



Wednesday, July 29, 2026

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

UN Secy Gen urges full international support for Syria

Detailed News On Page-06

Govt efforts helped minimize rains damage: Tarar

Detailed News On Page-08


Pakistan keen to have more trade with US: Dar

Detailed News On Page-01



After US strikes

Iran's Bushehr airport still out of order

Meanwhile, diplomatic sources disclosed that Oman has presented a proposal to Iran for a regional mechanism to manage the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most vital waterways for global oil and gas shipments

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Iran's government has confirmed that Bushehr Airport remains "out of order" following the latest round of US strikes, underscoring the growing impact of the conflict on the country's infrastructure. A government spokesperson revealed that Iran has lost nearly 230 million cubic metres of gas production capacity due to the war, a setback that is expected to further strain its economy and energy sector. The spokesperson stressed that the damage to Bushehr Airport highlights the vulnerability of civilian infrastructure in times of escalating hostilities. The loss of gas production capacity, she added, is not only a blow to Iran's domestic energy supply but also to its export potential, which has long been a critical source of revenue for the country. Meanwhile, diplomatic sources disclosed that Oman has presented a proposal to Iran for a regional mechanism to manage the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most vital waterways for global oil and gas shipments. Under the proposal, which reportedly enjoys regional backing, Iran would no longer exercise sole control over the strait. Instead, a cooperative framework involving multiple regional stakeholders would be established to ensure stability, security, and uninterrupted maritime traffic. The Strait of Hormuz has long been a flashpoint in regional tensions, with Iran asserting its strategic dominance over the passage. Oman's initiative, if accepted, could mark a significant shift in regional security arrangements, reducing the risk of unilateral actions and potential confrontations. The dual developments — Iran's infrastructure losses

Trump warns of hardline stand if talks fail

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has confirmed that negotiations with Iran are ongoing but warned that Washington is prepared to "hit Iran hard" if the talks collapse. Speaking to reporters, Trump said Iran is "asking for a deal," suggesting Tehran is under pressure to reach an agreement. He emphasized that while dialogue continues, the US will not hesitate to take strong measures should diplomacy fail.

and Oman's diplomatic overture — highlight the complex interplay of war, energy security, and geopolitics in the Middle East. For Iran, the strikes have not only weakened its energy sector but also raised questions about its ability to sustain prolonged conflict. For regional states, the Hormuz proposal reflects a growing desire to prevent instability from spiraling into a broader crisis that could disrupt global energy supplies.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding rightsizing and improving efficiency of the Federal Government in Islamabad on 28 July 2026. — DNA

Pakistan, Qatar pledge deeper ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Qatar have reaffirmed their commitment to expanding bilateral security cooperation, strengthening institutional ties between their interior ministries, and working together to promote regional peace and stability during a high-level meeting between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Qatar's Interior Minister and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Le-khwiya), Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. The meeting focused on enhancing collaboration across a wide range of security-related sectors, with both ministers holding detailed discussions on ways to deepen their strategic security partnership.

Continued on Page 06

Fresh spell of monsoon from today

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast another widespread spell of monsoon rains across the country from July 29 to August 5, warning of urban flooding in major cities, flash floods in local streams and nullahs. In an advisory issued on Tuesday, the PMD said that monsoon currents from the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal are likely to penetrate the upper and central parts of the country from July 29. A westerly wave currently affecting the northern areas is expected to strengthen from August 1, bringing widespread rain and thundershowers to

Continued on Page 06

PM Shehbaz Sharif orders expansion of country's strategic petroleum reserves

Cabinet committee approves proposed amendments to Pakistan Oil Refining Policy, 2023

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday instructed authorities to expand Pakistan's strategic petroleum reserves, calling refinery upgradation a "key pillar of Pakistan's comprehensive energy security system". The premier made the remarks while chairing a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Energy at the Prime Minister's Office, where the proposed amendments to the Pakistan Oil Refining Policy, 2023, were approved, according to a statement issued by the PM Office. During the meeting, PM Shehbaz said that the upgradation of oil refineries is an important need of the time, stressing that refineries aligned with modern requirements will not only better meet the country's energy needs but will also prove helpful in reducing dependence on imported fuel and providing environment-friendly fuel. It was said during the meeting that upgrading existing refineries was inevitable to increase their production capacity. The production of fuel meeting Euro-4 and Euro-5 standards was termed essential for fulfilling Pakistan's international environmental

