom, he respected the customs of conquered peoples and left behind the Cyrus Cylinder, a enduring monument often hailed as an early charter of human rights. This golden epoch of Persian power and refinement met its dramatic close with the conquests of Alexander the Great in 330 BCE. In time, after the Hellenistic interlude of the Seleucids, native Iranian dynasties reclaimed their heritage. The Parthians held sway from 247 BCE to 224 CE, yet it was the Sassanid Empire, enduring until 651 CE, that restored Persian majesty to its fullest. Sovereigns such as Shapur the First and Khosrow the First advanced learning, architecture, and bureaucratic excellence, standing as formidable rivals to Rome and Byzantium while safeguarding ancient Zoroastrian traditions. The Arab conquests of the mid-seventh century introduced Islam, which gradually took root and blended richly with Persian culture. During the Abbasid Caliphate, Iranian minds and administrators played central roles in the brilliance of the Islamic Golden Age. Waves of Turkic, Mongol, and Timurid invaders tested the nation’s resilience, yet its spirit endured. The Safavid dynasty, established in 1501, marked a decisive turning point by declaring Twelver Shia Islam the state religion, thereby weaving a profound and distinct Iranian identity that has defined the land ever since. Subsequent rule by the Afsharid, Zand, and Qajar dynasties unfolded amid internal reforms and mounting pressure from European empires. In 1925, Reza Shah Pahlavi inaugurated a new modernising dynasty. His son, Mohammad Reza Shah, governed from 1941 until the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Under his hand came swift Western-style industrialisation, women’s suffrage, and the ambitious White Revolution. Yet these changes, coupled with growing authoritarianism and foreign influence, stirred deep opposition that finally brought an end to more than two and a half millennia of monarchical rule. Central to that revolutionary dawn was Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, revered as Imam Khomeini. His outspoken criticism of the Shah’s regime, its land reforms, social changes, and increasing reliance upon Western, particularly American, power led to repeated arrests. Exiled in 1964, he journeyed first to Turkey, then settled for more than a decade in Najaf,

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Iraq. In 1978, at the Shah’s urging, Saddam Hussein expelled him. After being refused entry by Kuwait and several other nations, Khomeini found sanctuary in Neauphle-le-Château near Paris on the sixth of October 1978. France offered liberal freedoms of expression and superior means of communication. From this quiet corner, he masterfully employed interviews, audio recordings, and the international press to rally his countrymen. His triumphant return to Iran on the first of February 1979 electrified the nation. Swiftly consolidating authority, he guided the establishment of the Islamic Republic through popular referendum and the drafting of a constitution that enshrined the principle of religious leadership. The years that followed tested the revolution sorely; the hostage crisis at the American embassy, the long and bitter Iran-Iraq War from 1980 to 1988 and determined internal efforts to secure clerical rule. When Khomeini passed in June 3, 1989, Ali Khamenei, who had served as president, was elected Supreme Leader. For more than thirty-six years he navigated the republic through reformist movements, harsh economic sanctions, delicate nuclear negotiations, and complex regional engagements. A steadfast guardian of the revolutionary ideals, he upheld a resolute position toward the West and Israel while fostering the Axis of Resistance. His leadership came to a sudden and sorrowful end on 28 February 2026. Amid mounting regional conflict, Khamenei, together with members of his family and closest circle, fell victim to a joint United States-Israeli airstrike on Tehran. Across Iran the tragedy was mourned as martyrdom, a sacrifice that stirred the deepest emotions of the people. In certain quarters of Washington, it was confidently assumed that Iranians had grown weary of Islamic governance. Schemes were prepared to restore the son of the late Shah, expecting joyous crowds to welcome a return to monarchy under foreign patronage. The martyrdom of religious leaders, followed by heavy losses among civil and military ranks, was thought to open the way. Yet reality shattered these calculations. Far from embracing the proposed restoration, the Iranian people poured into the streets in waves of grief and defiance. Outraged by the assault upon their sovereignty, they honoured the fallen leaders and stood firmly behind the nation’s independence. The grand funeral of Ali Khamenei witnessed millions gathering without fear, their unity a powerful rebuke to external designs. Traditional American allies in Europe withheld support for the aggressive course. Iran, for its part, responded with a determination and capability that confounded many Western analysts. Defence and policy institutes appeared to have misread the temper of the nation entirely. Though patient diplomatic efforts, notably assisted by Pakistan, eventually brought adversaries to the negotiating table, a durable peace in the region has yet to be secured. Many obstacles remain visible. Nevertheless, the Iranian leadership has demonstrated, through supreme sacrifice, that it stands ever ready to place itself ahead of the people in moments of peril. In doing so, it has brought to completion the great work of national awakening and consolidation begun by Imam Khomeini. The Iranian nation, tempered by centuries of grandeur and trial, has once more affirmed its unyielding attachment to self-determination and cultural pride. Time, in its unhurried wisdom, will reveal the final shape of events, yet the enduring spirit of this ancient civilisation continues to shine as an inspiring example of resilience and faith.

How Trump Turned Hormuz into a US Cash Machine

Qamar Bashir



The first component is Venezuela. After the capture and removal of President Nicolás Maduro, the Trump administration said the United States intended to control Venezuelan oil sales and revenues indefinitely. American officials described arrangements under which proceeds from Venezuelan petroleum would be deposited into U.S.-controlled accounts, while sanctions were eased to permit greater Western participation in the country’s oil sector

PRESIDENT Donald Trump’s declaration that the United States will become the “guardian” of the Strait of Hormuz, reimpose its blockade on Iranian shipping and demand reimbursement equal to 20 percent of eligible cargo value has exposed a striking contradiction at the heart of American policy. Until recently, Washington insisted that Hormuz was an international waterway through which commercial vessels must enjoy free and unimpeded passage. American officials condemned Iran’s attempts to regulate maritime traffic or collect payments as violations of international law. Now, the United States is proposing an even larger charge while declaring that it controls the strait. Trump has defended this reversal by arguing that America has protected the waterway for decades without receiving payment. He said Washington was protecting “a very rich portion of the world” and therefore deserved reimbursement. The United States has simultaneously resumed attacks on Iran and restored its blockade of Iranian ports. This is no minor policy adjustment. It changes the character of the conflict and demolishes Washington’s earlier moral argument. When Iran sought to impose conditions on ships, Washington presented freedom of navigation as a universal principle. When the United States proposes a 20 percent charge, the same waterway is suddenly treated as a commercial asset whose protection must generate revenue. A principle cannot remain universal if it changes according to who possesses the stronger navy. The International Maritime Organization has reaffirmed that passage through the Strait of Hormuz should remain free from tolls and charges and that all ships must enjoy nondiscriminatory and unimpeded transit. The strait is bordered by Iran and Oman, not the United States, which is geographically an external military power. The struggle over Hormuz must now be examined within a wider pattern involving Venezuela, Greenland and the world’s major energy corridors. The first component is Venezuela. After the capture and removal of President Nicolás Maduro, the Trump administration said the United States intended to control Venezuelan oil sales and revenues indefinitely. American officials described arrangements under which proceeds from Venezuelan petroleum would be deposited into U.S.-controlled accounts, while sanctions were eased to permit greater Western participation in the country’s oil sector. Venezuela possesses enormous petroleum reserves. Control over its exports gives Washington influence not merely over one country’s resources but over a major source of energy in the Western Hemisphere. Oil shipments that might otherwise serve China or other custom-

