



Islamabad POST

Wednesday, July 22, 2026

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

US President says will take care of blockade by Houthis

Detailed News On Page-01

Ijaz Khokhar becomes Vice President IAF

Detailed News On Page-07



Kazakh envoy lauds role of Islamabad POST

Detailed News On Page-0



Briefs

Saudi govt starts multiple umra visa

DNA

RIYADH: The Saudi Ministry of Haj and Umrah has launched a multiple-entry Umrah visa with one-year validity from the date of issuance, through which pilgrims will be able to enter the kingdom multiple times, with a cumulative stay of up to 90 days each year, state-run Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported on Monday. As per the conditions of the visa, each visit would require the purchase of a service package from an approved provider on the Nusuk platform – a digital platform that lists several Umrah packages for various economic tiers. The report added that the packages' durations should not exceed the "remaining days available on the visa". "Entry is also contingent on issuing an Umrah permit via the Nusuk application prior to arrival," the report added. It further detailed that the visa would be deactivated after each departure and reactivated upon meeting regulatory requirements for the next visit. However, the report said, the visa cannot be availed during the Haj season, from the first of Ziqad to the 13th of Zilhaj. The SPA reported that the Haj ministry "affirmed that the visa enhances flexibility in planning visits and supports the integration of digital and operational services throughout the pilgrim's journey". Nearly 43 million pilgrims performed Umrah in 2025, according to Saudi Arabia's General Authority for Statistics.

Petrol, diesel prices again go up

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) updates petroleum products prices on a daily basis on its website to ensure transparency and allow the immediate impact of international price fluctuations to be passed on to consumers. The daily pricing is based on a seven-day weekly average of international market prices to align

STRIKE NEWS ON BACK PAGE

with international standards, according to Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik. Petrol price has been increased by Rs 4.93 while diesel price is increased by Rs 7.15. The government had already increased petrol prices on Monday. Meanwhile people have strongly condemned govt decision to increase petrol prices on daily basis.

LHC confirms death sentence or rapists

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday issued a detailed judgment confirming the death sentences awarded to two convicts in the high-profile 2020 Lahore-Sialkot Motorway gang-rape case, ruling that the prosecution had established the charges beyond reasonable doubt through overwhelming ocular, medical and forensic evidence. Through a short order, a two-member bench comprising Justice Syed Shahbaz Ali Rizvi and Justice Tariq Mahmood Bajwa had on June 3, 2026, dismissed separate criminal appeals filed by convicts Abid Ali alias Malhi and Shafqat Ali alias Bagga. The court today issued its detailed written judgment on the appeal.

Momeni meets field marshal also PM Shehbaz urges Iran-US de-escalation

Iranian minister meets CDF Munir at GHQ, discusses regional, bilateral security and border management: ISPR

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday voiced deep concern over the recent escalation in the Gulf region and urged Iran and the United States to exercise restraint during a meeting with Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni. Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to regional peace and stability, the PM said the country would continue to play its role as an "honest and sincere mediator and facilitator". Momeni, who is on an official visit to Pakistan, called on PM Shehbaz at the Prime Minister's House. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Adviser to the Prime Minister Syed Tauqir Shah, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry and other senior officials attended the meeting, the PMO said in a statement. Welcoming the Iranian minister and his delegation, Shehbaz recalled his visit to Tehran earlier this month to attend the funeral of the late Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei. He conveyed his good wishes and respectful regards to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei and President Masoud Pezeshkian. The two sides discussed matters of mutual interest and bilateral cooperation. Momeni conveyed the greetings and best wishes of the Iranian leadership and

said he was leading a delegation of senior officials to further strengthen ties between the neighbouring countries.

The Iranian minister also thanked Pakistan's leadership for its diplomatic efforts and expressed appreciation for PM Shehbaz, DPM Dar and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for their role in facilitating the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). He also thanked the prime minister for travelling to Tehran to attend the funeral ceremony of the late Ali Khamenei. Separately, Momeni also held a meeting with CDF and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Munir at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi, today.

Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni meets Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at GHQ, Rawalpindi, on July 21, 2026. — Screengrab via ISPR During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional and bilateral security and effective border management were discussed, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. The visiting Iranian dignitary appreciated Pakistan's consistent efforts and indispensable diplomatic role in easing regional tensions, encouraging de-escalation and serving as an anchor for peace. The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation of resolve to maintain close coordination and cooperative mechanisms to

Continued on Page 06

Over students protest

Indian opposition leader demands Modi's resignation

Gandhi staged sit-in protest outside Modi's residence before being bundled into bus and taken away

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: India's main opposition leader, Rahul Gandhi, demanded on Tuesday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi step down over the police crackdown against student protests calling for reforms in the education system. Modi must resign "for destroying the future of India's youth", the Congress Party leader said in a post on social media as he led a march with other MPs towards the prime minister's residence in New Delhi. "The government doesn't want to take any accountability, nor does it want to have a debate on it in parliament," said Gandhi, the leader of the opposition in the lower house. Gandhi later staged a sit-in protest outside Modi's residence, where cries of "we want justice" were interspersed with chants of "down with Modi".

Continued on Page 06

India summons Russian diplomat

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: India said it had summoned a senior Russian diplomat and expressed "grave concerns" after an missile strike killed four Indians on a Black Sea cargo ship that was leaving a Ukrainian port. Ukraine said Russia hit the Golden Leo – a Guinea-Bissau-flagged ship manned by a crew from India and Syria – with three cruise missiles on Sunday, which killed 10 people including four Indians. Russia did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for a comment. Vladimir Ladanov, Russian chargé d'affaires, was summoned to India's Ministry of

Continued on Page 06

AJK EC announces polls beginning July 27

Third and final phase of AJK polls to be held in Poonch Division on August 10

STAFF REPORT

MUZAFFARABAD: The Chief Election Commissioner of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Ghulam Mustafa Mughal, announced on Tuesday that elections in the region would be held in three phases. According to the election commissioner, Mirpur Division will vote first on July 27, Muzaffarabad Division on August 2 and Poonch Division on August 10. The announcement marked a revision to the earlier single-day election schedule. The AJK election commission had previously announced July 27, 2026, as the date for general elections across all constituencies of the AJK Legislative Assembly, with polling to be held from 8am to 5pm. At least 1,265 candidates have submitted their nomination papers in total 45 AJK constituencies, including 12 refugee constituencies, for the upcoming elections. The News reported. Some 1047 candidates have filed their nomination papers

Continued on Page 06

'Will ask PM Shehbaz to make me AJK premier'

STAFF REPORT

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday said he would ask Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to make him the prime minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) if the party secured victory in the upcoming elections. The former premier made the remarks while addressing the party's rally in Muzaffarabad, as he – accompanied by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz – kicked off PML-N's election campaign ahead of the phased AJK polls, beginning July 27.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister of Iran ESKANDAR MOMENI called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday. – DNA

Ishaq Dar to attend ASEAN regional forum meet

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar departed Islamabad for Manila, Philippines, to participate in the 33rd ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial Meeting, being held on 22-23 July 2026. During the visit, DPM/FM will participate in discussions on key regional and international political and security issues and reaffirm Pakistan's commitment to peace, stability, and dialogue in the Asia-Pacific region. He will also hold bilateral meetings with participating foreign ministers and other dignitaries on the sidelines of the Forum.

Tensions escalate

Iran targets US military assets in Gulf

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they had attacked and stopped two "non-compliant oil tankers" attempting to transit the Strait of Hormuz, part of an effort to tighten its grip on the vital waterway while the war reignited

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran targeted US radar and air defence installations in the Gulf on Tuesday, warning Washington of "more decisive and powerful" attacks to come as the US military completed a fresh round of strikes on the country. Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they had attacked and stopped two "non-compliant oil tankers" attempting to transit the Strait of Hormuz, part of an effort to tighten its grip on the vital waterway while the war reignited. Following the deaths of at least three US soldiers in the past several days, the United States

Continued on Page 06

Trump says not finished with Iran yet

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said Tuesday the United States was far from finished with Iran and warned the next US military target could be an underground nuclear complex known as Pickaxe Mountain. Pickaxe Mountain is a deeply buried nuclear site near Natanz where Western intelligence suspects Iran is building an undeclared enrichment facility.

Continued on Page 06

General Practice HOSPITAL

Your Health. Our Priority - Every Step of the Way!

General Practice Hospital (GPH) is a state-of-the-art healthcare facility in the heart of Islamabad, offering international-standard medical care for individuals and families. From urgent care and specialized consultations to advanced diagnostics, surgery, and executive health packages – all services are available under one roof. Our concierge consultations, personalized care plans, and comprehensive health programs ensure a smooth and stress-free experience.

We understand that seeking medical care can be overwhelming, but you are never alone. With empathy at the heart of everything we do, we listen, guide, and support you every step of the way. In our clean, premium environment, you'll feel safe, valued, and cared for. Book your appointment today and experience healthcare with compassion.

Our Departments

General Physician Services	General Surgery	Dental & Maxillofacial Surgery	Plastic Surgery	Ear, Nose & Throat	Nutrition, Dietetics & Lifestyle
Internal Medicine	Pediatrics & Child Health	Breast Surgery	Anaesthesiology	Pulmonology	Physiotherapy & Rehabilitation
Gynecology & Women's Health	Cardiology	Bariatric Surgery	Gastroenterology & Hepatology	Endocrinology	Psychology & Mental Health
Dermatology & Aesthetics	Urology	Pediatric Surgery	Neurosurgery	Orthopedics & Sports Medicine	Diagnostic Radiology

Our Services

Empathic & Caring for everyone

FOR APPOINTMENT +92 33 22 474 474

Or Visit: Pakland Tower 2, New Blue Area, Islamabad

www.generalpractice.com.pk | generalpracticeislamabad | +92 51 6160 474 | +92 51 6161 474

Afghan repatriation drive steps up as thousands return

KOHAT: The authorities have intensified a nationwide campaign to repatriate undocumented Afghan nationals, issuing eviction notices to the owners of more than 20,000 houses and apartments accused of accommodating people living in the country illegally. The district officials have given property owners one week to remove undocumented Afghan tenants, adding that legal action would be taken against those who fail to comply within the deadline. According to a spokesperson for Pakistan's Home Department, the police and security forces had expanded operations across Peshawar and other districts in recent days. The Officials said more than 600 Afghan nationals had been detained and deported from Peshawar over the past five days, while 2,163 others were repatriated after being detained in different districts. The government figures showed that 23,336 Afghan nationals, including women and children, returned to Afghanistan between July, 11 to 16. The authorities said the pace of returns had increased sharply, adding daily repatriations, which previously averaged between 400 and 600 people, had risen to between 3,400 and 4,100 individuals. The security forces said that the operations would continue as part of the government's effort to ensure the departure of all undocumented foreign nationals from the country.—APP

Digital Immunization Hub set up in Upper Kohistan

PESHAWAR: To improve access to quality immunization services in the remote, mountainous and underserved district of Upper Kohistan, a Digital Immunization Hub has been established at the Rural Health Centre (RHC) Dassu. The initiative has been launched by HUIRA Village Support Organization in collaboration with the District Health Department to strengthen the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) through improved coordination, digital data management, community engagement and enhanced service delivery. "Geographic isolation, difficult terrain, limited infrastructure and inadequate health system support have historically contributed to low vaccination coverage, high dropout rates and delays in routine immunization in Upper Kohistan," said Dr. Munib ur Rehman, Team Lead of HUIRA Village Support Organization. The Digital Immunization Hub is designed to improve the planning, monitoring and delivery of routine immunization services while ensuring that children in remote communities receive life-saving vaccines on time and regularly, he added. The initiative was formally inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Upper Kohistan, Tariq Ali Khan, who appreciated the collaboration between the district administration, HUIRA Organization and the health department. "Establishment of this digitized immunization hub is a vital step for enhancing ability of health teams to track immunization coverage, manage data effectively and reach every child in the most remote corners of the district," Dr. Munib continued.—APP

Pakistan-China eco partnership enters new phase of business collaboration: Khalil

Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that ICCI determined to strengthen business linkages, facilitate Chinese investment in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi, has said that Pakistan-China economic relations are entering a more focused phase of investment-led business-to-business cooperation, with sustained efforts underway to translate the two countries' exceptional political relationship into tangible trade, investment and industrial partnerships. Addressing an interactive session with the business community at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), he said that over the past two-and-a-half years, the Embassy has worked to complement the strong government-to-government relationship, including CPEC, by accelerating B2B engagement and promoting Chinese investment in Pakistan, particularly through joint ventures. Ambassador Hashmi who was accompanied by Mr. Ghulam Qadir former trade and investment Counsellor in China said a research-driven strategy has identified 21 China-specific priority sectors for investment cooperation. He said six B2B investment conferences and six investment roadshows have been organized in areas including pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, healthcare, IT and telecom, energy storage, agriculture and food, textiles, leather, surgical and medical equipment and other industries. These initiatives, he disclosed, have generated more than 670 MoUs, around 40 joint ventures, and cumulative commitments exceeding US\$22 billion, while the conversion rate of MoUs into agreements or contracts has reached nearly 30 percent. He emphasized that the real objective was not merely signing MoUs but converting them into operational projects, factories, joint ventures and sustainable investments through a structured follow-up mechanism. Describing China as the "land of opportunity of the 21st century," the Ambassador urged Pakistani businesses to come forward with well-prepared and bankable projects to attract credible Chinese partners. He said future initiatives would focus on high-potential sectors, including semiconductors, surgical instruments, sports goods and sportswear, while greater emphasis was also being placed on integrating investment with technical and vocational training and demand-driven skills development. Appreciating the initiative for business facilitation desks in Guangzhou and at ICCI in Islamabad, he said these platforms could strengthen investment and trade promotion, provide reliable market information and help resolve business disputes. He assured that the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing and its four consulates would continue extending full facilitation to the business community. In his welcome address, ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood said China has always stood by Pakistan through thick and thin and remains one of its most trusted friends and strategic economic partners. He said CPEC has laid a strong foundation for connectivity, infrastructure development and industrial cooperation, and the time has come to further capitalize on this



relationship by expanding private-sector collaboration, joint ventures, technology transfer and value-added production. He emphasized that Pakistan offers significant opportunities to Chinese investors in pharmaceuticals, healthcare, biotechnology, agriculture, information technology, renewable energy, minerals, engineering and other promising sectors. Sardar Tahir Mehmood said ICCI was committed to serving as an effective bridge between the business communities of Pakistan and China and facilitating meaningful B2B linkages. He highlighted ICCI's initiative to establish a Business Facilitation Desk in Guangzhou, along with a corresponding facilitation mechanism at the Chamber in Islamabad, to provide businesses with market information, investment guidance, partner identification and support in addressing trade-related issues. He expressed confidence that close coordination between ICCI, Pakistan's diplomatic missions in China and relevant institutions would help transform business leads into concrete investment and trade outcomes. The event was effectively moderated by ICCI Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub, who emphasized the impor-

ance of sustained institutional engagement and regular interaction between the private sectors of the two countries to unlock the full potential of Pakistan-China economic cooperation. In his vote of thanks, ICCI Vice President Mohammad Irfan Chaudhry reiterated ICCI's commitment to strengthening Pakistan-China business relations and extending all possible facilitation to Chinese investors and Pakistani entrepreneurs seeking partnerships in China. An impressive question-and-answer session was also held, during which members of the business community interacted with Ambassador Khalil Hashmi on issues relating to investment opportunities, joint ventures, market access, trade facilitation, dispute resolution and sector-specific cooperation with China. The session was attended by ICCI former Presidents Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi, Sheikh Aamir Waheed, Executive Members Waseem Chaudhry, Raja Naveed Satti, Zulqurnain Abbasi, Imran Minhas, Ishaq Sial, former SVP Naveed Malik, senior members Israr Mishwani, Sajid Iqbal, and many other.