Continued on Page 06

'Militants elements perusing enemy agenda in AJK'

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Referring to the recent violence in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday said the protests by the proscribed Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) were not peaceful but violent, alleging that militant elements pursuing a foreign agenda and backed by Indian funding were involved. "Peaceful and transparent elections were held in AJK, with all the mainstream political parties participating fully. The people of Kashmir responded to the call of the election," he stated, referring to the first phase of elections held in the region on Monday. In Rawalakot alone, a total of 600,000 votes were cast, making it a massive success, he said, adding that political parties held

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Kuwait FM arrives



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait, arrived in Islamabad today on an official visit at the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. Upon arrival at Islamabad International Airport, the dignitary was received by Mr Zahid Husain, Additional Secretary (Middle East), Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the visit, the two sides will hold talks covering the full spectrum of bilateral relations and exchange views on regional and international issues of mutual interest. The visit reflects the longstanding brotherly relations between Pakistan and Kuwait, anchored in shared history, mutual trust and close cooperation.

Dar says Pak keen to have more trade with US

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday said the government was "confident" that trade between Pakistan and the United States could double to \$20 billion over the next five years. Dar made the remarks while addressing a delegation of US congressmen and businessmen in Islamabad.

Oil prices fall 1% as investors weigh pause in US strikes on Iran

Brent crude falls \$0.54 to \$87.82 while US WTI slips \$0.66 to \$81.95 per barrel

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Oil prices fell 1% on Tuesday as market participants continued to weigh a pause in US strikes on Iran, which has raised hope of a diplomatic solution to their conflict and the normalisation of Middle East energy flows. Brent crude futures were down \$0.54, or 0.6%, at \$87.82 by 0046 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude was at \$81.95 a barrel, down \$0.66, or 0.8%. Both contracts fell 1% earlier in the session to their lowest level in more than a week. US President Donald Trump said on Monday the United States was having "good talks" with Iran and that there was a chance of a resolution. However, he said US strikes would resume if negotiations failed while Iran issued similar comments about retaliation. "For now, the relief that an off-ramp has been found has taken the heat out of prices and eased concerns around Houthi attacks on Saudi infrastructure. However, the situation remains highly fluid," IG an-

alyst Tony Sycamore said in a client note. Afrah al-Zoubah, the foreign minister-designate of Yemen's internationally recognised government, said Yemen-based Houthi fighters aimed to replicate Iran's control of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz at Bab el-Mandeb. "Whether the Houthis have the military capacity to enforce a comprehensive blockade is questionable, especially given that the Saudis will attack them relentlessly. Still, there is no doubt that traffic has dropped off significantly in the Red Sea and the Strait of Hormuz," said Marex analyst Edward Meir. "A key reason prices are not even higher than they are right now is the demand destruction that is taking place, especially in Asia," Meir said. Barclays analysts said in a note on Monday "flows through the strait remain subdued". They said, in the week ended July 24, crude oil and refined product net exports through the strait averaged 2.9 million barrels a day

Continued on Page 06

Bilawal Bhutto alleges rigging in AJK elections

Says PTI played in the hands of 'enemies' by boycotting the elections

STAFF REPORT

MUZAFFARABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has accused the state of openly patronizing the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in the recent Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections, alleging massive rigging and manipulation of results. Addressing a rally in Muzaaffarabad, Bilawal questioned whether the state considered the PML-N more important than the people of Pakistan, warning that such favoritism undermines democracy and fuels resentment among Kashmiris. Bilawal claimed that the elections were rigged on a scale that cannot be ignored, describing it as a "conspiracy against the Kashmiri people." He argued that it was impossible for a PPP candidate to win in one constituency but lose in his own hometown, calling the outcome a



clear indication of manipulation. He said the PPP had remained silent in the past in the interest of national unity, but there was a limit to such silence when the will of the people was being blatantly disregarded. The PPP leader further remarked that rigging is an old phenomenon in Pakistan, but this time it was confined specifically to AJK, where the scale of manipulation was unprecedented. He

indirectly supported the AJK Banned Committee, criticizing the state's handling of protests and unrest.