ers can be redirected, regulated or subjected to financial arrangements determined by the United States. The second component is Greenland. Trump has repeatedly argued that Greenland should come under American control, citing national security, Russian and Chinese activity, minerals and the island’s strategic position. Greenland’s importance goes beyond territory. Melting Arctic ice is gradually increasing the strategic relevance of northern shipping routes. These corridors could eventually carry energy, minerals and commercial cargo between Asia, Europe and North America. A dominant position in Greenland would therefore offer influence over an emerging maritime gateway as well as access to critical resources. The third and most immediate component is Hormuz, through which a substantial share of the world’s oil and liquefied natural gas normally travels. Before the war, around 130 ships reportedly crossed the strait daily. Viewed together, Venezuela, Greenland and Hormuz form a strategic triangle: control of an enormous oil-producing state in the Western Hemisphere, influence over a future Arctic corridor and command of the principal energy gateway of the Middle East. This does not require the existence of a publicly released document entitled “Plan for Global Energy Domination.” Great-power strategies are often revealed not by a single declaration but by the consistency of actions, priorities and outcomes. Therefore, the possession of nuclear fissile material by Iran has never been an issue. Had the nuclear issue remained Washington’s sole or overriding concern, the United States could have preserved this framework, strengthened verification and continued negotiations. Instead, the diplomatic framework was sacrificed as the confrontation over maritime authority intensified. Washington reimposed the blockade, expanded attacks and announced that it would control the strait and charge vessels for protection. Therefore the control of Hormuz has been a higher strategic priority than preserving the nuclear agreement. The nuclear issue may have initiated or justified the confrontation, but the struggle now concerns who regulates, protects, restricts and profits from the waterway. The economic consequences would be enormous. If the 20 percent charge is calculated on cargo value, transporting an \$80 barrel of oil could attract an additional fee of approximately \$16. A tanker carrying two million barrels could face more than \$30 million in added costs. Importers, refiners and shipping companies would inevitably pass a signif-

icant portion of this burden to consumers. The result would not be limited to higher gasoline prices. More expensive energy would increase manufacturing, transportation, electricity, fertilizer and food costs. It would intensify inflation, weaken financial markets and place severe pressure on countries dependent on Gulf energy. China, India, Pakistan, Japan, South Korea, Europe, Southeast Asia and other importing economies would become vulnerable to decisions made by the military power controlling their energy lifeline. Gulf producers themselves could find that their ability to reach customers depended on American permission and American pricing. This is why the proposed fee represents more than greed for revenue. It risks transforming military protection into economic domination. A country thousands of kilometres from the Persian Gulf would possess the power to determine who passes, what they pay and under what political conditions their energy can reach world markets. The danger is that other nations may eventually unite against such concentrated leverage. China, Russia, India, Europe and affected regional powers could accelerate alternative pipelines, Arctic routes, currency systems, naval cooperation and strategic alliances designed to bypass American control. Trump may regard Hormuz as a source of reimbursement—a “money-minting machine” protected by American power. But international waterways cannot remain instruments of shared commerce if the strongest state converts them into toll plazas. The world is therefore approaching a dangerous crossroads. Either Hormuz remains an international passage governed by law and equal access, or it becomes a precedent under which military superiority determines the ownership of global trade. If Venezuela’s oil, Greenland’s strategic position and Hormuz’s energy traffic ultimately fall under decisive American control, Washington will not need to fire another bullet to influence much of the world. It will sit astride the routes, revenues and resources on which modern economies depend. History may record that the war publicly framed around Iran’s nuclear capability ultimately became a struggle for control of the world’s most valuable energy gateway—and that freedom of navigation was defended only until it became profitable to abandon it.

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

The Real IMF Strategy Lies in Production, Not Financing

Mujtaba Arshad

Vietnam turned itself into a manufacturing and export machine through sustained industrialisation and deep integration into global supply chains. Every dollar of export earnings fed back into reserves, industrial expansion, and resilience. Pakistan, by contrast, is still leaning heavily on a narrow band of low-value textile exports. Manufacturing productivity trails its regional peers, technology adoption remains patchy, and the country’s foothold in global value chains is thin. The result is predictable: not enough foreign exchange coming in from actual production, which leaves the economy...

EVERY time Pakistan signs another agreement with the International Monetary Fund, you can practically predict the conversation that follows. Critics call it proof the economy has failed again. Supporters insist the money is necessary just to keep things stable in the face of relentless external pressure. Both Camps, however, tend to talk past the real issue. The problem was never the IMF. It’s the structural weaknesses that keep dragging Pakistan back to the Fund’s door in the first place. The pattern by now is almost mechanical. Growth picks up, imports climb, reserves start thinning out, and eventually the country has to go looking for external financing just to avoid a full-blown balance-of-payments crisis. Things stabilize for a while. But the underlying weaknesses never really get fixed, so a few years later the cycle starts all over again. Strip it down, and Pakistan’s recurring vulnerability is not really about money. It’s about what the country makes. Economic resilience is not something you borrow your way into. It comes from building productive capacity by exporting more, attracting real investment, and earning the foreign exchange needed to grow without constantly having to ask someone else for a bridge loan. The gap between countries that keep landing in balance-of-payments trouble and those that don’t usually comes down to one thing: how much they can produce and sell competitive products on the world stage. The numbers make the point better than any argument could. Pakistan’s merchandise exports hovered around \$32 billion in fiscal year 2024-2025. Vietnam, meanwhile, exported more than \$405 billion worth of goods in 2024, pulled in over \$25 billion in foreign direct investment, and still managed growth above seven percent. That’s not just a gap between two economies; it’s two completely different paths taken over the same three decades. Vietnam turned itself into a manufacturing and export machine through sustained industrialisation and deep integration into global supply chains. Every dollar of export earnings fed back into reserves, industrial expansion, and resilience. Pakistan, by contrast, is still leaning heavily on a narrow band of low-value textile exports. Manufacturing productivity trails its regional peers, technology adoption remains patchy, and the country’s foothold in global value chains is thin. The result is predictable: not enough foreign exchange coming in from actual production, which leaves the economy exposed the moment external financing gets harder to come by.