Indigenous family law for Kalash Community passed in KP

PESHAWAR: In a landmark step for indigenous peoples' rights and minority protection, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly has passed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Kalash Marriage Bill, 2026, making it Pakistan's first comprehensive family law enacted specifically for an indigenous community. The legislation provides, for the first time, a statutory framework for the solemnization, registration and dissolution of Kalash marriages while preserving the community's centuries-old customs and traditions. The legislation traces its origins to Mr. Wazirzada, the first Kalash Member of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly and currently Focal Person to the Chief Minister on Minority Affairs, who initially introduced it as a Private Member's Bill. Recognizing its importance, the Local Government, Elections and Rural Development Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, later adopted it as an official Government Bill and steered it through the legislative process. The law comes at a particularly significant time. Earlier this year, the Kalasha Valley Cultural

Landscape was included on United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) World Heritage Tentative List, reflecting Pakistan's efforts to secure international recognition for one of the world's oldest living indigenous cultures. The new legislation complemented those efforts by providing legal protection to the family life and customary marriage practices of the Kalash community while preserving its unique cultural identity. For generations, Kalash marriages were conducted according to customary traditions but without a dedicated statutory legal framework. The absence of formal registration often created challenges in proving marital status, accessing public services, securing inheritance rights and obtaining official documentation. With the enactment of this law and once the implementing rules are notified within 120 days, the era of unregistered marriages in the Kalash valleys is expected to end, ensuring that every Kalash marriage will be formally registered and legally recognized. The Act makes registration of Kalash

marriages mandatory, establishes 18 years as the minimum age of marriage, requires the free consent of both parties, prohibits marriages within prohibited degrees of relationship, legally recognizes Kalash customary marriage ceremonies, validates previously solemnized marriages and provides legal procedures relating to marriage registration, dissolution, custody and penalties for violations. Sharing his views Wazirzada, Focal Person to the Chief Minister on Minority Affairs, said, "This is a historic day for the Kalash community. For the first time, our marriages and family traditions have received formal legal recognition while preserving our cultural identity. This law will strengthen the rights and dignity of future generations of Kalash people." Rizwan, Provincial Coordinator, National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said, "The Kalash Marriage Act is a significant milestone for minority and indigenous rights in Pakistan. It demonstrates that protecting cultural traditions and strengthening legal rights can go hand in hand within a constitutional framework.—DNA

Chinese investment invited in ports sector: Junaid

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has invited Chinese investors to expand investment in Pakistan's ports, logistics and maritime sectors, saying the government was committed to transforming the country into a regional transit trade, logistics and industrial hub. Addressing the Regional Transit Trade Hub Initiative in Beijing, organised by Jiang Tonland International Holdings, the minister said Pakistan and China shared an "All-Weather Strategic

Partnership" that was entering a new phase centred on connectivity, trade facilitation, logistics, industrial development and sustainable economic growth. He said the global trading system was being reshaped by digitalisation, smart logistics, resilient supply chains, green shipping and multimodal transport, making stronger regional partnerships and innovation increasingly important, said a press release issued here on Tuesday. Junaid Chaudhry said Pakistan's strategic location positioned it as a natural gateway

for regional and international trade. He said maritime institutions, including the Karachi Port Trust, Port Qasim Authority, Gwadar Port Authority and the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation, were implementing reforms to develop the country into a modern maritime, logistics and industrial hub serving regional markets. He said the Regional Transit Trade Hub initiative complemented Pakistan's economic priorities and offered opportunities for cooperation in port modernisation, multimodal transport corridors.—APP

CM for faster implementation of key water projects

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Sohail Afridi on Tuesday directed the authorities to accelerate work on major hydropower and water resource projects, emphasizing timely completion to strengthen irrigation, energy production and water supply in the province. Chairing a high-level review meeting at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House in Islamabad, the chief minister assessed progress on the Chashma Right Bank Canal (CRBC) Lift Canal, Mohmand Dam, New Munda Headworks and Dasu Hydropower Project. Senior federal and provincial officials, including WAPDA Chairman Lt Gen (Retd) Muhammad Saeed, attended the meeting. Afridi instructed the relevant departments to expedite land acquisition for the CRBC Lift Canal Project and ensure adequate security for project staff. He said the scheme would significantly expand cultivable land and enhance agricultural productivity, adding that the provincial government would continue to provide its share of funding on a priority basis. The meeting was informed that construction on the CRBC Lift Canal was progressing under multiple work packages, while the Mohmand Dam Project has achieved substantial progress and was expected to provide irrigation, hydropower generation and a reliable supply of drinking water upon completion. The chief minister also reviewed the progress of the Dasu Hydropower Project and New Munda Headworks, directing all concerned agencies to improve coordination and promptly resolve implementation issues. He stressed that these strategic projects would contribute to national energy security, sustainable water management and long-term economic development.—APP

A war for economic and trade dominance

TANVEER HUSSAIN

The United States and Israel jointly launched an air attack on Iran on 28 February. Since then, the attacks have continued. Although negotiations have taken place between the warring side and there have been pauses in the fighting, lasting peace has not yet been established. In this war, Iran's senior political, military, and religious leaders have been killed, a large number of scientists have lost their lives, Iran's defense installations and nuclear facilities have been targeted, and many civilians have also become victims of the conflict. Schools, hospitals, and residential areas have also suffered damage. In simple words, this is not merely a war between two countries; rather, it is a full-scale military assault by a powerful superpower and its ally against a comparatively weaker country.

However, there is one aspect of this entire war that deserves serious attention. Iran has always declared the United States and Israel to be its greatest enemies. The slogans "Death to America" and "Death to Israel" are heard in almost every speech of its political and religious leaders. But when the actual war with Israel began, Iran turned the direction of its missiles toward its neighboring Arab countries. Even if Iran fires a few missiles toward Israel, dozens of its missiles fall on Arab countries. American naval fleets are stationed in the Strait of Hormuz, only a few kilometers from Iranian territory. Iran possesses missiles capable of easily reaching Israel, yet instead of targeting those positions, it is targeting the oil facilities, gas reserves, ports, and airports of Arab countries. The targets of Iranian missiles are not American aircraft but Kuwait's gas plants, the airports and hotels of the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Jordan, and Egypt have also come under attack. The question is: if America is killing Iranian civilians and schoolchildren are being martyred in these attacks, then why is Iran targeting the oil reserves of Arab countries instead of attacking American aircraft? These attacks suggest that this is, in fact, a war for economic dominance and control over trade in the region. Looking at history, this is not the first time that Iran has protected American interests. During the American invasion of Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power, Iran also worked in favor of American interests. A similar situation existed during the invasion of Afghanistan. Later, the United States established governments with Iranian influence in those countries, giving Iran a stronger role in the region, the effects of which later appeared in the form of proxy wars.

the airports and hotels of the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Jordan, and Egypt have also come under attack. The question is: if America is killing Iranian civilians and schoolchildren are being martyred in these attacks, then why is Iran targeting the oil reserves of Arab countries instead of attacking American aircraft? These attacks suggest that this is, in fact, a war for economic dominance and control over trade in the region. Looking at history, this is not the first time that Iran has protected American interests. During the American invasion of Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power, Iran also worked in favor of American interests. A similar situation existed during the invasion of Afghanistan. Later, the United States established governments with Iranian influence in those countries, giving Iran a stronger role in the region, the effects of which later appeared in the form of proxy wars.

freeline MOVERS

PACKING, SHIPPING & FREIGHT FORWARDING

Our Services

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

Head Office

3rd Floor, Yasin Plaza, 74-West, Blue Area, Islamabad.

Tel: (+92 51) 2822471, 2274221, 2878029, 2272273, 2822711, 2674289 - Fax: (+92-51) 2825132, 2274227.

E-mail: moving@freelinemovers.com - Website: www.freelinemovers.com

Branch Offices

Karachi Plot No 14 & 15, 3rd Floor, Kalkandah Mall, Main Tang Road, T2 1 Block 2, P.E.C.H.S. Karachi. Tel: (+92-21) 3403808, 34319478. Fax: (+92-21) 3403147. E-mail: karachi@freelinemovers.com	Lahore P-4 Gulberg Centre, Main Boulevard, Lahore. Tel: (+92-42) 3579884, 35791085. Fax: (+92-42) 35711620. E-mail: lahore@freelinemovers.com	Peshawar Office No. C-6, 2nd Floor, Zohreh Plaza, Left Road, Ring Road, Peshawar. Tel: (+92-91) 2502778. Fax: (+92-91) 2502998. E-mail: peshawar@freelinemovers.com	Kabul House #4, Street #4, Chahar Afsar Road, Shahr-e-Naw, Kabul - Afghanistan. Tel: (+92-70021) 373, 63 793585 868, 63 779469 308. E-mail: kabul@freelinemovers.com
---	---	---	---

National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY

July 01/Japan Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada National Day

July 01/Somalia Independence Day

July 04/USA Independence Day

July 05/Algeria Independence Day

July 09/Argentina Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium National Day

July 20/TRNC Independence Day

July 23/Egypt National Day

July 26/Cuba National Day

July 26/Liberia National Day

July 30/Morocco National Day

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

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

Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police...9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114

PIA Cargo.....92809979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi...5555489

CAA.....9281092

Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....561116

Cantt Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDa.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Kazakh envoy recognizes role of Islamabad POST group

Ansar Mahmood Bhatti Chief Editor received the award; Notably, Ambassador Kistafin’s very first interview after his arrival in Pakistan was given to Centreline, Islamabad Post, and DNA News Agency, underscoring the trust and value he places in their journalistic work

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin, has awarded a Certificate of Appreciation to the Chief Editor of Daily Islamabad Post, Centreline, and DNA News Agency in recognition of their role in promoting bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and Pakistan. Ansar Mahmood Bhatti Chief Editor received the award. The ceremony highlighted the importance of media in strengthening diplomatic ties and fostering mutual understanding between the two nations. Ambassador Kistafin emphasized that the media plays a vital role in building bridges between peoples and nations, and he expressed gratitude for the efforts of these publications in projecting Kazakhstan's vision and priorities to the Pakistani audience. Notably, Ambassador Kistafin's very first interview after his arrival in Pakistan was given to Centreline, Islamabad Post, and DNA News Agency, underscoring the trust and value he places in their journalistic work. The recognition reflects Kazakhstan's commitment to deepening cultural, political, and economic cooperation with Pakistan. It also highlights the role of independent media in shaping narratives that encourage friendship and collaboration. The award ceremony marks another step forward in the growing partnership between the two countries, with media continuing to serve as a cornerstone for dialogue and diplomacy.