Bilawal also addressed the controversy surrounding the 12 seats reserved for Mohajirs, saying that a middle ground could have been found instead of resorting to force. "There was absolutely no need for 14 days of misery inflicted on the Kashmiri people," he said, adding that the use of force created unnecessary friction and worsened the situation. He suggested that a Truth and Reconciliation Commission should have been formed to deal with the grievances of the protesting people, which could have saved many lives. He lamented that both the state and protestors refused to step back, resulting in innocent lives being lost. "In this strife, innocent people are being killed. Without peace, elections in AJK are not possible," Bilawal warned, stressing

Continued on Page 06

WAPDA employee dies of electric shock

PESHAWAR: A 27-year-old WAPDA employee lost his life after suffering an electric shock while carrying out electrical work inside a well in the Gar Yousafai area of Swabi district on Tuesday. According to Rescue 1122 officials, the deceased was identified as Waqar, a government employee of WAPDA and a resident of Topi. Upon receiving the emergency call, Rescue 1122 teams reached the scene and conducted a rescue operation, recovering the victim's body from the well. Rescue authorities said that after completing the necessary legal formalities, the body was handed over to the heirs. WAPDA authorities have started getting information to determine the cause of the accident.—APP

Farmland allocated to 22 families

HAFIZABAD: The Punjab government has allocated agricultural land to 22 landless families in district under its "Apna Khet Apna Rozgar" (Own Farm, Own Livelihood) programme, the officials sources said on Tuesday. The allotment letters were distributed during a ceremony attended by Member, National Assembly Saira Afzal Tarar, Deputy Commissioner, Abdul Razzaq, Provincial Parliamentary Secretaries, Mian Shahid Hussain and Aoun Jahangir Bhatti, and other officials. Speaking at the event, Tarar and Abdul Razzaq said the initiative, launched under Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, aimed to create employment opportunities for landless people while promoting agricultural development and economic growth across the province.—APP

Wafi Energy, NED partner to boost entrepreneurs

KARACHI: Wafi Energy Pakistan Limited, through its flagship social investment initiative Tameer, partnered with NED University of Engineering & Technology to sponsor the regional round of the World Startup Championship – SEE Pakistan 2026. The World Startup Championship is an international entrepreneurship competition and exhibition held annually, helping create more opportunities for students and young innovators to turn their ideas into successful businesses, a press release issued here on Tuesday said. The regional competition brought together more than 300 promising student-led startups from universities across Sindh, providing aspiring entrepreneurs with a platform to present their ideas, engage with industry leaders, receive expert feedback and compete for the opportunity to progress to the national stage.—APP

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that the original registration documents of the following motorcycle have been lost Honda CG-125. If anyone finds these documents or has any information about them, kindly contact the owner.

Fazal E Rabi,

cell no03005812025

Haroon for transforming Pak-Turkiye brotherhood into eco prosperity

ICCI mobilizes private sector to realize Pak-Turkiye \$5 billion trade target: Sardar Tahir

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan has reaffirmed the Government of Pakistan's unwavering commitment to private-sector-led economic growth, describing the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (ICCI) Business Opportunity Conference & Excellence Awards, scheduled to be held in Istanbul on August 13, 2026, as a timely initiative that complements the vision of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to raise bilateral trade to US\$5 billion. Addressing a hugely attended press conference at ICCI here on Tuesday, Haroon Akhtar Khan said Türkiye is Pakistan's second home and stressed that the deep-rooted political and brotherly ties between the two countries must now be transformed into stronger economic partnerships through investment, joint ventures, technology transfer and enhanced business-to-business collaboration. He announced that he would proudly lead the Pakistani business delegation to Türkiye and facilitate meaningful engagements with Turkish investors and entrepreneurs. He said Pakistan has entered a new phase of political and macroeconomic stability, resulting in growing international confidence in its economy. He noted that the government's foremost priority is to empower the private sector, accelerate industrialization and position Pakistan as a competitive manufacturing and export hub. He added that comprehensive reforms aimed at improving the ease of doing business, simplifying regulations, rationalizing tariffs and promoting industrial competitiveness are already underway. Haroon Akhtar Khan further highlighted that the government is introducing progressive industrial, auto and electric vehicle policies while creating new opportunities in renewable energy, battery manufacturing, electronics and pharmaceuticals. He said special emphasis is being placed on strengthening SMEs and exporters through easier access to finance, export refinancing, long-term financing facilities and targeted tax incentives. Speaking on the occasion, Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, expressed profound gratitude to Haroon Akhtar Khan for his strong support of the Chamber's