Most of the public conversation around CPEC gets stuck on roads, power plants, and infrastructure. Fair enough — those projects genuinely improved connectivity and eased the energy shortages that used to cripple industry. But their real significance is not the concrete and steel. It’s what they were supposed to make possible next: industrial transformation. That’s really the story of the shift from CPEC’s first phase into CPEC Phase II. The early years were about closing infrastructure gaps. This next Phase is supposed to be about industrial cooperation, Special Economic Zones, technology transfer, agricultural modernization, and export-oriented manufacturing. Put simply: phase one laid the foundation. Phase two is where the economy’s actual productive capacity is meant to grow. Infrastructure by itself doesn’t generate sustainable growth. Roads don’t export anything. Highways don’t earn foreign exchange. Ports don’t build resilience unless they are plugged into industries that can compete, at home and abroad. Gwadar will only become the growth engine it’s billed as if it’s tied into export-oriented industry, logistics, and regional supply chains. Not sitting there as a monument to what could be. This is where Special Economic Zones under Phase-II matter. Well-run economic zones have a long track record of pulling in investment, clustering industries together, moving technology across borders, and building export capacity. China’s own rise started with zones like Shenzhen — a fishing town that became one of the world’s manufacturing and tech capitals. Vietnam used the same playbook to plug itself into global production networks. Perhaps the biggest opening for Pakistan right now comes from China itself. As Chinese wages rise and the economy shifts toward higher value manufacturing, a wave of labor-intensive industry is looking for somewhere else to go. Pakistan has a real chance to catch part of that wave and with it, investment, jobs, technology, and exports. The raw ingredients are there: a population past 240 million, a large labor force, improving infrastructure, and direct connectivity through CPEC. None of that guarantees anything, but it does make Pakistan a plausible destination for relocating Chinese manufacturing. Even a modest slice of that shift could meaningfully move the needle on jobs, industrial output, and export earnings. More than anything, this is what would address the root problem: not enough foreign exchange being generated at home. Every factory that exports strengthens the exter-

nal account. Every manufacturing investment adds to productive capacity. Every technology partnership makes the country a bit more competitive. Add it all up, and dependence on external borrowing starts to shrink on its own. So much of the national conversation about Pakistan’s economic future revolves around loans, reserves, exchange rates, and the terms of the next stabilization package. Those things matter, but they are symptoms, not causes. You can’t borrow your way to resilience. You have to build it. Countries break out of the bottom-and-bust, borrow and repeat cycle when they produce more, export more, and compete harder in international markets not when they get better at lining up financing. For Pakistan, that means the policy conversation needs to shift from crisis management toward actual structural change. Judged that way, CPEC Phase-II should not be scored by how many ribbon-cuttings or MOUs it produces. The real scorecard should track things like how many factories are actually up and running in the Special Economic Zones, how much manufacturing investment has landed, how fast non-traditional exports are growing, how many industrial jobs have been created, and how deeply Pakistani firms are woven into regional and global supply chains. None of this should be framed as IMF versus CPEC. They are not competing for the same job. The IMF exists to stabilize the economy during a crisis. CPEC, if it works as intended, is meant to fix the structural weaknesses that keep creating the crisis in the first place. One patches the leak. The other is supposed to fix the pipe. Pakistan’s long-term future won’t be decided by how big the next bailout package is. It will be decided by whether the country can actually produce more, export more, and hold its own in global markets. Resilience gets built through production, investment and exports not through another round of borrowing. The real exit from IMF, in other words, is not a financing strategy at all: It is a production strategy. If CPEC Phase II succeeds actually in expanding Pakistan’s industrial base, attracting productive investment, and strengthening export competitiveness, it could achieve what repeated stabilization programmes have not: making the next bailout unnecessary before the country has to seek one.

– The author is a Research Associate at the Centre of Excellence for CPEC, at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). He can be reached by Email at: mujtaba@pide.org.pk

Briefs

CDF discusses regional security...

FROM PAGE 01

During his visit to Anitkabir, the Mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, CDF Munir laid a floral wreath and paid respects to the founder of modern Türkiye, acknowledging his visionary leadership and the deep-rooted historical bonds between the two nations. The visit signifies the resolve of both nations to further strengthen their multifaceted defence relationship and continue their joint efforts for regional peace and stability. Islamabad and Ankara share longstanding brotherly relations, underpinned by strong strategic, political, defence and economic cooperation. Earlier this month, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met President Erdogan in Istanbul, where the two leaders reaffirmed longstanding brotherly ties between the two nations. They also pledged to expand economic cooperation, with a target of increasing bilateral trade to \$5 billion. Ankara is also building corvette warships for the Pakistan Navy under the decades-long defence ties between the two nations. Türkiye has also upgraded numerous F-16 fighter jets of the Pakistan Air Force, and also shares its drone technology with Islamabad. In January, Minister for Defence Production Raza Hayat Harraj said that Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye had prepared a draft defence agreement after nearly a year of talks. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan later said that talks have been held on a possible defence pact with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but no agreement has been signed.

‘Mastermind’ behind Rangers...

FROM PAGE 01

Lanjari said that four terrorists carried out the assault, including three Afghan nationals and one resident of Bajaur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said that the attackers’ handlers directed the operation from Afghan territory, while Rangers killed three terrorists during a successful operation and arrested a fourth attacker in an injured condition. IGP Ghulam Nabi Memon said the objective of the attack was to sabotage peace in Karachi, adding that logistical support and weapons had originated from Afghanistan. He said the matter was being examined by law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Additional CTD IG Zulfiqar Larak said that the incident marked Jamaat-ul-Ahrar’s first major activity in a long time, adding that the group was attempting to reassert its presence.

Pakistan reaffirms support for KSA

FROM PAGE 01

PM Shehbaz said that the “reprehensible actions” against Saudi Arabia had the potential to further undermine regional peace and stability. “Pakistan reaffirms its unwavering support for the Kingdom’s security and stands in complete solidarity with the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at this critical time,” he added. He reiterated that Pakistan will continue to support all sincere efforts aimed at promoting peace, stability, security, and mutual understanding across the region. Riyadh and Islamabad signed a mutual defence pact in September 2025, committing both sides to treat any aggression against either country as an attack on both. That significantly deepened a decades-old security partnership. In April, Pakistan sent fighter jets and other military forces to Saudi Arabia under the defence pact. Pakistani fighter jets and support aircraft had arrived at the King Abdulaziz Air Base in the country’s eastern province, aimed to strengthen joint defence cooperation and support regional and international security and stability, Saudi Arabia’s defence ministry said in a statement on April 11.