Pakistan reports first documented 285-gram eye tumor in newborn

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Doctors at Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital have successfully performed a rare, life-saving operation on a three-day-old newborn suffering from an aggressive congenital eye tumor, saving the infant through emergency surgery. The baby, from a village in Jhelum district, was brought to the hospital shortly after birth with a rapidly progressing tumor affecting one eye. Following an urgent assessment, specialists decided that immediate surgery was the only option to prevent the disease from causing further life-threatening complications. The complex procedure was carried out by a multidisciplinary team comprising Dr. Tayyab Afghani, Dr. Faizan Tahir, Dr. Ali Raza Syed and Dr. Aiman, with support from anesthetists, nurses and other clinical staff. Due to the advanced nature of the disease, surgeons removed the affected eye to completely remove the tumor

and save the infant's life. Doctors said a normal newborn eyeball weighs about three grams, but the tumor removed from the infant weighed 285 grams, about 95 times the normal weight of a newborn eyeball. According to the treating team, this appears to be the first documented case in Pakistan of a 285-gram congenital eye tumor being successfully treated in a three-day-old infant. Dr. Tayyab Afghani said the operation was successful and the infant was recovering well under close medical supervision. He said the baby's condition had stabilized and doctors were satisfied with the post-operative progress. He said congenital eye tumors in newborns are uncommon but can progress rapidly if not diagnosed and treated without delay. Early referral to a specialized eye care facility, he added, can significantly improve the chances of successful treatment and reduce the risk of serious complications. Dr. Afghani

Shaanxi Aerospace Breeding Center signs pact

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Pakistan's Ayub Agricultural Research Institute (AARI) and China's Shaanxi Aerospace Breeding Engineering Technology Center signed a Commitment of Cooperation (CoC) on July 20 to strengthen long-term collaboration in agricultural research, climate-resilient crop development and advanced breeding technologies. The agreement was signed during the official visit of Punjab Director General/Chief Scientist Agriculture (Research) Dr. Sajid-ur-Rahman to China, where he met representatives of the Shaanxi International Technology Transfer and Innovation Cooperation Centre and the Shaanxi Aerospace Breeding Engineering Technology Center, as per AARI. "The Commitment of Cooperation marks an important step toward strengthening scientific collaboration between Pakistan and China in agricultural research and innovation," Dr. Sajid-ur-Rahman said, according to a Gwadar Pro's report. "By working together on climate-resilient crop varieties, advanced breeding technologies and knowledge exchange, we can contribute to sustainable agricultural development and improved food security." The CoC establishes a framework for cooperation in agricultural research, aerospace breeding technology, germplasm exchange, capacity building, technology transfer and joint research projects. During the meetings, both sides discussed expanding scientific partnerships through collaborative research and innovation while exploring opportunities to accelerate the adoption of modern agricultural technologies. Chinese representatives expressed their willingness to facilitate exchange visits involving scientists, farmers and agricultural companies from both countries to promote knowledge sharing, joint projects, technology transfer and agricultural trade. "This cooperation reflects our shared commitment to advancing agricultural science through innovation and international partnership, according to AARI's statement," which added that it will expand exchanges and implementing joint initiatives that will benefit both countries.—DNA

President Zardari felicitates Belgian

DNA

ISLAMABAD :President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday extended felicitations to King Philippe of the Kingdom of Belgium, the Government and the people of Belgium on their National Day. The president, in a statement, highlighted that Pakistan and Belgium enjoy long-standing and cordial relations founded on mutual respect, trust and goodwill. He noted with satisfaction that over the years, the two countries have developed a constructive partnership across diverse fields. He emphasised that Pakistan values its engagement with the European Union, in which Belgium plays a pivotal role, and looks forward to further strengthening cooperation to achieve their shared objectives of peace, sustainable development and mutual prosperity. President Zardari expressed confidence that the bonds of friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and Belgium will continue to grow stronger in the years ahead for the mutual benefit of the people of both nations.

PM reaffirms support to GB

DNA

ISLAMABAD :Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to working closely with the newly elected government of Gilgit-Baltistan for the welfare and development of the area and its people. During a meeting with Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Amjad Hussain at the PM House, the prime minister congratulated Amjad Hussain on assuming the office of Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan. The prime minister said that the federal government was undertaking development initiatives in Gilgit-Baltistan across renewable energy, tourism, infrastructure, health, education, and other sectors. He noted that the federal government's flagship initiatives included a 100 MW solar power project and the establishment of Daanish Schools in the region. He further said that the federal government was planning to establish a Pakistan Aasan Khidmat Centre in Gilgit to facilitate the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, and Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema were also present at the meeting.

Minister, KUFPEC discuss cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaz Malik met with Mr. Tareq Ebrahim, Vice President Operations of Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC), to discuss opportunities for expanding cooperation in Pakistan's

petroleum sector. The Minister described Kuwait as one of Pakistan's closest friends, highlighting the two countries' more than 50-year partnership in the energy sector. He reaffirmed the Government's commitment to further strengthening this longstanding relationship. Mr. Tareq Ebrahim thanked the Minister for his support in facilitating investment opportunities and said KUFPEC sees strong potential for expanding its presence in Pakistan's upstream energy sector. The Federal Minister assured KUFPEC of the Government's full support and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to providing a conducive environment for international investment in the petroleum sector.

Pakistani, Chinese companies sign MoU

The Pakistan Agro Show provides an ideal platform for international investors and technology partners to connect with local stakeholders,” Ali added

DNA

ISLAMABAD : A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on the sidelines of the Pakistan-China B2B Investment Conference held here, marking a step forward in bilateral commercial cooperation within the agricultural sector. The agreement was one of the key collaborative outcomes achieved among the more than 450 business-ess from both countries that participated in the event, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro. The agreement was inked between Eventex, a Pakistani exhibitions and event management company, and Songshi Enterprise Management Consulting (Suzhou) Co., Ltd. Under the terms of the MoU, Eventex will facilitate the

participation of the Chinese company in the 3rd Pakistan Agro Show 2026, scheduled to take place from October 29-31 at the International Expo Centre in Lahore. Both parties have mutually recognized each other as strategic partners, committing to promote common development and achieve mutual benefit and win-win results through their business collaboration. The partnership is expected to open new avenues for Chinese agricultural machinery manufacturers, technology providers, and agribusiness firms to explore Pakistan's growing market, while also providing local farmers and enterprises with access to cutting-edge innovations and expertise. The Pakistan-China B2B Investment Conference was organized by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination in collaboration with other relevant authorities. The conference focused on strengthening industrial cooperation and promoting investment across multiple sectors, with healthcare, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology in particular. Representing Eventex, Haider Ali highlighted the irreplaceable role of Pak-China cooperation in advancing the agricultural development process in Pakistan, noting that Chinese innovation and expertise have become vital drivers for modernizing the farming sector in the country. "The Pakistan Agro Show provides an ideal platform for international investors and technology partners to connect with local stakeholders," Ali added. "Through this MoU with Songshi, we aim to bridge Chinese excellence with Pakistani agricultural needs, creating sustainable value for both sides."

Monsoon rains trigger NDMA flood alert till July 24

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Tuesday issued a nationwide alert warning of flash floods, urban flooding, landslides and rising river flows across several parts of Pakistan from July 21 to 24, directing provincial and district authorities to remain on high alert, deploy emergency teams and ensure preventive measures in vulnerable areas amid forecasts of heavy monsoon rains. The NDMA warned of flash floods in rivers, local streams and mountain waterways in Gilgit Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and northeastern Balochistan. In Gilgit Baltistan, districts of Hunza, Shigar and Ghanche face the risk of flash floods in the Shimshal, Hunza, Chapursan, Kilik, Shigar, Shyok and Hushe rivers. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, water levels are expected to rise dangerously in the Jhelum, Neelum, Poonch and Mahl rivers, as well as in Betar and Bhimber nullahs, Kanshi River and tributaries of the Jhelum and Poonch rivers. The NDMA said flash floods may occur in the Chitral, Kabul, Swat and Panjkora rivers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Local streams in Khyber, Kurram, Orakzai, Kohat, Bannu, Karak, Hangu, Lakki Marwat, North and South Waziristan, Bajaur, Mohmand, Mansehra, Buner and Swabi are also at risk of flooding. In Punjab, hill torrents in Dera Ghazi Khan, the Soan River and the Potohar region may witness high water flows. Flooding is also expected in rivers and seasonal streams of northeastern Balochistan. The NDMA forecast high-level flooding at Marala on the Chenab River and in the upper reaches of Mangla on the Jhelum River. Water levels may also rise suddenly in the Dora, Dota, Dwara, Bhimber, Halsi, Aik, Plakho, Bein, Basantar, Dek and Sukhi nullahs. It warned that additional water releases from India's Thein, Pong and Bhakra dams could increase flows in the Ravi and Sutlej rivers. Urban flooding is feared in low-lying areas of Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Khushab, Sialkot, Gujrat, Narowal, Lahore, Okara, Chakwal and Attock. The NDMA has directed district administrations to continuously monitor rivers and streams, pre-position rescue teams and implement precautionary measures in sensitive areas. The authority urged people to avoid crossing rivers, streams and flood channels during periods of strong water flow and to strictly follow safety advisories. Separately, the NDMA has issued a landslide alert for Chitral and various mountainous areas of Gilgit-Baltistan from July 21 to 23. The alert covers Zangram to Ayun, Bamburet, Drosh to Lowi, Hindur to Barkult, Qarghali, Upper Yasin, Badswat to Bellahans, Puriyan Sar, Shamsabad, Ultar to Shispar, Karimabad to Altit, Hopper Nagar, Rama to Astore, Tarishing to Rupal and the Jaglot Skardu Road between RD 20 and RD 80, where landslides, falling rocks and debris flows may disrupt traffic. The NDMA has advised the public to avoid unnecessary travel to vulnerable and mountainous areas during the forecast period.—DNA

Briefs

FIA starts
visa scam
probe

ISLAMABAD: Pursuant to the special directives of Director General Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Usman Anwar, the Anti-Human Trafficking Circle (AHTC) Rawalpindi conducted an Khuli Kacheri to crack down on visa fraud agents and ensure prompt redressal of public grievances. During the session, ten complainants, including a woman, appeared directly before the Deputy Director AHTC to submit their applications and evidence against fraudulent visa agents. The Deputy Director listened to the applicants individually and ordered an immediate verification and scrutiny of all cases on the spot. Responding to an query by the APP, an FIA spokesperson stated that all complaints and supporting evidence related to visa fraud undergo an initial verification process. Upon authentication, the complaints are formally converted into regular inquiries. The designated inquiry officer is required to complete the investigation within a stipulated timeframe and present findings before the FIA Zonal Board. After evaluating the recommendations, the Zonal Board approves legal proceedings, including the registration of a First Information Report (FIR) against the nominated agents. The spokesperson emphasized that resolving public grievances and eliminating the visa mafia remain top priorities for the agency. In line with DG FIA Usman Anwar's directives, the entire procedure has been made fully transparent and expedited to deliver swift justice to citizens.—APP

ANF seizes
42.7 kg of
drugs

RAWALPINDI: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) on Tuesday conducted four operations in different parts of the country and arrested three suspects, including a woman, recovering 42.7 kilograms(kgs) of narcotics worth more than Rs 8.2 million According to an ANF spokesperson, the operations targeted both international drug trafficking and domestic narcotics smuggling networks. In an international drug interdiction operation at Islamabad International Airport, ANF recovered 42,000 ecstasy tablets weighing 5.6 kgs from the luggage of a passenger travelling to Riyadh. In a domestic operation near GT Road in Dina, Jhelum district, officials recovered 19.1 kgs of ice concealed in six carton rolls and arrested the suspect. In another raid near Faisalabad, ANF seized 12 kgs of hashish, two pistols, four magazines and 33 rounds of ammunition from a house and arrested a woman. In a separate operation near Hayatabad, Peshawar, officials recovered six kgs of hashish from a motorcycle. Cases have been registered under the Control of Narcotic Substances Act (CNSA), 1997, while further investigations are underway.—APP

SC Shariat
Appellate
Bench rejects
convict's
appeal

ISLAMABAD: The Shariat Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court has rejected an appeal against the death sentence of a convict involved in the rape and murder of an 11-year-old girl in Karachi's Landhi area, while upholding the verdicts of the trial court and the High Court. A five-member Shariat Appellate Bench, headed by Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, heard the appeal. During the proceedings, the counsel for the convict argued that neither was his client's DNA test conducted nor were his fingerprints collected. Justice Shahzad Ahmed Malik remarked that an 11-year-old girl was subjected to rape and subsequently murdered. He prosecution counsel informed the court that the convict was a friend of the victim's father. Upon this, Justice Shahzad Ahmed Malik remarked that the culprit probably thought no one would ever suspect him.—APP



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people boarding an electric bus at Kana Pul.

Federal non-formal education strategy

Education
emergency govt's
top priority

Mr. Yusuke Shinozaki, Chief Representative of JICA Pakistan office, praised the Pakistani government's efforts and assured that Japan would continue its technical and financial support for the implementation of Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALP) and professional teacher training to ensure quality education reaches marginalized communities

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE), in collaboration with the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), has officially launched the "Annual Statistical Report 2024-25" and the "Federal Non-Formal Education (NFE) Strategy 2025" here on Tuesday aimed at reintegrating out-of-school children into the educational fold. According to the report, 34,256 teachers are currently educating 1,238,573 children across 30,543 non-formal centers established nationwide. Notably, the appointment of 83% to 86% female teachers has successfully resulted in girls' enrollment reaching 55%. These centers also benefit 15,747 refugees and over 11,774 minority children. Statistically, 97% of these non-formal educational institutions are dedicated to primary education, three

percent to middle and middle-tech, and one percent to adult literacy. Sharing his remarks as Chief Guest at the report launching ceremony, Nadeem Mehboob, Federal Secretary Ministry Education and professional training emphasized that following the declaration of a "National Education Emergency," the government's top priority was to bring 25.3 million out-of-school children back into the educational mainstream. He added that the new strategy created a unified system providing modern technical skills from primary to matriculation levels, enabling these children to contribute actively to national economic growth. Dr. Zaigham Qadeer Director General PIE, lauded the pivotal role of female teachers and clarified that a comprehensive record of every child's pro-

gress would be maintained through digital monitoring and an advanced data system (NFEMIS) to facilitate better future policy-making. Meanwhile, Mr. Yusuke Shinozaki, Chief Representative of JICA Pakistan office, praised the Pakistani government's efforts and assured that Japan would continue its technical and financial support for the implementation of Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALP) and professional teacher training to ensure quality education reaches marginalized communities. According to provincial data from the report, Punjab leads with 20,610 centers and 678,751 students, supported by 17,750 female teachers and 504 minority students. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has 352,535 students across 5,026 centers, where the female enrollment rate stands at 60% and 11,537 refugee

children are receiving an education. In Sindh, 58,411 students are enrolled in 1,152 centers, including 8,498 Hindu and 269 Christian children, with a 63% female teacher ratio. Balochistan's 751 centers cater to 38,115 students, including 2,012 refugees and 54 children from the Hindu community. The "Federal Non-Formal Education Strategy 2025," prepared by the Ministry of Education, introduces various educational frameworks from primary to matriculation, including 18-month 'Middle-Tech' and 'Matric-Tech' courses in collaboration with NAVTTC. To maintain strict educational standards, the strategy proposes digital monitoring, hybrid learning modes, and the conduct of terminal assessments twice a year under the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) to ensure the educational continuity of these children.—DNA