international outreach initiatives. He said ICCI's Business Opportunity Conference in Istanbul is designed to showcase Pakistan's economic potential, facilitate high-impact B2B meetings, attract investment, promote joint ventures, encourage technology transfer and create new export opportunities in sectors including real estate, construction, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, information technology, agriculture, food processing, textiles, tourism, engineering and logistics. He emphasized that ICCI is committed to projecting Pakistan as a peaceful, reliable and investment-friendly destination while strengthening economic diplomacy through private-sector engagement. He expressed confidence that the conference would make a meaningful contribution towards achieving the shared Pakistan-Türkiye vision of expanding bilateral trade to US\$5 billion

and opening a new chapter of economic cooperation between the two brotherly nations. Enes Malik Cetin, Commercial Counsellor at the Embassy Türkiye, Islamabad while hailing the ICCI leadership for the initiative expressed confidence that the visit will prove fruitful and the B2B match making will lead to further strengthening of two countries trade and investment relations. Those present on the occasion included ICCI Founder Group Chairman Sheikh Tariq Sadiq, Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub, Vice President Irfan Chaudhry, former Presidents Zubair Ahmed Malik, Moammad Ejaz Abbasi, Khalid Javaid, Sheikh Aamir Waheed, Executive Members, Zulqurnain Abbasi, Imran Minhas, Waseem Chaudhry, Mirza Mohammad Ali, Rohail Anwar Butt, Aftab Gujar, former SVP Khalid Chaudhry, ICCI members Israr Mishwani and trade leaders belonging to different markets of Islamabad.

Mannan promoted to DG PBM



DNA

ISLAMABAD: According to an official notification (No. PBM/Estb/023/1597) issued by Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), Ministry of Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety, Government of Pakistan, "Mr. Abdul Mannan Ch., Director (BPS-19), has been promoted to the rank of **Director General (BPS-20)* in the Accounts / Audit Category Ex-Cadre with immediate effect. The promotion was formally approved by the Managing Director, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, on the recommenda-

tions of the Departmental Selection / Promotion Board. Prior to this elevation, Mr. Abdul Mannan Ch. was serving as Director in the Fund & Pension Branch at the PBM Head Office, Islamabad. Hailing from "Bahawalpur, Mr. Abdul Mannan Ch. carries a distinguished record of public service. He has previously served as **Director, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, South Punjab", where he rendered key services in managing social welfare programs and delivering institutional relief to marginalized communities across the region. Following the announcement of his promotion to Grade

20, a continuous stream of felicitations and warm wishes has been pouring in from officers and staff across Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal. Senior management, regional directors, assistant directors, and field officers extended their heartiest congratulations, recognizing his professional capability, integrity, and dedication to public welfare. Colleagues across all departmental tiers expressed confidence that his elevation to Director General will further strengthen administrative efficiency and expand PBM's welfare outreach nationwide.

RCCI, PIBF join hands to host Mera Brand Expo

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Pakistan International Business Forum (PIBF) to jointly organize the 'PIBF Mera Brand Expo' in Rawalpindi. According to the details, strategic collaboration aims to showcase and promote domestic brands, products, and services, strengthen local industrial capacity, and boost regional trade activities. Under the agreement, both organizations will work together to foster entrepreneurship and create business development opportunities across key commercial sectors. The upcoming exhibition is designed to serve as a dynamic platform for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), startups, and emerging entrepreneurs, enabling them to market their innovations, expand market reach, and establish valuable industry networks. RCCI leadership highlighted that supporting indigenous brands and facilitating small-scale enterprises remain top priorities for driving sustainable economic growth and industrial progression in the region.—APP

PM's Digital Youth revolutionary initiative: Nehal

KARACHI: Governor Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi said that dreams become reality only through hardwork, dedication and perseverance, urging young people to equip themselves with modern education, information technology and digital skills so they can play a meaningful role in Pakistan's progress and prosperity. He expressed these views while addressing students of a one-year Leadership and IT Classes programme. The Governor Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi said that when the Youth Parliament Forum was established, it was initially met with criticism and ridicule. Rizwan Jaffer remained determined, continued his efforts with unwavering commitment, and ultimately achieved success. He said such dedicated young people are among Pakistan's greatest assets and serve as an inspiration for others. Syed Muhammad Nehal