World cup celebration exhibition football matches held at Jinnah Stadium

The event witnessed distinguished participation, including H.E. Mr. Paulo Domingues, Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan, Mr. Eduard Preda, Romanian DHM, and several other diplomats who actively took to the field



DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a vibrant celebration of the FIFA World Cup spirit and a testament to the unifying power of sports, two exhibition football matches were held at Jinnah Stadium, Islamabad. The event brought together the Diplomatic Team and the Pakistan Veterans Team in a friendly yet competitive showcase of football, friendship, and cultural exchange. Organized by Mr. Mubasher Sanjrani, a former international footballer and Chairman of the Islamabad Veterans Football Association, the event saw the Diplomatic Team field players representing more than 24 different nationalities. In contrast, the Pakistan Veterans Team fea-

tured experienced former professional footballers from Islamabad. The matches were not only a display of athletic prowess but also a celebration of international goodwill. The Diplomatic Team clinched the opening match with an impressive 3-1 victory, while the Pakistan Veterans Team responded with a 5-3 win in the second match, keeping the crowd engaged throughout. Adding to the excitement, both matches were played using the original FIFA Trionda World Cup football, proudly manufactured in Pakistan. This highlighted the country’s significant contribution to the global football community and its reputation for producing world-class sports equipment. The event witnessed distinguished participation, including H.E. Mr. Paulo



Domingues, Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan, Mr. Eduard Preda, Romanian DHM, and several other diplomats who actively took to the field. Their participation underscored a shared commitment to strengthening bilateral ties and fostering cooperation through sports. The Chief Guest, Mr. Nawabzada Jamal Raisani, also played for the Pakistan Veterans Team. Speaking on the occasion, he remarked, “These friendly matches reflect Pakistan’s identity as a sports-loving and welcoming nation that brings people from different countries together. Through sports, we promote friendship and mutual understanding.” The organizers extended their heartfelt gratitude to all participating diplomats, players, spectators, supporters, volun-

teers, and event partners for making the celebration a resounding success. They emphasized that such initiatives are vital for encouraging healthy lifestyles, reinforcing international goodwill, and demonstrating the role of sports as a powerful bridge between nations. At the conclusion of the event, World Cup commemorative trophies and awards were presented to the distinguished guests and members of both teams in recognition of their valuable contributions to the success of the exhibition matches. The event was proudly sponsored by Royal Business Solution, Gujrawala Business Alliance, Authentique Perfumes, and Sanjrani Oxen Enterprises, whose generous support played a vital role in the smooth and successful organization of the celebration.

Pakistan crowned best under-16 team of Asia with four medals at Asian Ju-Jitsu C’ship

Chairman of the Pakistan Ju-Jitsu Federation hailed the achievement, saying it reflected the federation’s long-term planning, the commitment of the coaching staff and the dedication of the athletes

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan made a historic start to the Asian Ju-Jitsu Championship 2026 by winning two gold and two silver medals on the opening day and securing the prestigious “Best Under-16 Team of Asia” title in Almaty, Kazakhstan. According to information made available here by Pakistan Ju-Jitsu Federation, the country’s golden moment came in the Under-16 Duo Show System event, where Zunaira Zulfiqar and Sundas Ali delivered a superb performance to clinch the gold medal and become Asian champions. Their triumph was celebrated with the hoisting of Pakistan’s national flag and the playing of the national anthem during the medal ceremony. Pakistan added another impressive result in the same event as Abdul Rehman and Amina Irfan claimed the silver medal, while hosts Kazakhstan settled for bronze. The outstanding performances also earned Pakistan the coveted “Best Under-16 Team of Asia” award, marking a landmark achievement for the country’s Ju-Jitsu programme. The championship has attracted around 728 athletes from 25 Asian countries competing across different categories. Chairman of the Pakistan Ju-Jitsu Federation hailed the achievement, saying it reflected the federation’s long-term planning, the commitment of the coaching staff and the dedication of the athletes. He described winning the Under-16 Asian titles and the Best Under-16 Team of Asia award as a proud moment for the nation. Secretary General of the Pakistan Ju-Jitsu Federation and team leader Tariq Ali said the team’s remarkable start highlighted the bright future of Pakistan Ju-Jitsu. He expressed confidence that the young athletes would continue their winning momentum in the remaining events of the championship. – APP

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan installing first pillars on state borders

ISLAMABAD: As part of the next stage of state border demarcation, representatives of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan today jointly began installing the first border pillars along the section starting from the junction of the state borders of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, according to Kabbar. According to the Cabinet of Ministers, the total length of the state border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan is 1,008.14 km, with the total perimeter of neutral lands extending 14.07 km. The full completion of the state border delimitation process, which began in December 2002, was a historic achievement, opening a new chapter in relations between the two neighboring states. This result was achieved thanks to the political wisdom, mutual trust, and firm commitment of Kyrgyz President Sadyr Zhaparov and Tajik President Emomali Rahmon to the principles of good-neighborliness, mutual respect, equality, and consideration of the legitimate interests of both sides. It is noted that on March 13, 2025 in Bishkek, the heads of state signed the Treaty between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan on the Kyrgyz-Tajik State Border. – APP

Norway turn World Cup heartbreak into celebration as huge crowds pack capital

“The support we have received in the USA and here at home in Norway, has been beyond all expectations,” says Odegaard

DNA

OSLO: More than 100,000 fans flooded the streets of the Norwegian capital Oslo on Monday to give their football team a heroes’ welcome, turning the heartbreak of their World Cup exit into a massive national celebration. A 2-1 extra-time defeat by England on Saturday brought Norway’s historic run to an end in the quarter-finals, shattering the Nordics’ dreams of a place in the last four. However, it did not stop the country celebrating their heroes. Massive crowds under the Norwegian summer sun filled the grounds of the Royal Palace early on Monday afternoon, with an unofficial turnout estimated at more than 100,000 people. The Norway squad touched down to a traditional water cannon salute before commencing their homecoming parade in the capital. Members of the Norwegian men’s football gather outside the palace as they celebrate their performance in the World Cup after returning to Oslo, Norway, July 13, 2026. – Reuters

The line of supporters quickly packed the palace square before stretching far down the main street, Karl Johans gate, as the squad first attended an audience with King Harald. “I have felt very proud, it has been amazing, I have been both at home and in Spain, and the atmosphere between the Norwegian people has been there all the time, so it has been unbelievable,” Norway fan Catherine Breiland told Reuters. The team stepped out to greet the fans with the Royal Guard standing to attention behind them. Striker Erling Haaland was noticeably absent from the final stage of the celebrations, having left early. The men’s national football team is greeted by the audience at Slottsplassen after returning to Norway from the USA, in Oslo, Norway, July 13, 2026. – Reuters

His departure meant he missed joining his teammates on the palace steps for one last “Viking row”, with tens of thousands of fans celebrated below, which was led by Crown Prince Haakon on the drums. “Erling and Sander (Berge) had to catch their plane as our trip from the US was delayed four hours,” coach Stale Solbakken said, as the squad prepared to continue the celebrations in an open-top bus parade around Oslo. Crowds slowed the bus to a halt through central Oslo, forcing it to reverse at one point as police escorts struggled to carve out a path. Undeterred, Norway’s players celebrated with beer and waved as the party continued long after dark. “The run the Norwegian team has had this year has been way beyond anything I’ve ever expected. I feel everybody in Norway should just honour the national team, which has done such an amazing job during this whole cup,” said Nicolai Sivesind, who travelled to Oslo to take part in World Cup events. There was a moment of irony when the parade was halted by low-hanging overhead cables. Men’s national football team is greeted by the audience at Slottsplassen after returning to Norway from the USA, in Oslo, Norway, July 13, 2026.