NJPMC approves national
judicial reform framework

The committee also decided that the Secretariat of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP), in coordination with the Ministry of Law and Justice, would establish a dedicated cell to map reforms under the framework and present its progress at the next NJPMC meeting scheduled for October 8, 2026

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee (NJPMC) on Tuesday approved, in principle, a National Judicial Reform Framework aligned with the World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index to introduce evidence-based reforms aimed at strengthening accessibility, transparency and predictability in Pakistan's judicial system through measurable performance standards, internationally recognised benchmarks and continuous performance evaluation. The decision was taken at the 61st meeting of the NJPMC, chaired by the Chief Justice of Pakistan at the Supreme Court. The meeting was attended by the chief justices of the high courts, while the federal minister for law and justice and the law secretary participated on special invitation. Representatives of the Pakistan Bar Council and the Supreme Court Bar Association also attended to ensure an inclusive policy-making process. The committee resolved that the

high courts may adopt the National Judicial Reform Framework along with the Self-Assessment Checklist of the International Framework for Court Excellence (IFCE), with necessary modifications. It directed the high courts to establish institutional mechanisms for periodic assessment and submit quarterly reports on reform progress. The committee also decided that the Secretariat of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP), in coordination with the Ministry of Law and Justice, would establish a dedicated cell to map reforms under the framework and present its progress at the next NJPMC meeting scheduled for October 8, 2026. The LJCP Secretariat was further tasked with identifying and validating appropriate rule of law indicators, in consultation with the high courts and other justice sector institutions, for phased integration into the National Judicial Analytics Dashboard (NJAD). In collaboration with the National Information Technology Board (NITB), it will also develop a technology platform for periodic progress reports, coordinate capacity-build-

ing initiatives and conduct annual assessments of Pakistan's performance in the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index. The committee observed that judicial reforms should increasingly be driven by objective data, measurable outcomes and internationally accepted standards to strengthen institutional performance, improve public confidence and ensure better delivery of justice. The meeting also reviewed progress on the federal government's proposed Commission on Enforced Disappearances. The federal law minister informed the committee that former Supreme Court judges were being considered to head the commission and said its composition and terms of reference would be finalised soon. The committee appreciated the progress and stressed strict compliance with legal requirements for producing detained persons before competent courts within the prescribed time. The meeting concluded with the committee reaffirming its commitment to sustained judicial reforms, stronger institutional coordination and improved access to justice through innovation, evidence-based governance and technology-enabled service delivery.

March train crashes
probe finalized

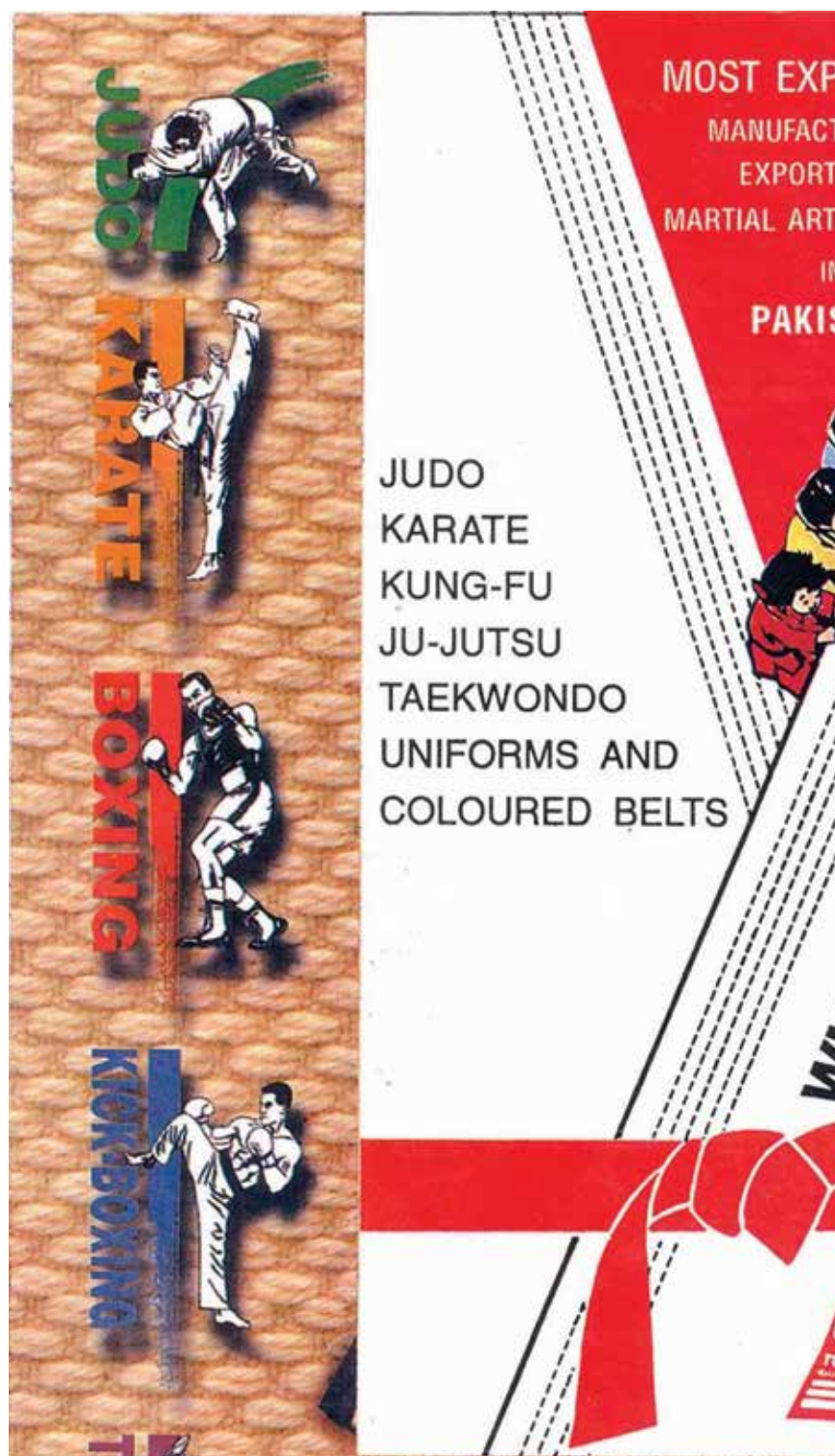
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has finalized the inquiry reports into two major train accidents that occurred in March 2026, presenting the findings before the National Assembly Standing Committee on Railways. The report attributes the mishaps to a combination of human error and technical failures, leading to immediate departmental action against nine employees. According to the data, a total of 135 train accidents were recorded across the country over a one-year period, with defective tracks remaining the leading cause behind 34 incidents, while 35% of the total mishaps occurred at unmanned railway crossings. The probe revealed that the collision between the Shalimar Express and a freight train at Mehrabpur was caused by gross driver negligence. The driver overshot a stop signal and failed to control the brakes in time, ramming into a stationary cargo train on the loop line, which resulted in the death of one railway employee and derailed several coaches. Railway authorities have held driver Fayyaz Muhammad, assistant driver Asif Saeed, senior train examiners Asif Hussain and Valiullah Khan, and head train examiner Imran Nisar directly responsible, while Station Master Asadullah was found indirectly negligent. Meanwhile, the second major accident involving the Tezgam Express on the Lodhran-Bahawalpur section resulted from negligent technical monitoring, where a fault in the dining car's front trolley caused eight coaches to derail, injuring multiple passengers. For lapses in fitness inspection, disciplinary action has been launched against TXR Saqib Ghafoor and TXR Minhas Anwar for direct negligence, and Head TXR Imran Sharif for indirect oversight. According to Chairman Pakistan Railways Mazhar Ali Shah, around 35,000 to 38,000 trains operate annually, keeping the overall accident rate at a low 0.02%, and the administration continues to maintain infrastructure using its existing workforce despite limited resources. Elaborating on the annual statistics, he noted that apart from the 34 track defects and 35% unmanned crossing incidents, staff negligence accounted for 32 accidents, rolling stock defects caused 30, and acts of sabotage resulted in 10, while the remaining incidents were triggered by natural disasters and miscellaneous factors. The railway administration assured the committee that emergency measures are being actively implemented to curb these occurrences.—DNA

WASA on high
alert

RAWALPINDI: The Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Rawalpindi has remained on high alert as intermittent monsoon rain continued in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, with field staff and heavy machinery deployed in low-lying areas to ensure smooth drainage. Managing Director WASA Rawalpindi Azizullah Khan said heavy machinery had been stationed at vulnerable locations, including Liaquat Bagh, Committee Chowk Underpass, Murree Road and Sadiqabad, to respond promptly to any rain-related emergency. He said the flow of water in Nullah Lai was being monitored continuously and remained normal. According to the latest rainfall data, 64 millimeters(mm) of rain was recorded in Saidpur, 32 mm in Golra, 29 mm in Bokra, 33 mm at the Pakistan Meteorological Department, 34 mm in Shamsabad, 21 mm in Katcheri, 26 mm in Pirwadhai, 25 mm in Gawalmandi and 33 mm in New Katarian. The MD appealed to citizens not to dispose of garbage in drains and sewers or remove manhole covers, as such practices could obstruct the drainage system and create hazardous conditions. He also urged the public to contact the WASA helpline immediately in case of any emergency.—APP

FCCP nullifies
administrative
order

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court has ruled that final decisions rendered by competent authorities under the Land Reforms Regulation of 1972 cannot be reopened decades later through an administrative order. Declaring the Federal Land Commission Chairman's August 22, 1996 order—issued after a lapse of 24 years—illegal, the court clarified that land restored on the basis of legally finalized decisions cannot be taken back from its original owners. A two-member bench of the apex court, headed by Chief Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan, accepted the civil appeals while setting aside the August 22, 1996 order of the Federal Land Commission Chairman, the Lahore High Court's ruling, and the subsequent mutation. In a detailed 25-page judgment authored by Chief Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan, the court noted that the decisions issued by the Deputy Land Commissioner and the Land Commissioner in 1972 were never challenged before any higher legal forum. Consequently, they had attained finality, leaving no legal justification to reopen or alter them.—APP



The Battle of Ideas and Pakistan’s Future



DR. MUHAMMAD AKRAM ZAHEER

POLITICS is often understood through elections, governments and the exercise of state power. Yet history repeatedly demonstrates that lasting authority is not secured by laws alone. Nations rise and decline not merely because of military strength or economic resources, but because of the ideas that shape public attitudes and define what people accept as natural, legitimate and desirable. It was this deeper dimension of power that the Italian political thinker Antonio Gramsci sought to explain through his influential concept of cultural hegemony. Writing during the early twentieth century, Gramsci challenged the conventional belief that governments rule primarily through force. He argued that durable political authority depends on consent as much as coercion. Every society develops institutions that influence the beliefs, values and habits of its citizens. Schools, universities, families, religious institutions, newspapers, literature, television and, in today’s world, digital platforms all contribute to shaping public opinion. When these institutions reinforce a shared understanding of society, governments enjoy stability because citizens come to regard the existing order as both legitimate and inevitable. Gramsci described this process as cultural hegemony. The dominant groups in society retain influence not simply because they possess economic or political power, but because they are able to define the prevailing ideas, values and assumptions that become widely accepted. Power, therefore, operates through persuasion as much as through authority. This insight remains remarkably relevant in the twenty-first century. Countries now compete not only through military capability or economic performance but also through information, narratives and public diplomacy. The struggle over ideas has become a defining feature of international politics. Nations invest heavily in education, media, cultural exchanges, scientific research and technological innovation because they recognise that influence begins long before negotiations or conflicts arise. Pakistan’s experience illustrates the importance of this lesson. Since independence, the country has often devoted considerable attention to immediate political crises while paying comparatively less attention to the institutions responsible for shaping long-term national thinking. Frequent policy shifts, changes of government and competing political narratives have weakened the development of a coherent national vision. Education is perhaps the most obvious example. Successive governments have introduced reforms, yet disparities in curriculum, standards and access continue to divide society. Public schools, private institutions and religious seminaries frequently produce graduates with different intellectual foundations and contrasting understandings of citizenship. Such divisions make it difficult to cultivate a common civic culture capable of supporting democratic stability and national cohesion.

IslamabadPOST

Pakistan’s First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 06 Issue: 340
Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com
Phone: 051-8488394

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



Xi Jinping’s Vision and the China–Pakistan Journey of 75 Years—Part II

Qamar Bashir



China’s digital economy makes this transformation visible in everyday life. Mobile payments allow vendors and rural businesses to participate in modern commerce, while e-commerce, cloud computing, artificial intelligence and automated logistics connect producers with consumers nationwide. In 2026, integrated-circuit production reportedly approached 280 billion units in the first half of the year, while Chinese companies competed in generative AI, robotics, autonomous mobility and smart manufacturing. During my 2024 visit, I saw digital technology...