Hashmi said that the Prime Minister's Digital Youth Programme is a revolutionary initiative aimed at preparing young people for the challenges and opportunities of the modern world. "Through the programme, youth are being provided with opportunities in information technology, artificial intelligence (AI), digital skills, freelancing, startups, entrepreneurship, employment, scholarships, internships, the laptop scheme, and other modern facilities, enabling them to compete successfully at both national and international levels, he added. He added that Pakistan's future rests in the hands of its youth, and the government is utilizing every available resource to empower them. Hashmi said that he has always envisioned a strong, prosperous, and developed Pakistan where investment flourishes, industries expand, and young people enjoy abundant employment opportunities. He

added that Pakistan has now reached a stage where no one can dare cast an evil eye on the country. He recalled that when laptops were distributed among university students a decade ago, he saw dreams of progress and success in the eyes of young people. Today, he said, those dreams are gradually becoming reality through the vision of a Digital Pakistan and the promotion of modern IT education. He urged the youth to take full advantage of the Prime Minister's Digital Youth Programme, enhance their skills, and contribute towards making Pakistan one of the world's leading nations in technology, innovation, and research. The Governor Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi also appreciated the services of Daniyal Nagori, saying that he has been tirelessly providing IT training to thousands of young people and has become an exemplary role model for the younger generation.—APP

Govt unveils reforms to boost exports

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Tuesday, said the government was pursuing a comprehensive industrial policy aimed at enhancing industrial competitiveness, promoting export-led growth and attracting investment from China, Türkiye and the Central Asian Republics (CARs). He was addressing a press conference at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) regarding the Chamber's Business Opportunity Conference and Excellence Awards, scheduled to be held in Istanbul on August 13. Haroon Akhtar said the government was committed to creating a business-friendly environment through reforms focused on improving the ease of doing business, simplifying regulations, rationalizing tariffs and strengthening industrial competitiveness. He said these measures would help transform Pakistan into a competitive manufacturing and export hub while encouraging greater foreign investment. He noted that Pakistan has entered a new phase of political and macroeconomic stability, resulting in increased international confidence in the country's economy. He emphasized that the private sector would remain the driving force behind sustainable economic growth and industrial development. The SAPM said the government was finalizing a comprehensive industrial policy to attract Chinese investors and other regional partners, particularly the Central Asian Republics, to enhance market competitiveness and expand industrial cooperation. Highlighting key policy initiatives, he said the government was introducing progressive industrial, automobile and electric vehicle policies while creating investment opportunities in renewable energy, battery manufacturing, electronics and pharmaceuticals.—APP

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, 2822211, 2674289 - Fax: (+92 51) 2825132, 2274227.

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

Branch Offices

Karachi Plot No. 14 & 15, 2nd Floor, Kalkaji Road, Main Tang Road, 172 (Block 2, P.E.C. S.S. Karachi), Tel: (+92 21) 3403008, 34010478. Fax: (+92 21) 3403147. E-mail: karachi@freelinemovers.com	Lahore P-4 Gulberg Centre, Main Boulevard, Lahore. Tel: (+92 42) 3579881, 35791085. Fax: (+92 42) 3571420. E-mail: lahore@freelinemovers.com	Peshawar Office No. C-6, 2nd Floor, Zuhair Plaza, Left Road, Ring Road, Peshawar. Tel: (+92 91) 2502778. Fax: (+92 91) 2502598. E-mail: peshawar@freelinemovers.com	Kabul House #4, Street #4, Chahar Afsar Road, Shahr-e-Nasr, Kabul - Afghanistan. Tel: (+92 70021) 373, 93 7935858, 93 7794938. E-mail: kabul@freelinemovers.com
--	--	---	--

Info secretary assures APNS of pending payment release

DNA

KARACHI: The Secretary Information, Government of Sindh, Mr. Kashif Gulzar Shaikh, has assured the APNS Sindh Committee that the payment of outstanding dues of newspapers for the year 2021 will be released at the earliest. He also assured the Committee of a fair and equitable distribution of provincial government advertisements and agreed that the data regarding the distribution of advertisements should be uploaded on the official website on a daily basis. A meeting of the APNS Sindh Committee was held under the chairmanship of Mr. Javed Mehr Shamsi,