Twin sisters rule PAKMMAF contender series

Punjab Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb attended the event as chief guest and praised PAKMMAF for promoting MMA among youth

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Mixed Martial Arts Federation (PAKMMAF) successfully held the inaugural PAKMMAF ACTIVIT Contender Series featuring 12 elite bouts and showcasing the country’s top emerging MMA talent ahead of upcoming IMMAF World Championships. Twin sisters Maliha Ali and Manesha Ali stole the spotlight with impressive victories. Former National MMA Champion Manesha Ali defeated Karachi’s Imama by unanimous decision and earned the Fight of the Night award with a dominant three-round display. Her sister Maliha Ali overcame Quetta’s Sadia despite giving away around five kilograms in weight, highlighting her class and determination. Former national wrestling champion Rashid Gujjar avenged his National Championship final defeat by beating Qurban Khan in a keenly contested rematch, while rising star Aurangzeb Ahmed produced a stunning knockout victory as he prepares for the IMMAF Youth World Championships in Abu Dhabi this August. Maliha Ali, Manesha Ali and Rashid Gujjar will now focus on the IMMAF World Championships in Georgia this November. The Contender Series aims to provide Pakistani fighters with high-level competition and a pathway to international events and professional MMA organizations. Punjab Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb attended the event as chief guest and praised PAKMMAF for promoting MMA among youth, saying sports help steer young people away from drugs and crime while building discipline, resilience and healthier lifestyles. PAKMMAF President Omar Ahmed said the federation is developing a complete athlete pathway from schools and colleges to international championships and professional promotions, adding that the goal is not only to win medals but also to create sustainable opportunities for Pakistani MMA athletes. He also thanked ACTIVIT and Dr. Rizwan Aftab Ahmed for their continued support in promoting the sport.



6 children die of HIV

FROM PAGE 01

The minister confirmed that government data showed at least 78 children had been infected with HIV linked to the hospital, but noted that the number of affected individuals could rise. The minister said authorities had so far screened 10,500 people in surrounding areas as part of the investigation, with 120 testing positive for HIV. He, however, said it had not been established that all those infected contracted HIV at the hospital. The minister said a standardised form had been developed in consultation with experts to collect comprehensive data on patients and help investigators determine the source and extent of the outbreak. Referring to disciplinary proceedings, Ghani said show-cause notices were issued to 10 individuals in connection with the HIV case at Valika Hospital. He added that another inquiry committee had been constituted on the orders of the ombudsman. The minister said the inquiry committee, constituted over the directives of the ombudsman, submitted its report on June 19.

US strikes on Iran continue

FROM PAGE 01

Bandar Abbas, to “degrade Iran’s ability to attack commercial shipping”. After the strikes, Iran’s Revolutionary Guards announced they had in turn fired missiles and drones on Bahrain, targeting a residential building for US forces and other facilities. “We’re going to hit them very hard tonight, and we’re going to hit them hard tomorrow,” Trump said at the White House on Monday. Trump’s declaration on the Hormuz blockade followed US and Iranian attacks of a scale unseen since an April ceasefire in the Middle East conflict, adding to doubts about efforts to bring a permanent end to the war. Iran started blocking the strait after US-Israel attacks in February, which prompted Washington’s blockade on Tehran’s ports – but restrictions eased after the sides agreed a preliminary deal in June. Trump said Monday that the United States was “taking over” the strait and would slap a levy of 20% on all cargo shipped through it, in an announcement that drew mockery from Iran and accusations of “piracy”. US Central Command (Centcom) said Iran’s ports on the waterway would be blockaded from 2000 GMT on Tuesday. Oil prices shot up more than 9% Monday over fears of renewed conflict and rose again Tuesday, piling on more than 1%.

Pakistan committed...

FROM PAGE 01

the UN in advancing the global development agenda, he stressed that the UN must remain responsive to the needs of the developing nations. DPM/FM also underscored the need for the peaceful resolution of international disputes through the faithful implementation of UN Security Council resolutions for sustainable global peace. He especially underscored the need for addressing the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and the Palestine issue in this regard. Ms. Bachelet commended Pakistan’s ongoing efforts for regional peace and stability, and appreciated its invaluable contributions to the UN over the years.

22 vehicles cross into...

FROM PAGE 01

the WFP was sent back to Karachi earlier this year after the Afghan Taliban authorities in Kabul refused to accept any assistance from the UN body.

Asif slams Fazl for...

FROM PAGE 01

driven by ideology, faith, a sense of duty, and deep devotion to the homeland. Asif said the war against terrorism is ongoing, and personnel of the Armed Forces, along with members of other institutions and civilians, continue to embrace martyrdom.

Briefs

Rupee gains
01 paisa
against Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.01, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs278.02. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 279.30 and Rs 280.50, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 0.90 and closed at Rs 316.82 from the previous day's closing of Rs 317.72, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.71, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of Rs 1.04 and closed at Rs 371.38 compared to the previous day's Rs 372.42. The exchange rates of the Emirate Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 01 and 03 paisa, closing at Rs 75.69 and Rs 74.02, respectively.—APP

Chinese,
Pakistani
varsities ink
MoU

BEIJING: China's Dalian Ocean University (DLOU) and Pakistan's Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences (LUAWMS) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen cooperation in marine science and education. The signing ceremony took place in Dalian, where an LUAWMS delegation led by Vice Chancellor Abdul Malik met Liu Wenhe, vice president of Dalian Ocean University, and other university officials. According to a statement issued by DLOU, the two universities planned to focus their cooperation on the sharing and application of marine big data, research into changes in the marine environment and modern aquaculture. CEN reported on Tuesday. The partnership would also include joint training programmes for faculty members and students, collaborative research projects and the proposed establishment of a Belt and Road marine laboratory.—APP

SCCI holds
awareness
session on
ECI

SIALKOT: An awareness session on Export Credit Insurance (ECI) was held at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) by the Export-Import Bank of Pakistan (EXIM Bank). The EXIM Bank delegation was welcomed by Syed Ahtesham Mazhar, President, SCCI, Salman Sheikh, Vice President, and Akmal Javed, Chairman, Committee on Banking Affairs. The session highlighted EXIM Bank's mandate and its Export Credit Insurance (ECI) facility, which helps exporters against commercial and political risks associated with non-payment by foreign buyers, improves access to trade finance, and supports business expansion into international markets.—APP

Indonesia & Pak advance
sustainable partnership: Envoy

Karachi forum promotes diversified trade, two-way investment and practical cooperation towards a future CEPA