ONE defining feature of President Xi Jinping’s leadership has been his emphasis on discipline, merit and accountability. Soon after taking office in 2012, he launched an anti-corruption campaign targeting both senior “tigers” and junior “flies.” Millions of officials have since been investigated or disciplined, reinforcing the principle that public office is a public trust. This resolve reflects a central warning in Xi Jinping: The Governance of China: “We must uphold the principle that all are equal before discipline, that there are no privileges in observing discipline, and that no one is immune from its enforcement.” For Xi, effective governance must ultimately improve people’s lives. Development is therefore measured not only by economic growth but also by better public services, education, healthcare, environmental protection and social stability. China’s ability to pursue these goals over decades reflects the policy continuity described throughout The Governance of China. As Xi declared on assuming the country’s leadership, “The people’s wish for a happy life is our mission.” China’s infrastructure revolution demonstrates this long-term approach. By the end of 2024, its railway system extended 162,000 kilometres, including 48,000 kilometres of high-speed rail—the world’s largest network. China also had 5.49 million kilometres of roads, including 190,000 kilometres of expressways; 263 transport airports; 129,000 kilometres of navigable waterways; and 22,219 productive port berths. These networks have reduced travel times, lowered logistics costs, integrated inland and coastal markets and supported national modernization. They embody Xi’s instruction in The Governance of China to “promote coordinated development and foster synergy,” turning connectivity into shared economic opportunity. My visit to Fujian Province in 2012 offered an early glimpse of this transformation. Roads linked industrial parks with ports, universities worked with research centres, and efficient public services coexisted with clean, carefully planned cities. What impressed me most was not any single project, but the integration of transport, industry, education, technology and the environment within a strategy measured in decades. It reflected Xi’s insistence that “strategic issues are fundamental to the success of a political party and a country,” and that long-term goals must be pursued with consistency. China’s manufacturing sector has similarly advanced from low-cost assembly to sophisticated industrial production. By 2025, manufacturing generated about US\$4.82 trillion in value added—roughly one-quarter of national GDP—while China produced nearly one-third of global manufacturing output. Its factories now make electric vehicles, batteries, solar panels, high-speed trains, telecommunications equipment, robots, medical devices and aerospace components. In 2026, high-technology manufacturing was growing by more than 13 percent and equipment manufactur-

ing by about 8.7 percent. This ascent up the value chain reflects Xi’s conviction in The Governance of China that “innovation is the primary driving force for development.” Scientific research supplies the foundation for this industrial upgrading. By 2026, China’s R&D spending had reached about 2.8 percent of GDP and, when adjusted for purchasing power, was estimated at more than US\$1.1 trillion. China led the Nature Index in high-quality research output, while the Chinese Academy of Sciences ranked among the world’s foremost research institutions. Facilities such as the FAST radio telescope, EAST fusion reactor and advanced quantum laboratories illustrate the scale of investment. As Xi states, “Science and technology are our primary productive force, talent is our primary resource, and innovation is our primary driver of growth.” China’s digital economy makes this transformation visible in everyday life. Mobile payments allow vendors and rural businesses to participate in modern commerce, while e-commerce, cloud computing, artificial intelligence and automated logistics connect producers with consumers nationwide. In 2026, integrated-circuit production reportedly approached 280 billion units in the first half of the year, while Chinese companies competed in generative AI, robotics, autonomous mobility and smart manufacturing. During my 2024 visit, I saw digital technology woven seamlessly into transport, banking, retail, tourism and public services. This is the practical expression of Xi’s call to “accelerate the building of a digital economy, a digital society and a digital government.” Environmental protection has become another pillar of China’s development strategy. After decades of industrialization caused serious pollution, ecological conservation moved to the centre of national policy. The Ecological and Environmental Code, adopted in March 2026, consolidated rules on pollution, biodiversity, conservation and climate action. The 15th Five-Year Plan targets a 17 percent reduction in carbon intensity by 2030, alongside continued progress toward peaking emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060. This policy is rooted in Xi’s best-known ecological principle in The Governance of China: “Lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets.” China is now the world’s largest renewable-energy investor and leading manufacturer of solar panels, wind turbines, electric vehicles and batteries. By May 2026, its installed generating capacity had reached 4.01 terawatts, with renewables accounting for about 61 percent. Solar capacity exceeded 1,240 gigawatts and wind approached 660 gigawatts, supported by ultra-high-voltage transmission, smart grids and expanding battery storage. Electric buses, metro networks and new-energy vehicles have also transformed urban transport. During my 2024 visit, I was impressed by the cleaner air, widespread electric vehicles and integration of green spaces into cities. These achieve-

ments answer Xi’s call to “accelerate the formation of green development models and green ways of life.” China’s ecological commitment extends beyond energy. Afforestation, desertification control, river and wetland restoration, water conservation, soil rehabilitation and industrial pollution control have become integral to modernization. China nevertheless remains the world’s largest carbon emitter and still depends heavily on coal, making the transition incomplete. Yet its scale of renewable deployment and ecological restoration shows how planning, investment and technology can reconcile growth with sustainability. In Xi’s words, “Protecting the environment is protecting productivity, and improving the environment is boosting productivity.” China’s experience also demonstrates the strategic value of investing in people. By 2026, it operated the world’s largest education system, with about 470,000 institutions, 286 million students and 18.7 million full-time teachers. More than 48.5 million students attended over 3,160 higher-education institutions, while vocational colleges supplied much of the skilled workforce required by industry. Universities have increasingly introduced programmes in AI, robotics, intelligent manufacturing and advanced materials. This emphasis follows Xi’s directive: “We must give high priority to the development of education, build China’s self-reliance and strength in science and technology, and rely on talent to pioneer and propel development.” For developing countries—especially Pakistan—China offers practical lessons. Sustainable progress requires more than money or isolated projects: it demands visionary leadership, institutional continuity, quality education, vocational skills, technological innovation and disciplined execution. Pakistan’s youthful population can become an economic asset only if equipped with relevant skills and opportunities, while national priorities must survive changes of government and be judged by measurable outcomes. This is the essence of the people-centred modernization presented in The Governance of China: “Development is for the people, by the people, and its fruits are shared by the people.” China’s experience shows that when leadership, institutions and human capability move toward a common national purpose, transformation on an extraordinary scale becomes possible.

– Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister,
Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former Press Attaché to Malaysia
Former MD, SRBC | Michigan, USA
(To be continued in Part III: The Belt and Road Initiative, CPEC, China’s Global Vision, and the Future of the China–Pakistan Partnership.)

Rise, Reign and Reminder

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Their rivalry has enriched football immeasurably. Ronaldo’s raw power and longevity give him the edge in total goals and appearances, while Messi frequently surpasses in efficiency, dribbles completed, and sheer creative impact. In big moments and knockout ties, both have delivered memories that will endure for generations

IN this boundless universe, every rise save that of Almighty Allah, the Most High, carries within it the seed of its own fall. This profound truth, as old as creation itself, has once more been revealed to the watching eyes of humanity during the recently concluded Football World Cup. The planet’s finest talents converged upon the grand stage, their skills dazzling millions and earning fervent admiration from supporters across every continent. Among them all, two luminous figures stood pre-eminent; Cristiano Ronaldo of Portugal and Lionel Messi of Argentina. For more than fifteen years these extraordinary athletes have reigned supreme, their legendary rivalry illuminating the beautiful game with unmatched brilliance. Both had scaled the loftiest peaks of sporting glory, yet both departed their final matches in this tournament with eyes dimmed by sorrow and hearts burdened by the sting of defeat. Cristiano Ronaldo, born in 1985, and Lionel Messi, born in 1987, represent the pinnacle of modern football. Ronaldo embodies athletic perfection—explosive pace, powerful heading, deadly accuracy from penalties and distance, and a versatility that allowed him to conquer multiple leagues with distinction. His career spans Sporting CP, two spells at Manchester United, glorious years at Real Madrid, Juventus, and now Al-Nassr, where he continues to defy time. With well over 1,300 senior appearances and nearly 970 official goals, he stands as the all-time leading scorer in men’s football history. His record of 146 international goals for Portugal and 140 in the Champions League underscores a hunger for victory that few have matched. Messi, meanwhile, enchants with an almost otherworldly mastery of the ball. His close control, visionary passing, free-kick artistry, and ability

to orchestrate play from deep positions have produced over 910 senior goals and a staggering tally of assists, often leading creative statistics even in the twilight of his career. Primarily loyal to Barcelona before moves to PSG and Inter Miami, he has dominated wherever he has played. Both men have graced six World Cups between 2006 and 2026. Ronaldo scored in every single tournament—a singular achievement—netting eleven goals across his appearances and guiding Portugal to a best finish of fourth place in 2006. In 2026, Portugal reached the round of sixteen before falling to Spain; Ronaldo contributed three goals in what proved his farewell to the global stage. Messi’s World Cup story gleams even brighter in its culmination. With twenty-one goals, the highest total in the competition’s history, and numerous assists, he inspired Argentina to triumph in 2022. In 2026, the Albiceleste fought their way to the final once more, only to suffer a narrow 1-0 defeat to Spain after extra time. Messi’s eight goals in that campaign, crowned by a hat-trick, added fresh chapters to his record of thirty-plus appearances and indelible influence. Their rivalry has enriched football immeasurably. Ronaldo’s raw power and longevity give him the edge in total goals and appearances, while Messi frequently surpasses in efficiency, dribbles completed, and sheer creative impact. In big moments and knockout ties, both have delivered memories that will endure for generations. Yet beyond the statistics lies something deeper. Ronaldo has long been the more open and engaging with fans and the public—his warmth, ready smile, and visible affection winning him a special place in the collective heart. Messi, more reserved and introspective, allows his sublime talent to speak for him. In victory and in adversity alike, Ronaldo’s softened manner

at the height of his fame reveals a truth often overlooked; true greatness is measured not only by trophies but by humility and love for one’s fellow man. Fortune has smiled upon both off the pitch as well. Through prodigious salaries, lifetime endorsement deals with Nike and Adidas, and successful business ventures, each stands among the wealthiest in their profession. Ronaldo’s net worth approaches 1.4 billion dollars, bolstered by the expansive CR7 brand—luxury hotels such as the Pestana CR7, gyms, fashion lines, fragrances, and more—alongside a fleet of supercars, private jet, and one of the richest club contracts ever signed. Messi’s fortune, estimated near 1.1 billion, includes the MiM Hotels, his beverage brand, retail stores, substantial real estate holdings in Barcelona and Miami, and equity in Inter Miami. Their philanthropy matches their success. Ronaldo has given millions to hospitals during the pandemic, cancer centres, children’s surgery, and disaster victims, often donating blood and auctioning personal items. Messi’s foundation focuses on education and opportunity for underprivileged youth, while he too has supported hospitals, UNICEF initiatives, and humanitarian causes in Argentina and beyond. Both have quietly and publicly channelled tens of millions toward uplifting others. As the curtain falls on another World Cup, Ronaldo and Messi depart the international arena not as diminished men, but as titans whose rises illuminated an era. Their final defeats remind us that earthly crowns are transient. In Ronaldo especially, whose open heart and gracious bearing endeared him even at the summit of his powers, we see the grace that endures beyond victory. In this universe, all must one day descend—yet the memory of such spirits, and the lessons they impart, linger long after the final whistle.

Briefs

PM Shehbaz
urges
Iran-US de-
escalation

FROM PAGE 01
safeguard regional security and mutual prosperity, the statement concluded. Momeni arrived in Islamabad on Monday on an official visit, accompanied by a high-level delegation for talks with Pakistan's civilian and military leadership. His visit comes amid renewed tensions in the Gulf region, with Iran and the United States facing a fresh standoff over the Strait of Hormuz, raising concerns about the future of an interim agreement reached between the two sides. Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson had signalled on Monday that diplomatic exchanges with the United States via mediators were ongoing despite US military strikes on the country. Pakistan said last week it would encourage the warring nations to stop violence and resume talks under a memorandum of understanding (MoU) it helped mediate last month.

AJK EC
announces
polls...

FROM PAGE 01
against 33 constituencies within the territory of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, while as many as 218 candidates have filed their nomination papers against 12 Kashmiri refugee seats. According to AJK Election Commission, the scrutiny process in 45 constituencies have been completed, and the body has rejected 41 nomination papers on legal grounds. A total of 6,983 polling stations and 10,913 polling booths will be set up for 3,804,368 voters to elect representatives for 33 Azad Kashmir region seats and 12 migrant seats. Of these, 3,365,685 voters will exercise their right to vote at 5,926 polling stations in AJK. Of the total voters in AJK, 52 per cent are male, and 48 per cent are female. A total of 22 political parties are participating in the elections. Imran Khan-founded Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has boycotted the polls in solidarity with the ongoing protests in the region.

'Will ask PM
Shehbaz to
make...

FROM PAGE 01
Addressing party workers, Nawaz said it had been a long time since he last met the people of the region. "Today, we are meeting after a very long time. I have remained away from you," he said. The former prime minister also questioned why a motorway had not been built between Kohala and Muzaffarabad. "For me, Azad Kashmir is just as dear as Punjab," he said, adding, "Azad Kashmir is my second home." Nawaz pledged to visit AJK every three months if his party won the elections, promising to personally review development work. "If you make the PML-N successful, I will personally come here every three months to review the progress of development work," he said. He urged voters to support the PML-N, saying the party would work to address the region's issues if elected.

Trump says
not finished
with Iran yet

FROM PAGE 01
"We'll be hitting that area pretty soon, and very heavily," Trump said, adding that he would not normally announce targets but "there's not a thing they can do about it." Trump estimated it would take Iran more than 20 years to rebuild from current damage, addressing reporters during a White House meeting with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun. "If we left right now, it would take Iran 20, 25 years to rebuild. Okay, and we're not finished at all...we're not leaving right now." Iran stepped up its strikes in the Middle East on Tuesday, two weeks after its war with the United States resumed, with Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain coming under attack.