Chairman of the Sindh Committee. The Provincial Secretary Information attended the meeting as a special guest. APNS President, Senator Sarmad Ali, Secretary General Mr. Muhammad Athar Kazi, and the members of the Committee apprised the Secretary Information of the issues being faced by newspapers in Sindh. They stated that newspapers in the province were facing severe financial difficulties due to the non-payment of outstanding dues and urged the Government of Sindh to ensure the early clearance of all pending payments. The members also requested the issuance of display advertisements and urged that Sindhi-language newspapers be given priority in the release

of Government of Sindh advertisements. The members expressed serious concern that the quantum of advertisements being released by the Sindh Information Department to newspapers and periodicals had declined to the lowest level, contrary to the agreed allocation, and that APNS member publications were receiving only a limited number of advertisements. The meeting demanded that the quantum of advertisements allocated to the print media be increased so that newspapers could continue their publication without financial hardship. The Committee members further demanded that the previous system for the pay-

ment of non-budgeted advertisements be restored and that, as in the past, payments for such advertisements be made by the Sindh Information Department on a monthly basis. Mr. Kashif Gulzar Shaikh assured the meeting that the Government of Sindh fully recognizes the importance of the print media and is well aware of the problems confronting the newspaper industry. He stated that immediate measures were being taken to resolve these issues. The meeting was attended by the following members: Mr. Javed Mehr Shamsi, Chairman, Sindh Committee; Mr. Younis Mehr, Vice Chairman (Daily Halchal); Mr. Shahab Zuberi (Business

Recorder); Mr. Kazi Mustafa Asad Abid (Daily Ibrat); Mr. Junaid Akram (Daily Dawn); Mr. Bilal Farooqi (Daily Aghaz); Dr. Jabbar Khattak (Daily Awami Awaz); Mr. Rafiq Ahmed Pirzada (Daily Pak Sindh); Mr. Najamuddin Shaikh (Daily Deyanat); Ms. Zahida Abbasi (Daily Nau Sijj); Mr. Kazi Sajjad Akbar (Daily The Regional Times); Mr. Mangal Das Arwani (Daily Hilal-e-Pakistan); Mr. Imtiaz Akhtar Qazi (Daily Tameer-Sindh); Mr. Mumtaz Ali Phulpoto (Daily Awami Parchar); Mr. Iqbal Hussain Tunio (Daily Jang); Ms. Haseena Jatoti (Daily Moomal); Mr. Muhammad Irfan (Daily Ummat); and Mr. Shahid Satti (Daily Vatan Gujrati).

National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY

July 01/Japan Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada National Day

July 01/Somalia Independence Day

July 04/USA Independence Day

July 05/Algeria Independence Day

July 09/Argentina Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium National Day

July 20/TRNC Independence Day

July 23/Egypt National Day

July 26/Cuba National Day

July 26/Liberia National Day

July 30/Morocco National Day

Rescue (Police).....	15
Bomb Disposal.....	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.....	1122
& Rescue Services.....	4451122
Motorway Police.....	9266044
Motorway Police.....	9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....	9222596
Rawalpindi.....	9270601-20

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....	115
PIA Flight Info.....	114
PIA Cargo.....	9280979
Railway Inquiry.....	117
Railway Exchange.....	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....	5555489
CAA.....	9281092

Hospitals

CMH.....	5611111
MH.....	561116
Chantt 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



ISLAMABAD: Car showrooms vehicles parked haphazardly on footpaths and even in spaces designated for passenger buses, despite clear CDA “No Parking” notices, in the Sector G-8 Markaz, highlighting the growing challenge of illegal parking in commercial hubs. DNA

Population growth poses Pak biggest challenges: Aurangzeb

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday described climate change and rapid population growth as the two greatest existential challenges facing Pakistan, stressing that sustainable economic growth depends on effectively addressing both issues through long-term planning and investment. Speaking during a visit to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) headquarters, the finance minister said the government had launched a US\$2 billion programme aimed at strengthening climate resilience and mitigating the impacts of environmental degradation. He added that approximately US\$700 million annually has been allocated to tackle natural disasters, reduce vulnerabilities, and protect both lives and critical infrastructure. Aurangzeb said Pakistan remains among the countries most vulnerable to climate change despite contributing only a small fraction of global greenhouse gas emissions. The minister noted that recurring floods, heat waves, droughts, and other extreme weather events continue to place enormous pressure on the country's economy and development. Referring to the devastating floods of 2022, the minister described them as the worst natural disaster in Pakistan's history. The catastrophe claimed the lives of more people, displaced millions, and caused widespread destruction to homes, roads, bridges, crops, and public infrastructure. Finance Minister said that while the floods experienced in 2025 also resulted in significant infrastructure damage, the loss of human lives was considerably lower due to the government's improved disaster preparedness and the NDMA's proactive response strategy.