DNA

KARACHI: Indonesia and Pakistan reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening a more balanced, sustainable, and investment-driven economic partnership at the Indonesia-Pakistan Investment and Business Forum held in Karachi. Organised by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Islamabad and the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Karachi, with the support of the Indonesia Investment Promotion Centre (IIPC) Abu Dhabi, the Forum brought together government officials, investment authorities, chambers of commerce, business leaders, investors and academics from both countries. The opening session featured remarks by H.E. Mr. Mudzakir, Consul General of the Republic of Indonesia in Karachi; Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President and Senior Vice President of FPC-CL; H.E. Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Chandra W. Sukotjo, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Pakistan; and the Honourable Syed Murad Ali Shah, Chief Minister of Sindh, who attended as Chief Guest. In his welcoming remarks, Consul General Mudzakir described the Forum as part of Indonesia's



sustained efforts to connect the business communities of both countries and translate commercial interest into practical cooperation. He highlighted Karachi's strategic position as Pakistan's

commercial, industrial, financial and maritime centre, and reaffirmed the Consulate General's role as a facilitator of business information, credible partnerships and market access. Represent-

ing Pakistan's private sector, Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon highlighted the complementary strengths of both economies and the vast potential of a combined market of more than 520 million people. He

called for more diversified trade, stronger business-to-business collaboration, improved logistics, and continued progress toward a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Ambassador Chandra W. Sukotjo in his keynote address underscored that Indonesia and Pakistan should transform their long-standing friendship into tangible economic results. He described Indonesia not only as a major market of over 280 million people but also as a manufacturing hub, investment destination, and gateway to ASEAN. He stressed that a future CEPA should provide a comprehensive framework covering trade, investment, services, standards, customs procedures, and supply-chain connectivity. Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, as chief guest, reaffirmed Sindh's commitment to attracting international investment and highlighted opportunities in manufacturing, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy, healthcare, infrastructure, logistics, digital technology, and data centres. He encouraged Indonesian businesses to explore partnerships in Sindh and welcomed closer cooperation between governments and the private sector.

BRA
intensifies tax
compliance
actions in
Hub's medical
sector

QUETTA: The Balochistan Revenue Authority (BRA) has accelerated actions in Hub district to ensure registration and tax compliance of doctors, medical consultants, and hospitals. Notices have been issued to various doctors and hospitals under the Balochistan Sales Tax on Services Act, 2015, requiring registration, timely filing of tax returns, payment of due taxes, and fulfillment of other legal obligations. BRA clarified that registration, timely return submission, and tax payment are mandatory for all taxable service providers. Non-compliance may result in penalties, attachment of bank accounts, sealing of business premises, and other legal actions. The authority appealed to all doctors, hospitals, and healthcare service providers to voluntarily comply with tax laws, ensure timely registration and return filing, and contribute to establishing a transparent, fair, and robust tax system in the province.—APP

Iraq PM
to meet
Trump in
Washington

BAGHDAD: Iraq's new prime minister, Ali Al-Zaidi, aims to secure major US investment in his country's oil, gas, and power sectors during a visit to the White House this week, after the Iran war hammered crude output and state finances. He will meet US President Donald Trump in Washington on Tuesday, as the US administration piles pressure on Baghdad to curb Iranian influence. The Iraqi leader met Tom Barrack, the US President's Special Envoy to Iraq, on Monday evening to discuss further cooperation between the countries as well as regional developments and how Baghdad can promote rapprochement and contribute to de-escalation, a statement from the prime minister's office said. His visit comes against the backdrop of renewed military escalation between the United States and Iran, Iraq's main allies. In an op-ed in the Washington Post ahead of his visit, Zaidi wrote that he leads "a government committed to ensuring that the state possesses the legitimate monopoly on the use of force". His government has given armed groups, which Washington designates as terrorist organizations, until September 30 to disarm, coinciding with the end of the US-led anti-militant coalition's mission. A senior Iraqi politician told AFP on condition of anonymity that even if the current government adopts a more US-friendly path, prioritizing the economy, "it doesn't mean that Iraq is turning against Iran".

Iraq "must maintain the long-standing balance" between its allies, he said. Last week, Iraq's holy cities, home to Shia Islam's most sacred shrines, hosted a massive funeral procession for Iran's late supreme leader Ali Khamenei, who was killed in a US-Israeli strike on Tehran.—APP

Countries tighten
travel rules as
Ebola risk rises

GENEVA: The World Health Organization on May 17 declared an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and said there was a high risk it could spread to neighboring countries. The decision has prompted governments to step up travel-related containment measures. Here is a list of screening steps and travel restrictions announced by different countries and measures by airlines. The US on July 13 said it was blocking American citizens in the DRC from returning to the United States on commercial flights, placing recent travelers on a "do-not-board" list until they have spent at least 21 days in a third country. Washington has also banned non-citizens who had traveled to the DRC, Uganda or South Sudan from entering the country. The Canadian government said on May 26 that residents from the DRC, Uganda and South Sudan would be banned from entering Canada for 90 days starting May 27. The Jordanian government on May 19 suspended the entry of travelers arriving from the DRC and Uganda, according to the Jordanian state agency. Bahrain said on May 19 it was suspending for 30 days the entry of foreign travelers arriving from South Sudan, the DRC and Uganda. INDIA India has launched screening and surveillance measures at airports and other entry points, issued advisories on precautions, and urged citizens to avoid non-essential travel to the DRC, Uganda and South Sudan. Thailand's Public Health Ministry said that from May 27 onwards passengers arriving from the DRC and Uganda would only be allowed to enter the country through Suvarnabhumi Airport, where they will undergo screening. Travelers from or through those countries will be required to quarantine for at least 21 days if they do not have symptoms, and will be referred to isolation for at least 21 days if they have symptoms compatible with Ebola virus disease. The Kenyan Ministry of Health said on May 25 it had enhanced screening of travelers at high-risk points of entry. AMBIA Zambia has stepped up screening and surveillance for Ebola after authorities ruled out two suspected cases. The EU's Health Security Committee said on May 22 that entry screenings were not necessary for passengers arriving from the DRC and Uganda, citing low risk to the population. The US government on June 9 called on European nations to follow Washington's lead and impose travel restrictions on people who have recently been in Central African countries affected by the Ebola outbreak, in hopes of avoiding the spread of the virus during the soccer World Cup. A European Commission spokesperson said there was no evidence that additional border measures were needed. KLM canceled flights to and from Entebbe airport near the Ugandan capital Kampala due to restrictions linked to the Ebola outbreak in Central Africa, the Dutch airline said on May 29. The carrier said it could no longer operate planned routes due to some countries' travel and entry measures for people who recently traveled through Entebbe, including its crew. Brussels Airlines said on June 1 the Ebola situation did not affect its flight schedule, but it had adapted the rosters of its long-haul crews because crew who had flown to the DRC or Uganda within the previous 21 days would be refused entry into the United States.—APP

DRC Ebola outbreak
two to 4 times bigger
than official scale

GENEVA: The World Health Organization said on Tuesday that a deadly Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo could be four times bigger than official figures suggest. According to the DR Congo's latest official figures, the haemorrhagic fever has infected more than 1,960 people and killed over 700 since it was detected two months ago. But WHO emergencies director Chikwe Ihekweazu told reporters in Geneva that its modelling indicated "the scale of the outbreak is at least two to four times the number of cases that we have found." According to official numbers, this is already one of the largest Ebola outbreaks recorded, with the virus spreading faster than ever seen before. "This is now the third-largest Ebola outbreak ever, and we've seen the fastest growth in a single month since the outbreak started, and of all the Ebola outbreaks that we've managed," Ihekweazu said. The DRC's 17th Ebola outbreak was declared on May 15 after several deaths in Ituri, a mineral-rich northeastern province plagued by armed groups. Cases of Ebola, which spreads through close contact and infected bodily fluids, have so far been found in five DRC provinces, as well as in neighboring Uganda. But more than 90 percent of cases are still being detected in Ituri, Ihekweazu said. Just back from a week-long trip to the region, the doctor said the crisis remained "deeply concerning." The outbreak, which is caused by the rare Bundibugyo species of Ebola, for which there is no approved vaccine or treatment, "continues to outpace the response efforts by the national authorities, international partners, including WHO, and the communities most affected," he said. "Perhaps the most alarming finding is that many newly reported cases are individuals who died in their communities, without ever reaching a health facility and receiving care." Ihekweazu nonetheless said he was encouraged to see a ramping up of the response. "Treatment capacity now exceeds 700 beds and continues to increase each week; laboratory capacity has expanded dramatically... and contact follow-up rates are approaching 80 percent," he pointed out. He noted that "over the last few days, we've seen some of the highest numbers of new infections in a single day." "A few days ago, we saw over 80 cases confirmed in a single day," he said, adding though that this is actually "good news," as it shows that fewer cases are escaping detection. "It's a sign of a maturing response.—DNA