Tearful end does not take
away from Messi's greatness

Messi is far from the only sporting legend since Ali to seemingly close out his career in a downbeat manner

DUBAI: The undisputed greatest of all time stood battered, bruised and badly beaten. The defeat added poignancy as it came at the hands of someone who had grown up idolizing him, and now, had all but ended his illustrious career. The date was Oct. 2, 1980, and the fight between Muhammad Ali and Larry Holmes, billed as "The Last Hurrah," had ended in a brutal defeat for the 38-year-old boxer, for whom the moniker GOAT was invented, after his corner saved him from a more savage beating by stopping the bout in the 10th round. An emotional Holmes, 30 at the time, and a former sparring partner and protege to Ali, cried in the ring as he was declared victor. Thankfully, only sporting parallels exist between the closing chapter of Ali's career and that of 39-year-old Lionel Messi after defeat in the World Cup final against Spain on Sunday. Whether Lamine Yamal felt a tinge of sadness for his childhood hero is not clear, but there was a clear element of the torch being passed as the two shared a warm embrace at the final whistle. The tears, eventually, came from Messi as he received the adoration of the Argentinian fans in the stands at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey. Messi is far from the only sporting legend since Ali to seemingly close out his career in a downbeat manner. Tennis fans will remember Roger Federer agonizingly giving up two championship points in the 2019 Wimbledon final against Novak Djokovic to eventually lose in five sets. He never won another Grand Slam. Perhaps the closest comparison to Messi's last dance came in 2006, when Zinedine Zidane, having won the World Cup eight years earlier with France, led his country to the final in Germany before losing to Italy. Infamously, the French captain was sent off late in extra time for headbutting Italy's Marco Materazzi after the two had exchanged words away from the action. Zidane then, and Messi this summer, had almost single-handedly dragged France and Argentina to an unexpected final years after their finest hours. What's more, both rolled back the years to deliver signa-



ture performances that many thought were beyond them at the start of their respective tournaments. The 34-year-old Zidane's virtuoso performance in the 1-0 quarterfinal win over a Brazil team boasting Ronaldo, Ronaldinho, Kaka, Roberto Carlos and Cafu has since gone down in World Cup folklore as one of the finest of all time. His efforts in a 3-1 win against Spain and in the final were not behind. Messi's performances at the 2026 World Cup arguably eclipse Zidane's 20 years ago. Clearly still the best player in a relent-

less but otherwise modestly gifted Argentine team, the man nicknamed La Pulga put on one masterclass after another to take reigning champions to a final many fans thought they barely deserved. For sheer resilience and willpower when all seemed lost, few can compare with his grab-a-match-by-the-scruff-of-the-neck performance in the 2-1 comeback win over England in the semifinal. In truth, Messi's heroics barely masked the glaring shortcomings of Argentina's class of 2026, culminating in the final when he was as helpless as those around him in stopping Spain's total, embarrassing dominance. If nothing else, Messi and company can have few, if any, complaints about a thoroughly humiliating loss. But unlike four years ago in Qatar, when Argentina and Messi rode a wave of goodwill and love on their way to a glorious triumph against France, this tournament will be remembered as the one in which the world turned on them. Thanks to a series of seemingly questionable refereeing decisions in wins over Algeria, Egypt, Switzerland, not to mention that shameful final performance, the backlash, particularly on social media, was savage. As ever, long-standing country, club and player rivalries added fuel to the fire, as did, not always fairly, geopolitical realities and assumptions. While it is a shame that Messi's international curtain call should echo the disappointments of Ali, Federer and Zidane, it should in no way detract from the fact that, to the last, he remained the greatest player on the planet, pulling off football miracles match after match. Not even his biggest critics, or haters, could claim that he had in any way overstayed his welcome. If anything, his latest flirtation with glory should, once the dust has settled and emotions calmed, be seen as one last proof of his unrivaled genius. From his explosion on the La Liga scene as a Barcelona teenager, through the majestic years under Pep Guardiola and Luis Enrique, to his late-career glory with Argentina, he was rarely anything less than simply breathtaking, producing football arguably beyond the capacity of even Pele, Diego Maradona, Zidane and the two Ronaldos. — APP

Spain stars lap up adulation of estimated
two million on World Cup parade

MADRID: New World Cup champions Spain enjoyed a vibrant night of celebrations after an open-top bus parade through the streets of Madrid on Monday in front of a jubilant crowd of an estimated two million people. The players enjoyed drinks on their procession under a blazing sun, along the main arteries in the city center where a sea of fans in red and yellow were waiting, before arriving at Cibeles square where they took to the stage and partied into the night. The squad and coach Luis de la Fuente were introduced one by one to the fans, each with their own choice of music that they sung along to, wearing "We are champions" shirts. "Spain" showed the world

what it is to work together, with one mind and one heart," said pop superstar Shakira in a video message played to the team and crowd. De la Fuente offered a similar message, hailing his players as the "best in the world" and telling fans not to forget that "together we are stronger." The players and staff posed for a photo before Rodri raised the trophy again, just as he had done on Sunday night after Spain beat Argentina 1-0 in extra-time in New Jersey to be crowned champions. After flying back from the United States to Madrid, the players were received by King Felipe VI and the royal family earlier Monday, and then Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, before kicking off

the parade. Players passed around the gleaming World Cup trophy and waved to their adoring supporters, some lining balconies, others on top of bus stops. Ferran Torres's strike in extra-time was enough to bring Spain their second World Cup, following a first victory in 2010. "You have shown your grit, your resilience and your courage... combining head and heart," the king told La Roja's stars, who were dressed in suits but changed to more casual clothing for their parade on a hot summer's day. "Kings of the world" ran the words on the front of their vehicle, with fans chanting "champions" to their heroes. Rodri held the World Cup trophy aloft at the top of the stairs as he descend-

ed from the Iberia plane that flew the team home after clinching their second star. The Manchester City midfielder said this was the crowning achievement of his career. "I've always said it, winning with your country is the most beautiful thing there is, above all a World Cup," said Rodri. "This generation grew up watching (Iker) Casillas and (Andres) Iniesta lift the cup and that we can do it today is the biggest thing you can do in football." Many younger supporters were not yet born when Iniesta's extra-time goal against the Netherlands secured Spain's first World Cup in South Africa 16 years ago. "I'm really happy about the second star" Spain has earned, "very joyful," said. — APP

Thousands welcome
home Argentina squad

EZEIZA, Argentina: Thousands of fans braved the cold and rain Monday to give a rapturous welcome to the Argentine football squad who landed back home without star Lionel Messi, after their World Cup final loss to Spain. It was not the homecoming Argentines had hoped for, four years after millions celebrated their team's tournament victory in 2022, but fresh scenes of joyful chaos filled the street as they danced, sang and set off fireworks to thank the players. The Argentine Football Association (AFA) said earlier that some squad members would not be on the flight, and iconic team captain Messi was not seen descending from the aircraft in images broadcast on local television. Coach Lionel Scaloni and the rest of the team were welcomed with a red carpet outside the aircraft and a military band. They then boarded a bus, waving to frenzied fans along the way. Despite falling short of a second straight championship, "Argentines will celebrate anyway," said housewife Marga Ledezma. The 36-year-old thanked Messi for "all the years he made us happy," urging him not to quit playing for Argentina, but admitting this would be difficult as he was 39. Argentina lost 1-0 to Spain in a game that has been criticized in international media for a plethora of fouls and displays of poor sportsmanship from the Albiceleste. "I think they criticize us because we know what it's like to suffer, that we get up, we fall down again, and we keep going," said Ledezma. — APP

With more matches, World
Cup shatters attendance
and TV records

DRIVEN by an enlarged 48-team format, the 2026 World Cup created a stadium attendance high while Fifa boss Gianni Infantino said that TV viewership broke the previous record "many, many times over". Speaking Friday, the president of world football's governing body acknowledged that the records had been boosted because "this is the largest World Cup in history by far, by many times, actually, welcoming 16 additional teams". But, he added, it "has exceeded all expectations". In its pre-event projections, Fifa, which folds World Cup income into revenue for the whole year, anticipated record revenues exceeding seven billion euros (8bn dollars) for 2026. That is a 56% increase compared to 2022 when the last World Cup was held in Qatar. Prior to the third-place play-off on Saturday and the final on Sunday, Fifa had already officially recorded over 6.6 million fans in stadiums across the host nations of the United States, Canada and Mexico. On Monday, after Spain beat Argentina to become world champions, media outlets calculated a total of 6.81 million spectators across the 104 matches, though no official figures were yet available from Fifa. The 5-million-spectator mark was surpassed during the round-of-32 match between France and Sweden. The previous ticket sales record was 3,587,538 in the United States in 1994. This time, stadiums were filled to a record 99.7% of capacity, despite rumbling controversy regarding high ticket prices. The average attendance was 65,351 per match. — APP

London
makes history
with first-ever
Nezabazi
competition

LONDON: The first-ever tent pegging competition was held in London, featuring more than 100 pedigree horses and riders from across the United Kingdom and Pakistan. Several Pakistani and Kashmiri Nezabazi groups travelled from Bradford, Birmingham, Manchester and other parts of the UK to participate in the historic event, which took place at a rugby ground in Acton. At least 16 leading riders travelled specially from Pakistan to compete — mainly from Jhelum, Multan and Pindi. The event was organised by British Pakistani entrepreneurs Khwaja Bilal Hassan and Ahsan Husain, who brought together a diverse group. — APP

Pakistan Celebrates
World Chess Day

The ceremony concluded with a cake-cutting to commemorate World Chess Day, with participants expressing their resolve to work collectively for the continued growth and success of chess in Pakistan

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Chess Federation of Pakistan (CFP) marked World Chess Day by reaffirming its commitment to promoting chess nationwide and nurturing the country's next generation of champions. President of the Chess Federation of Pakistan, Syed Zeeshan Naqvi, graced the ceremony as the chief guest while CFP Vice President Rehan Azam, federation officials, players and chess enthusiasts also attended the event. Speaking on the occasion, Syed Zeeshan Naqvi said the federation is taking practical and long-term steps to expand and strengthen chess at the grassroots and national levels. He said the record participation in the recently concluded National Chess Championship reflects the growing popularity of the game and will provide a major boost to chess in Pakistan. He added that the increasing interest among young players would create greater opportunities for emerging talent to compete and excel at both national and international levels. Naqvi reaffirmed the federation's commitment to organizing more tournaments, training programmes and development initiatives to nurture future champions and raise Pakistan's profile in the global chess community. The ceremony concluded with a cake-cutting to commemorate World Chess Day, with participants expressing their resolve to work collectively for the continued growth and success of chess in Pakistan.

Pakistan to face Sri Lanka in CAVA Volleyball opener

The opening day will feature three matches, with hosts Pakistan taking on Sri Lanka in the curtain-raiser, while Kazakhstan will face Nepal and Uzbekistan will meet Bangladesh

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will kick off its campaign against Sri Lanka in the Central Asian Volleyball Association (CAVA) Men's Volleyball Championships 2026 starting from today (Wednesday) the Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad following India's last-minute withdrawal from the tournament despite receiving comprehensive security assurances. Speaking to the media after the championship's trophy unveiling ceremony, Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) Chairman Chaudhry Mohammad Yaqoob expressed disappointment over India's decision to pull out of the event. "We are surprised by India's withdrawal after all necessary arrangements had been completed. At their request, the federation, in coordination with the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) and other relevant government departments, secured all required NOCs and comprehensive security guarantees to ensure the Indian team's safe participation in Islamabad," he said. Despite India's withdrawal, Yaqoob said the championship remains one of the biggest international volleyball events ever hosted

in Pakistan and reflects the country's growing stature as a safe and capable destination for international sports. Organised by the Pakistan Volleyball Federation under the auspices of the Central Asian Volleyball Association (CAVA), the championship will be held on 29 July, feature

teams from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan. The opening day will feature three matches, with hosts Pakistan taking on Sri Lanka in the curtain-raiser, while Kazakhstan will face Nepal and Uzbekistan will meet Bangladesh. The Pakistan Volleyball Fed-

eration has extended a warm welcome to all participating teams, officials and delegates, stating that comprehensive arrangements have been made to ensure the successful staging of the regional showpiece, which aims to promote volleyball, regional friendship and sporting excellence.

India
summons
Russian
diplomat

FROM PAGE 01
External Affairs, a statement from the ministry said on Tuesday. Ladanov was asked to convey India's strong concerns and told that the targeting of commercial shipping and the resulting loss of civilian lives was "unacceptable," the statement said. "Such attacks undermine the safety, security, and stability of international maritime commerce," the statement said. The Golden Leo is owned by Mumbai-based Ocean Grace Shipping Ltd, according to LSEG data. India has also lost seafarers in the Iran war, and protested to both the United States and Iran over the losses.

Indian
opposition
leader...

FROM PAGE 01
The developments come after police said 60 protesters were injured in clashes with security forces in the heart of New Delhi on Monday, marking the biggest street rally in the capital for about five years. Thousands of protesters had gathered to demand the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, following an appeal by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) online movement. Police fired tear gas and charged with batons at protesters, who responded by pelting stones. At least 118 police personnel were also injured, Delhi Police said of Monday's clashes. "After that, no self-respecting politician or citizen can stand aside." The CJP vowed to press on with its demands for Pradhan's removal as thousands of protesters remained camped at Delhi's Jantar Mantar protest site on Tuesday, many of them calling for changes to the wider education system. The CJP has won millions of followers on social media since its launch in May, fuelling one of the biggest challenges to Hindu-nationalist leader Modi since he won his third term in office in 2024. "We won't stop. Pradhan has to be sacked," CJP spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka said on social media. CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke urged protesters on Tuesday not to lose hope. "They want to break our spirit," he said, perched on top of a lorry. "Do not let them silence you." Protest organisers condemned the "high-handedness" of the authorities and said hundreds of protesters had been injured.

Iran targets
US military
assets in...

FROM PAGE 01
launched a new round of attacks against Iran late on Monday which it said were "designed to further degrade Iranian military capabilities used to attack commercial shipping" in the strait. It later said that it had completed the strikes during which US forces "struck Iranian military command centres, maritime capabilities, missile and drone launch sites, and air defence systems to degrade Iran's ability to continue attacking commercial vessels flowing through the Strait of Hormuz". "Commercial vessel transits through the vital international maritime corridor continue," it said. "American forces remain postured and prepared to hold Iran accountable for unwarranted aggression toward civilian mariners seeking to freely and openly transit the strait," it added. Hours after the first statement, the Iranian army said it had targeted US assets in Kuwait and Bahrain, including air defence systems, radar installations and administrative buildings. "With this radar sweep, the enemy should prepare for even more decisive and powerful waves of drone and missile attacks," the Guards said in a statement carried by state news agency IRNA. The Guards also said they targeted infrastructure belonging to US company Amazon in Bahrain. US President Donald Trump warned Monday that Iran would pay "many times over" for every American soldier killed, while Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said the conflict had become "a full-scale war".

Briefs

Pak, Xizang eye closer coop in climate action

BEIJING: Pakistan's Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Masood Malik, met with Xu Zhitao, Vice Chairman of Xizang Autonomous Region, on the sidelines of the 5th China-Xizang Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation, with both sides agreeing to expand collaboration in environmental protection and sustainable development. Welcoming the Pakistani delegation, the Vice Chairman briefed the minister on Xizang's history, economic progress, and cultural heritage, highlighting a development model built around ecological conservation. He noted that the region, home to 47 national parks, has witnessed remarkable socio-economic transformation in recent decades while keeping environmental protection at the heart of its development strategy. He also pointed to Xizang's cultural and religious diversity, including the historical presence of a small Muslim community of Kashmiri origin. Dr. Malik thanked his host for the warm hospitality and reaffirmed the Strategic Cooperative Partnership between Pakistan and China. He observed that Pakistan and Xizang shared similar mountain ecosystems and stood to gain significantly from knowledge-sharing and institutional partnerships, China Economic Net reported. The two sides discussed avenues for cooperation in climate change, scientific research, innovation, mountain ecosystem conservation, and biodiversity protection. They also noted the potential of traditional knowledge systems, observing that several medicinal practices associated with Tibetan medicine were familiar in Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan region, opening doors for academic and research collaboration. Dr. Malik expressed confidence that closer cooperation in climate action and scientific research would further deepen the enduring friendship between the two countries.—APP

Rupee gains 03 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 03 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.92, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 277.95. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 278.95 and Rs 279.15, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 0.50 paise and closed at Rs 317.49 from the previous day's closing of Rs 317.99, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paise and closed at Rs 1.70, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of Rs 0.88 and closed at Rs 373.53 compared to the previous day's Rs 374.41. The exchange rate of the Emirati Dirham declined by 01 paise, while the Saudi Riyal went up 01 paise, closing at Rs 75.67 and Rs 74.02, respectively.—APP

PSX posts modest gains, adds over 205 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a positive trend on Tuesday, gaining 205.83 points, a positive change of 0.12 percent, to close at 176,133.57 points against 175,927.74 points recorded on the previous trading day. During the session, the ready market recorded a trading volume of 1,003 billion shares with a traded value of Rs35,702 billion, compared to 675.921 million shares valuing Rs30,267 billion in the previous session. The market capitalization stood at Rs19,790 trillion, up from Rs19,763 trillion a day earlier. Out of 494 active companies in the ready market, 268 advanced, 191 declined, and 35 remained unchanged.—APP

Pak secures top global apparel role as Ijaz becomes IAF VP

Country's apparel exporters gain a global voice as first Pakistani elected to senior leadership of the International Apparel Federation

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan's value-added apparel industry has achieved a historic milestone as former Chairman of the Pakistan Ready-made Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PRGMEA), distinguished apparel industry leader and Sialkot's leading exporter Ijaz A. Khokhar has been elected Vice President of the International Apparel Federation (IAF). He is the first Pakistani apparel manufacturer and exporter to hold this prestigious global office in the federation's history, making the achievement a proud moment not only for Sialkot but for the entire country. IAF President Stefano Festa Marzotto announced Khokhar's nomination in recognition of his long association with the federation and his outstanding services to the global apparel industry. The nomination was unanimously endorsed and approved by the General Assembly. Marzotto praised Khokhar's valuable contributions to the promotion and development of the apparel sector. The landmark appointment has been widely welcomed by PRGMEA, textile and apparel associations, chambers of commerce and the wider business community. They described it



as a proud moment for Pakistan and expressed confidence that Khokhar's extensive international experience and deep understanding of global supply chains will strengthen Pakistan's voice in the international apparel community, open new opportunities for trade, investment, market access and global collaboration, and further enhance the coun-

try's image as a competitive and reliable sourcing destination. They also extended their heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for a successful tenure. Founded in 1972, the International Apparel Federation (IAF) is the world's leading and only global federation representing apparel manufacturers, national associations and allied industries. Its membership

spans more than 40 countries, representing over 100,000 companies employing more than 20 million people. The federation promotes international cooperation, sustainable supply chains, innovation, technology, global trade, knowledge sharing and harmonization of industry standards, while serving as the leading global voice of the apparel industry. Khokhar has maintained a long association with the IAF, previously serving as an Executive Board Member and Regional President. In these roles, he actively promoted stronger cooperation among apparel-producing countries and advocated greater representation for developing economies in global trade. A pioneer of Pakistan's martial arts garments industry, Khokhar heads Ashraf Industries (Pvt.) Ltd., Sialkot, a globally recognized manufacturer and exporter of martial arts uniforms since 1969. Under his leadership, the company has earned an outstanding international reputation for quality and innovation while successfully competing in global markets. Throughout his distinguished career, Khokhar has served multiple terms as Chairman of PRGMEA and currently serves as its Chief Coordinator. He is also a founding Executive Board Member of the Asian Apparel Federation (AAF),

a lifetime member of FPCCI and SAARC Chamber, and a Trustee of Sialkot Dry Port Trust. He has consistently promoted regional cooperation among Asia's major apparel-producing countries to strengthen Pakistan's apparel exports. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to Pakistan's economy and exports, Khokhar was awarded the Sitara-e-Imtiaz, one of Pakistan's highest civilian honours, in 2007. He also received the Businessman of the Year Gold Medal from the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Under his leadership, Ashraf Industries won the FPCCI Export Trophy for 25 consecutive years (1983-2008) as one of Pakistan's leading exporters of martial arts uniforms. Business leaders said Khokhar's election reflects not only his decades of visionary leadership and invaluable contribution to Pakistan's apparel sector but also the growing international recognition of the country's value-added textile industry, particularly Sialkot's SME sector. They expressed optimism that his new global role will strengthen Pakistan's presence in international policy discussions, promote sustainable growth, encourage investment and create greater opportunities for the country's apparel exporters in global markets.

Hundreds battle new mega-wildfire in Spain

MADRID: More than 600 firefighters and troops and 29 aircraft on Tuesday battled for a sixth day a huge wildfire north of Madrid that authorities said is one of the most difficult they have faced. Some 1,200 people have fled their homes and the flames have devastated 29,000 hectares (70,000 acres) of land in Guadalajara province about 100 kilometers (60 miles) north of the Spanish capital. Castilla-La Mancha regional president Emiliano Garcia-Page said firefighters had "practically stopped" the advance of the fire toward the town of Soria but that the inferno was still not under control. The fire started Thursday in an isolated forest and has since spread quickly across neighboring hills. Authorities say it has been difficult to control because there are few people in the area, a lot of abandoned scrub land, and a severe drought. Firefighters said that 34 isolated hamlets had been evacuated across Castilla-La Mancha. On top of 1,200 people ordered out of their homes, people in 14 other districts had been told to stay indoors away from the flames. Temperatures are rising again in Spain, which on July 9 saw a wildfire that killed 13 people.—APP

Israeli airstrike kills family of six in Gaza

CAIRO: An Israeli airstrike on Tuesday killed a father, his wife and their four children in Gaza City, while setting their home ablaze, health officials said. Medics said the Israeli strike on the family house in the Sabra neighborhood killed the man, Firas Al-Masri, his wife, Salsabeel, and their three daughters and son. The Israeli military confirmed the strike, saying its target was a Hamas militant and it was still looking into the result of the attack. 1:06 In separate strikes since Friday, the Israeli military said it had killed three militants from Hamas and Islamic Jihad, two of whom had taken part in the October 7, 2023 attack on Israel and had held Israeli hostages seized in the assault. The deaths swell a toll of more than 1,150 Palestinians, mostly civilians, killed by Israeli attacks since an October ceasefire between Israel and Hamas militants took effect, according to Gaza health officials. Hamas does not usually disclose its losses. The truce halted major fighting but has not stopped near-daily Israeli strikes. Israel says it is targeting militants. Four Israeli soldiers have been killed by militants in Gaza over the same period. The war began when Hamas-led fighters attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking about 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies. Israel's subsequent offensive has killed more than 73,000 Palestinians, say Gaza health officials. Nearly all of Gaza's 2 million people now live on a tiny strip of land along the coast, mainly in makeshift tents or damaged buildings, under Hamas control.—APP

UN refugee agency says 144 dead or missing off Mauritania

Arrivals of migrants and refugees to Europe by sea on the major routes are down by more than a third this year, with just over 40,000 arrivals compared with 65,407 in the first half of 2025, UN data showed

GENEVA: The UN refugee agency said on Tuesday that 144 people have been reported dead or missing off the coast of Mauritania in an effort to reach Europe. The toll comes after three rescue operations in Mauritania between July 14-18, the UN agency said, calling for more access to education and labor opportunities to create alternatives to dangerous sea crossings. A total of 143 people died on board a single vessel which left from Bafatou, Gambia, and was rescued on July 18 after 25 days stranded at sea. It was carrying bodies and 38 survivors, according to UNHCR which was present at disembarkation in Nouadhibou, Mauritania to provide support. "Among the survivors of all that ship were two children who have lost all their family members during the journey and they are recovering in hospital," spokesperson Matt Saltmarsh told a UN briefing in Geneva. He did not immediately have details on whether they drowned or died from hunger, thirst or some other cause. The victims were from sub-Saharan African countries, he said, without giving details. Another person was dead on arrival on another vessel that disembarked in Mauritania on July 14, UNHCR said. Overall, three rescue operations were conducted between July 14-18 in Mauritania and 387 people survived, the UN agency added. So far in 2026, 17 disembarkations have been recorded in Nouadhibou and Nouakchott, Mauritania, with 2,147 individuals rescued in total. Arrivals of migrants and refugees to Europe by sea on the major routes are down by more than a third this year, with just over 40,000 arrivals compared with 65,407 in the first half of 2025, UN data showed.—APP

WPF hails Pak's regional role, call for new global order

BEIJING: Speakers at the World Peace Forum (WPF) hosted by Tsinghua University praised Pakistan's proactive regional diplomacy, describing it as a source of peace, security and stability in the Middle East and South Asia, while Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed called for the emergence of a new global order led by the Global South. Delivering a keynote address at the forum, Senator Mushahid said the post-World War II Western-led rules-based order was "unraveling due to double standards" and no longer effectively promoted global peace and stability, Gwadar Pro reported. "The time has come for a new global order to emerge from the Global South since the post-World War-II Western-led rules-based order is unraveling due to double standards as it neither promoted order nor was based on any rules," he said. The forum's inaugural session was addressed by Chinese Vice President Han Zheng and attended by around 100 international participants from 30 countries. Speakers, including former foreign ministers of Indonesia and Serbia, commended Pakistan's diplomatic engagement, describing it as a constructive force for regional peace and stability. Highlighting Pakistan-China relations, Senator Mushahid said 2026 marked the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries, describing the relationship as a unique partnership between "Iron Brothers" that has evolved into a comprehensive strategic relationship. He also referred to the Strategic Work Plan for Pakistan-China relations (2026-2030), describing it as a roadmap for expanding bilateral cooperation across multiple sectors. Speaking about China's global role, the senator praised the country's peaceful development and described it as a major global power that has risen without aggression, invasion, occupation or colonisation. He further said China's technological progress had enhanced its international standing and credited Beijing's diplomacy with strengthening its role as a trusted actor in regional affairs. During his visit to China, Senator Mushahid also chaired a dialogue on "Xi Jinping Thought and Poverty Alleviation" in Ningxia at the invitation of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC). Addressing participants from Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America and North America, he commended China's poverty reduction achievements, noting that the country had lifted around 800 million people out of poverty over four decades and eliminated absolute poverty. On the sidelines of the visit, Senator Mushahid met Chinese Vice President Han Zheng and IDCPC Minister Liu Haixing to discuss bilateral cooperation and regional issues.—DNA

Mideast fighting increases energy concerns

PARIS: The head of the International Energy Agency said Tuesday that renewed fighting in the Mideast increases concerns over energy supplies but that the market still has cushions to absorb the impact. "The escalation in hostilities affecting the Strait of Hormuz and energy infrastructure in the region increases security of supply concerns and uncertainty over the market outlook," IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol said in a statement. "For the moment, crude oil markets continue to benefit from several cushioning factors," he added, pointing to increased exports from several countries and Saudi and United Arab Emirates oil reaching markets by alternative routes.—APP