KSA, Indonesia step up coop
in aviation, urban transport

JAKARTA: Indonesia and Saudi Arabia are stepping up cooperation in aviation and urban transportation systems, officials said on Tuesday as the Kingdom's transport minister, Saleh Al-Jasser, visited Jakarta. Al-Jasser held meetings with various Indonesian officials during his trip, including Minister of Transport Dudy Purwaghandi, Coordinating Minister of Infrastructure and Regional Development Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono, and Minister of Hajj and Umrah Mo'hamad Irfan Yusuf, to explore further collaboration between the two nations. The talks come following President Prabowo Subianto and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's agreement in Jeddah last July to strengthen strategic cooperation across key sectors. The governments of Indonesia and Saudi Arabia have had long-standing cooperation in the transportation sector. The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Transportation, is committed to continue strengthening this cooperation and even expanding its reach," the Indonesian Ministry of Transportation said in a statement. Purwaghandi will assign a technical team to discuss new agreements with their Saudi counterpart, covering transport safety investigation, maritime and railway cooperation, as well as technical collaboration in civil aviation. Indonesian officials have also been working to increase flights between the two nations to facilitate more Indonesian pilgrims. Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, sends the biggest Hajj contingent and hundreds of thousands of Umrah pilgrims to Saudi Arabia every year. "I am certain there is still plenty of room for us to continue working together in the aviation sector," Purwaghandi said. During Al-Jasser's meeting with Yudhoyono, the two officials "explored opportunities to develop projects" in infrastructure, transport and logistics, exchange expertise and for broader investment potential, the Saudi Ministry of Transport and Logistics Services said on X. Indonesia is hopeful that the "bilateral synergy" with Saudi Arabia will progress "with various concrete achievements in aviation, maritime affairs, railways and logistics," Yudhoyono said. Al-Jasser's trip to Jakarta, which included an on-site visit of the city's developing mass rapid transit system, was also aimed at "strengthening exchange of expertise and learning about leading international experiences in developing urban transport projects," according to his office. Recent urban transportation developments across Saudi cities have been of interest for Indonesian officials, as the projects are taking place at a time when Indonesian cities are also developing mass transport systems.—APP

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Briefs

Lebanon,
Israel hold
talks in Rome

DNA

BEIRUT: Lebanon and Israel are holding new negotiations under US auspices in Rome on Tuesday, against the backdrop of a regional escalation between Washington and Tehran.

The two countries, officially at war for decades, reached a framework agreement on June 26, after five rounds of negotiations in Washington, aimed at ending the war between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah and paving the way for peace.

But Hezbollah rejects the agreement, which calls for the group's disarmament and whose implementation is set to begin with Israeli withdrawal from two "pilot zones" in southern Lebanon. The Lebanese presidency announced on Monday that its delegation to Rome had been instructed "to demand the immediate start of Israeli forces' withdrawal from the two pilot zones before any further discussion."

According to a Lebanese diplomatic source familiar with the content of the talks, "the Lebanese army is ready to gradually take control of the localities from which the Israeli army would withdraw." "Israel is willing to withdraw gradually," analyst Orna Mizrahi of the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) in Tel Aviv told AFP's Jerusalem bureau, but on the condition "that there will be no presence of Hezbollah in the areas that Israel is withdrawing from."

Death toll from
Bangkok music
bar inferno
rises to 30

BANGKOK: The death toll from a huge fire in a Bangkok music bar has increased to 30, officials said Tuesday. More than 70 people were injured, with 24 of them still in critical condition, according to a statement by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. The blaze at the Rong Beer Na Ladprao bar was the city's deadliest in 17 years. It broke out late Sunday in a northern part of the Thai capital, and firefighters needed half an hour to bring it under control. The fire left 25 people hospitalized in critical condition, city officials said. Bangkok Gov. Chudchart Sittipunt said most of the deaths were caused by smoke inhalation. By day-break Monday, the site had been cordoned off as dozens of forensic officers sought clues about what caused the fire. The bar's street-facing windows were blown out, and debris littered the sidewalk, including charred television sets, speakers and an electric guitar. Associated Press journalists looking through the shattered windows could see empty beer bottles still sitting atop burned tables. — APP

FBI chief Patel meets Naqvi,
lauds Pakistan's support

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Kash Patel, the director of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), hosted Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi at the

agency's Headquarters, lauding Pakistan's support in protecting US interests in the region. In a post on X, Patel described the meeting as an honour and said the FBI deeply appreciated Pakistan's support in protecting US interests in the region.

Serena Hotels showcases
Mango Diplomacy at ISH

Aziz Boolani assured that Serena Hotels will continue hosting such cultural and culinary events in the coming days, reinforcing the brand's commitment to promoting Pakistan's agricultural treasures and hospitality traditions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels celebrated Pakistan's rich mango heritage with a vibrant Mango Festival at the Islamabad Serena Hotel, marking another step in its culinary diplomacy initiative. Global CEO of Serena Hotels, Aziz Boolani, alongside KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, formally inaugurated the event.

The festival showcased scores of mango varieties, delighting guests with the diverse flavors of Pakistan's "fruit king." Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs Anna Baloch represented the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Ishaq Dar. She visited various stalls.

Aziz Boolani assured that Serena Hotels will continue hosting such cultural and culinary events in the coming days, reinforcing the brand's commitment to promoting Pakistan's agricultural treasures and hospitality traditions.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Anna Baloch along with Global CEO Serena Hotels tasting mangoes at the Mango Festival. — DNA

PSX extends losses as
oil spike, Middle East
tensions rattle investors

KSE-100 Index stumbles to intraday low of 174,615.03, down 5,312.01 points, or 2.95%

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index touched an intraday low of 174,615.03, down 5,312.01 points, or 2.95%, from the previous close of 179,927.04. Its intraday high stood at 178,112.04, still down 1,815 points, or 1.01%. Ismail Iqbal Securities Chief Executive Officer Ahfaz Mustafa told Geo. tv that: "Markets are reacting to a sharp rise in oil prices and the new uncertainty that has developed in the Middle East conflict and oil prices." "Result season is also around the corner, which will help determine market direction," Mustafa said. Oil prices rose nearly 3% on Tuesday to their highest level in four weeks as the United States reimposed its naval blockade of Iran and both countries stepped up attacks in the Strait of Hormuz, heightening uncertainty over energy flows. Brent crude futures were

last up \$1.50, or 1.8%, at \$84.80 per barrel at 0330 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate crude rose \$1.70, or 2.2%, to \$79.84 a barrel. Both contracts earlier rose more than \$2 a barrel before paring some gains. Brent had surged 9.6% in the previous session, its biggest daily gain since May 2020. The US military carried out a third consecutive night of strikes against Iran on Monday, while US President Donald Trump reinstated a blockade of Iranian shipping and proposed charging a 20% fee to guard the Strait of Hormuz. Amid the strikes, two United Arab Emirates tankers were hit by two Iranian cruise missiles in the southern lane of the Strait of Hormuz in Omani territorial waters, the UAE Ministry of Defence said on Monday.