S Africa's anti-migrant unrest sparks fear

JEFFREYS BAY, South Africa: Armored vehicles carried around 20 soldiers through a rundown area outside South Africa's normally calm seaside town of Jeffreys Bay, back up for police after an explosion of anti-migrant violence. Shots were fired during the unrest at Ocean View last week and three people were wounded, as the world-renowned surfing mecca became a new battleground for a nationwide xenophobic movement that has claimed several lives. Twenty-three small convenience stores run by foreign shopkeepers — a particular target for the campaign that accuses migrants of taking jobs from locals — were looted. "I could have died," said Zelalem Tesfaye, a 28-year-old Ethiopian, recalling how he escaped through a small back window as looters descended on his shop. The violence erupted after locals had gone house-to-house through the township to demand the expulsion of undocumented foreign nationals. Protesters alleged the gunfire came from men defending one of the migrant-owned "spaza shops," the small corner stores that are essential to township life. The shop owner denied the allegation and police said they were investigating. The wounded were among the protesters and looters. Protests against undocumented migrants have continued across South Africa even after an unofficial demand by fringe groups for them to

leave by June 30. At least four foreign nationals have been killed since late May, although some African countries claim a higher toll. More than 150,000 have left, according to an AFP tally based on official figures. Most were Malawians and Zimbabweans, and many departed through repatriation programs organized by their governments. "Some love, some don't" - "It could have been a bloodbath," said Ocean View pastor Alfred Jongile, accusing police of standing by as tensions built during the march and only intervening when the stealing began. "People were chased from the beach to the police station by other people with sticks," he said. The South African opened his Pentecostal Impact Church to migrants fleeing the violence, taking in 26. Weeks earlier he had sheltered hundreds of Malawians displaced by similar unrest elsewhere. Zimbabwean Benson Jere, who works for a fiber-installation company, lost everything that night. "Three people came to catch me at home," the 36-year-old told AFP at the shelter. "They told me that if I gave them money, they would tell the others they hadn't seen me." He handed over 60 rand (about \$3.65, 3.20 euros) and they told him to go to the beach, he said. When he slipped back two days later to the shack he rented for 400 rand a month, he said: "All my belongings were gone." "South African people: some have love, others don't. Some don't want what is happening now but they

are going to be told that they are standing with foreigners," he said. Standing inside his ransacked shop, Muse Ismail pointed to security gates pried open with crowbars. "I was told they were coming, so I left," said the 52-year-old Somali-born shopkeeper, who says he is a South African citizen. "It was not just a few people but the whole community." But the following day, his neighbors behaved as if everything was normal. "The next day they were greeting me, 'Hello Muse', as if nothing happened," he said. Police rounded up 69 people for the looting and unrest. Some 350 have been arrested nationwide for "unlawful conduct, intimidation, incitement and related offenses" as of July 8, according to government figures. But there have been no arrests for the shooting in Ocean View, leaving residents suspicious and fearful even if a precarious calm has returned. Many were angry that authorities had not identified those who had opened fire, said local politician Chris Mtyaleka, as claims persisted they came to protect the shopkeepers. "They're forcing our community to accept the people that are shooting our people here," he told AFP. Outside a nearby courthouse, a small group waved signs reading "Foreigners Out" under the watch of soldiers and an anti-riot truck. "There is no arrest because they want people now to be scared," said Mtyaleka. "They want to silence the people.—DNA

DNA
DIPLOMATIC NEWS AGENCY
Connecting Pakistan to the World

Credible News. Global Reach. Trusted by All.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

CREDIBLE & DEPENDABLE

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

WIDEST NETWORK

DIVERSE COVERAGE

A M Bhatti |
 @EditorDnanews
editor.dnanews@gmail.com | **dnanews.com.pk**

Briefs

**Pakistan
pays record
\$21.88/
mmBtu for
seventh spot
LNG cargo**

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has purchased its seventh spot LNG cargo since QatarEnergy declared force majeure in March, paying \$21.88 per MMBtu – the highest price since March 2026 – as prolonged supply disruptions linked to Strait of Hormuz tensions continue to force the country into the costly spot market. PLL received only one bid for the tender, submitted by TotalEnergies Gas and Power Limited. The bid, priced at \$21.88 per MMBtu, was found to be technically and commercially compliant and was subsequently accepted. On July 17, 2026, PLL had invited bids from international LNG suppliers for one spot cargo of 140,000 cubic metres (m³) for delivery during the July 27–28 window. The procurement marks Pakistan's seventh spot LNG cargo purchase since QatarEnergy declared force majeure earlier this year, highlighting the country's growing reliance on costly spot market imports amid prolonged disruptions in supplies under its long-term contract. With the latest award, TotalEnergies will supply Pakistan's seventh spot LNG cargo since March 2026. The procurement comes as the country continues to face supply shortages following QatarEnergy's force majeure declaration on March 4, 2026, after an attack on its flagship Ras Laffan LNG production complex. The disruption, linked to heightened tensions in the Strait of Hormuz, has since been extended until August, forcing Pakistan to procure spot LNG cargoes almost weekly to meet domestic gas demand.

**Monsoon
rains kill
12 in KP**

DNA

PESHAWAR: The ongoing torrential rainfall in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has killed 12 people in three days, while 18 people have been injured, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said on Tuesday. Power supply has been disrupted in several regions of the province due to the weather conditions, Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) said. Furthermore, NDMA issued a nationwide alert warning of flash floods, urban flooding and landslides from July 21 to 24. The PDMA report, detailing losses and damages for the Sunday to Tuesday period, showed that five men, two women and five children had been killed by the heavy rains. Half of the deaths were reported from Khyber district, where a vehicle carrying Afghan families was swept away in a flash flood on Monday.

**ASEAN ministers voice serious
concern over Middle East situation**

The clash casts further doubt on hopes for a long-sought Code of Conduct between ASEAN and China for the waterway, a quest analysts have warned is unlikely to result in a document with teeth

DNA

MANILA: ASEAN foreign ministers expressed serious concern on Tuesday about the rapidly evolving conflict in the Middle East, calling for restraint and the avoidance of acts that further aggravate the situation. The developments severely undermine ongoing efforts by key mediators and diminish prospects for a peaceful resolution through dialogue and diplomacy, the ministers added in a statement. A clash in the South China Sea threatened to overshadow the meeting on Tuesday as the United States condemned "dangerous" Chinese actions in the contested waterway. The US statement came minutes after Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrived in the Philippines, where the 11-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is expected to tackle issues including civil war-torn Myanmar's ongoing pariah status. Before departing Washington on Monday, Rubio said he was open to the possibility of a side-line meeting with China's top diplomat Wang Yi, who will also be in Manila. In an op-ed published Tuesday morning in the Philippines, Rubio touted Washington's commitment "to freedom of navigation in Southeast Asia" and the regional defensive umbrella it has provided. "This freedom is by no means guaranteed. If these waters were to fall under the control of a power willing to use trade as a geopolitical weapon, both the United States and the ASEAN states would face serious new threats to their

sovereignty, security, and economic future," he wrote, in a clear allusion to China. Beijing claims sovereignty over almost the entire South China Sea, a vital global trade route, despite an international ruling that its claims have no legal basis. On Monday, Philippine and Chinese sailors clashed at the Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea in what was the first serious seaborne encounter in months. Manila said China Coast Guard personnel had assaulted Filipino sailors near a beached vessel that serves as a garrison on the disputed shoal. Beijing said the Philippines instigated the incident by sending men in small rubber boats to approach their vessel. The clash casts further doubt on hopes for a long-sought Code of Conduct between ASEAN and China for the waterway, a quest analysts have warned is unlikely to result in a document with teeth. The resumption of hostilities in another strategic waterway, the Strait of Hormuz, also looms large this week, as the rekindled war with Iran is placing traditional American allies under economic strain. The import-dependent Philippines declared a national energy emergency in March and has been forced to cast an ever-wider net for fuel, including purchases of oil from Russia, whose Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will arrive Tuesday in Manila. The week is expected to see renewed efforts toward regional energy security, including the ongoing push for ratification of the bloc's Framework Agreement on Petroleum Security fuel-sharing scheme.

**UN concerned at Houthi
threats to Saudi Arabia****Critical infrastructure and civilians caught in US-Iran war**

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: As the United States and Iran trade deadly attacks for a second week, the UN continues to call for de-escalation while highlighting the devastation caused to civilians and critical infrastructure across the Middle East. "We are indeed concerned by a resurgence of hostilities and renewed escalation across much of the region," UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said Tuesday in New York, stressing that "immediate de-escalation is essential." He noted that "as in any conflict, the protection of civilians and civilian objects is critical," and the vital infrastructure they rely on to survive – including hospitals and water supplies – must be spared. "All parties must respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, in-

cluding the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution," he said. The Spokesperson added that the UN is also "very much concerned" over fresh threats by Houthi rebels in Yemen against Saudi Arabia and freedom of navigation in the crucial shipping lanes of the Red Sea along Yemen's coast, underscoring the risk of an even wider regional escalation. He again called for immediate de-escalation and urged all parties to address their differences through dialogue and diplomacy. In response to a reporters' question, Dujarric also expressed concern over the potential impact on humanitarian operations and global trade. "We've seen the Red Sea already being choked off in the past. We don't want to see a return to that," he said. "It will, of course, impact the flow of UN goods that are shipped, notably humanitarian goods and elements for peacekeeping. But much more worryingly,

it will again have a negative impact on global commerce, on the trade in energy, and just commerce as a whole." This is unfolding when "we're already seeing the impact of the near closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and what impact that is having on the global economy," he said. The renewed hostilities between the US and Iran, which initially began over control of the Strait, have dampened hopes for peace following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Washington and Tehran in June. The deal ought to end fighting that began in February with the US and Israel bombing Iran which in turn carried out retaliatory strikes on targets in several Gulf States and Jordan. "Across the Middle East, civilians are once again living with the fear and uncertainty of repeated strikes, and health systems are being forced to manage the consequences," said Dr. Hanan Balkhy,

Regional Director for the World Health Organization (WHO), in an update on Monday. The situation in Iran: She said Iranian health authorities report that 50 people have been killed this month, and more than 500 injured, with women and children among the casualties. Moreover, vital infrastructure has also been affected. She pointed to a reported strike on a water desalination plant in Hormozgan province, located in the south of the country, that has disrupted safe drinking water supply for thousands. Meanwhile, explosions near Baqaei Reference Hospital last week forced the precautionary evacuation of children receiving specialized cancer treatment. In other developments, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said on Sunday that it was looking into reports of an overnight attack on the site of the Darkhovin nuclear power plant in Iran which is under construction.

**Oil prices dip
as mediation
efforts offset
US-Iran
strikes**

OIL prices softened on Tuesday, with markets weighing reports of mediation efforts between the US and Iran against an exchange of fresh attacks between the two and threats of a naval blockade of Saudi Arabia by Yemen's Houthis. Brent crude futures LCOc1 eased 35 cents, or 0.4%, to \$88.87 per barrel by 0052 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate crude CLc1 for September delivery was steady at \$82.47 a barrel. Both contracts were trading below their highest levels in more than a month hit in the previous session. Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis said on Monday they would impose a naval blockade on Saudi Arabia, opening a potential new front against US in its war on Iran and raising the threat to global energy supplies. – APP



RAWALPINDI: Eskandar Momeni, Interior Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces, at the General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional and bilateral security and effective border management were discussed. – DNA

**Japan alarmed at
China-Russia drills**

The latest live-firing drill prompted Tokyo to mobilize by air and sea to surveil and monitor the situation, Kihara said

DNA

TOKYO: Chinese and Russian naval forces conducted a joint live-firing exercise using machine guns within Japan's exclusive economic zone, a sign of their deepening military cooperation, Tokyo said Tuesday. The incident on Sunday was the first time that Japan's defense ministry has spotted a live-fire drill by China within its EEZ and disclosed it, according to Japanese media. Tokyo sees the drill as "part of a move by the two militaries toward strengthening their cooperation," Japan's top government spokesman Minoru Kihara said at a Tuesday briefing. Relations between Japan and China have worsened since Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi angered Beijing in November with comments about Taiwan. On Sunday, the Chinese navy's Luyang III-class missile destroyer was seen conducting the exercise 180 kilometers (110 miles) southwest of the Okinotori island, Japan's southernmost territory, alongside a Russian naval vessel, officials said.

A fleet comprising three Chinese ships and a Russian navy frigate was first sighted at around 2:00 am (1700 GMT Saturday) 330 kilometers southwest of the island, heading northeast. Japan told Beijing via diplomatic channels that the drill "could have endangered the navigation of nearby ships," according to Kihara. Chinese and Russian air forces jointly flew bombers over waters around Japan last month, while their navies also conducted a joint exercise this month. The latest live-firing drill prompted Tokyo to mobilize by air and sea to surveil and monitor the situation, Kihara said. "We will continue to monitor with concern the behaviors by Chinese and Russian vessels in the waters around our country," he added. Ships from Japan's and China's coast guards faced off near disputed islands this month, with each claiming they drove out the other's vessels that had intruded into their territorial waters. The incident took place near uninhabited islands claimed as the Senkaku in Japan and the Diaoyu in China, which sit between Taiwan and Okinawa and have caused diplomatic tensions for decades. Takaichi said in November that Tokyo could intervene militarily in any attack on self-ruled Taiwan, drawing Beijing's ire. Under Takaichi, Japan has also accelerated its pivot toward a more proactive defense policy, further shaking off – with US encouragement – a pacifist outlook in place since the end of World War II.

9 dead in Indian tunnel collapse

NEW DELHI: At least nine people have died and 15 others remained trapped after a tunnel collapsed at an under-construction hydroelectric project in India's remote northeast, officials said Tuesday. The incident occurred Monday in the Himalayan state of Sikkim, where workers were constructing a tunnel for a state-run hydropower project on the Teesta river. "We are estimating around 25-27 people were trapped," Rajiv Roka, director of the Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority, told AFP. "Nine bodies have been recovered." The collapse was likely triggered by a blast, the cause of which was yet to be ascertained. The region has seen torrential monsoon rains in recent days. Roka said authorities were "not sure what caused the blast because it was deep in the tunnel," adding that "it was most probably natural." Toxic methane gas leaking from underground rock formations was hampering rescue efforts, officials said, allowing only teams carrying oxygen equipment to enter. "Aggressive rescue operations are underway but problem is there's a lot of gas present there," Roka said. A specialized team trained in mining accidents had been flown in to aid the rescuers, he added. Accidents on large infrastructure construction sites are common in India but ecologists say excessive development projects have led to more disasters in the fragile Himalayan areas. In 2023, 41 workers were rescued after 17 days being trapped under a Himalayan road tunnel that had collapsed in northern Uttarakhand state. – APP