One Indian crew member was killed and eight others were wounded. Shipping data on Monday also showed the number of tankers transiting the Strait of Hormuz fell in the past day to the lowest level in two months.

ECP mulls holding of
local govt polls in KP

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Under the chairmanship of Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, a significant meeting was convened at the Election Commission regarding the scheduling of local government elections in 23 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The meeting was attended by respected members of the Election Commission, the Secretary of the Commission, senior officials, as well as representatives from the provincial government including the Chief Secretary and Secretary Local Government. The Chief Election Commissioner highlighted the importance of establishing local governments, stressing that under Article 140 A of the Constitution of Pakistan, holding local elections is a constitutional requirement. He further noted that according to Section 219(4) of the Elections Act, the

Election Commission is bound to conduct local government elections within 120 days of the expiry of the term of local bodies.

Officials briefed the Commission that the tenure of local bodies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa expired on March 14 and June 19, 2026. The Election Commission has already completed the delimitation process in 23 districts and is fully prepared to conduct elections there. In line with Section 219(3) of the Elections Act and Rule 15(1) of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Councils (Conduct of Elections) Rules, 2021, consultations with provincial government representatives are ongoing to finalize the election date. The Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa informed the Commission that the consultation letter regarding the election schedule was received on July 8, 2026, and the case summary has already been forwarded to the provincial cabinet.

He said the discussion focused on facilitating resources and specialised training to combat counterterrorism financing and cyber investigations both at home and abroad.

Patel described the partnership between the two countries as critical and expressed optimism about more success ahead in bilateral cooperation. "Our partnership is critical and we look forward to more success ahead," he wrote. The interior minister had arrived in Washington last week after representing Pakistan at the United Nations Chiefs of Police Summit 2026 (UNCOPS), which aimed to strengthen cooperation among the police services of UN member states.

The meeting comes at a time when Pakistan and the United States have been seeking to strengthen their security partnership, particularly in the areas of counterterrorism, intelligence sharing and combating financial crimes. Pakistan, a major non-Nato ally of the United States, has seen its relations with Washington improve since President Donald Trump's return to the White House. Islamabad has also played a mediatory role in efforts aimed at resolving the recent conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran.

China detains US seismologist

WASHINGTON: A Chinese-born American seismologist who has published US-funded work on detecting North Korean nuclear tests has been detained in China for nearly two years and faces trial on spying charges, according to his wife, US lawmakers and two hostage advocacy groups. The case of Youlin Chen, reported here for the first time, adds an irritant to the tense relationship between the nuclear-armed rivals and comes as President Donald Trump seeks to keep the relationship steady following last year's trade war. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on March 19 designated Chen, 54, as "wrongfully detained," making his release a top US priority. The Trump administration has withheld a public announcement to allow space for high-level diplomacy aimed at securing his freedom, according to his wife, Yufang Rong. Dr. Yufang Rong and her husband Dr. Youlin Chen, an American seismologist held for nearly two years by China, pose together in this undated photograph provided on July 13, 2026. (REUTERS) A US source familiar with Chen's case said the administration was "focused on gaining his release from his unjustifiable detention." The source spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive diplomatic talks. Chen, who became a US citizen in 2011 and lives in Boston, Massachusetts, is the only American currently held in China designated as wrongfully detained, according to his wife and hostage advocates. Rong said she has been told by the White House and the State Department that during a state visit to Beijing in May, Trump raised her husband's detention with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, who promised to look in to it. Xi's government, however, has taken no action, she said. — APP

Brazil's Lula
calls US plan for
Hormuz fee 'piracy'

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said Monday that plans by President Donald Trump to impose hefty fees on ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz would turn the United States into a "pirate" state.

Trump vowed earlier to reinstate a blockade of Iran's ports on the strait and slap a levy of 20 percent on all cargo shipped through Hormuz in order to pay for keeping the narrow waterway open.

Tehran started blocking the key conduit for petroleum shipments after the US and Israel launched attacks in late February, which

prompted Washington to stop the shipping to and from Iranian ports.

Those restrictions were eased after the two sides in June reached an interim agreement on ending the war, but Trump has vowed to snap them back after a fresh flare-up in fighting. Speaking at a public event in Sao Paulo state, Lula said: "President Trump tweeted that he will unblock the Strait of Hormuz. But for every ship unblocked, every ship removed from the strait, the oil owner must pay him 20 percent.

"This used to be considered piracy," Lula said. "A major nation like the United States, which I believe has fought against piracy for a long time, cannot now become a pirate," he added, warning that the conflict was driving up the prices of basic foodstuffs in Brazil including beans, rice, tomatoes and onions, as well as fuel. — APP

PM Shehbaz
commends
economic
team

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday lauded his economic team for achieving significant progress in promoting digital payments and advancing Pakistan's transition towards a cashless economy over the past year, saying the shift would enhance transparency, improve financial inclusion, and support sustainable economic growth. Chairing a meeting on the promotion of a cashless economy and digital payments, the prime minister praised the economic team for increasing the number of active merchants using QR code-based digital payments by 300 percent within a year. He also described the rise in mobile banking application users from 95 million to 137 million as a major achievement.

The prime minister directed the authorities to further strengthen awareness campaigns to encourage greater adoption of QR code-based digital payments among merchants. He also called on banks and financial institutions to play a more proactive role in accelerating the country's transition to a cashless economy. — APP

11 killed in
rain-related
incident
in KP

PESHAWAR: Eleven people were killed overnight when heavy rain caused the roof of a mud-brick house to collapse in northwest Pakistan, police and rescue officials said Tuesday. The accident occurred in Kohat district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, according to Bilal Faizi of the provincial emergency service. Rescuers recovered 11 bodies, mostly women and children, and handed them over to relatives for burial, Faizi said. Heavy monsoon rains also lashed the Gilgit-Baltistan region on Monday, triggering landslides that blocked several roads and damaged homes, according to a statement from regional emergency services. The government advised tourists to avoid travel to northern Pakistan because of the risk of landslides and flash flooding. Pakistan experiences heavy monsoon rains every year and the downpours frequently trigger floods and landslides that cause deaths and widespread damage. — APP

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