“The comprehensive planning, timely warnings and coordinated efforts of the NDMA helped minimise casualties during this year's floods,” Aurangzeb said. “Although infrastructure losses remained substantial, many precious lives were saved through effective preparedness and swift response mechanisms.” The finance minister also highlighted the shift in Pakistan's disaster financing strategy. He recalled that following the 2022 floods, the country relied heavily on international assistance and commitments made during the Geneva Conference for reconstruction and rehabilitation.

China advances Industrial partnerships with Pakistan

The visits provided firsthand insights into Gujrat's industrial capabilities, supply chains, and market conditions, helping Loudi companies better identify opportunities for expansion into Pakistan's growing commercial landscape

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As part of its strategic efforts to deepen engagement with the Belt and Road Initiative, a high-level delegation from China's Loudi City, led by Vice Mayor Yang Wei, completed a three-day trade and investment mission to Pakistan. The visit delivered significant progress in sister-city cooperation, industrial collaboration, and market-access opportunities for Loudi's key industries, according to a Gwadar Pro's report on Tuesday. The delegation's first stop was Gujrat, Pakistan's renowned “City of Fans,” where it was welcomed by Chaudhry Shafay Hussain, Punjab's Minister for Industry, Trade and Investment, and Noor ul Ain, Gujrat's Additional Deputy Commissioner. Following exchanges on the two cities' economic and development priorities, the delegation visited leading local manufacturers Royal Fan and Trend Line Furniture. The visits provided firsthand insights into Gujrat's industrial capabilities, supply chains, and market conditions, helping Loudi companies better identify opportunities for expansion into Pakistan's growing commercial landscape. On July 21, Loudi and Gujrat officially signed a Sister-City Memorandum of Understanding, elevating bilateral ties to a new level. On the same day, the Loudi Council for the Promotion of International Trade and the Pakistani Hunan Chamber of Commerce signed a Friendship and Co-operation Agreement, establishing a long-term platform for business coordination and exchange. The signing ceremonies were witnessed by Sun Yan, Chinese Consul General in Lahore, who highlighted that the agreements—signed on the 75th anniversary of the establishment of China-Pakistan diplomatic relations—represent a concrete example of subnational cooperation advancing under “CPEC 2.0”. The partnerships will help strengthen industrial complementarity, economic cooperation, and people-to-people connectivity between the two countries. During the visit, Vice Mayor Yang also extended an invitation to Minister Hussain to attend the 2026 Hunan International Sister-City Economic and Trade Conference, scheduled for September in Changsha. The delegation then visited the QABP Industrial Park, where it conducted detailed assessments of footwear and steel manufacturing facilities. The team examined industrial infrastructure, investment policies, and opportunities for alignment with Loudi's strengths in advanced steel and new materials.

Govt reviews wheat distribution strategy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain here on Tuesday emphasized that all provinces would be fully taken into confidence during the import process, particularly regarding the quality specifications of the imported wheat. The minister chaired a high-level meeting of the Wheat Board to review the country's wheat availability, distribution strategy, and provincial requirements, said a press release issued by the Ministry of National Food Security and Research. The meeting was attended by Secretary, Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Amer Ali Ahmed, PM Coordinator on agriculture, agriculture and food Secretaries of all provinces, representatives from Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir, senior officials of the Ministry, representatives of the Pakistan Flour Mills Association, and other relevant stakeholders. The meeting reviewed the requirements of provinces from passco stocks. It transpired that the collective demand for provinces exceeded the available stocks with passco. Accordingly, in consultation with the provinces and based on their needs, a process for the import of approximately 1 million tonnes of wheat was being explored. It is pertinent to mention that the import quantity has been determined on the basis of the requirements submitted by the provinces and is aimed at maintaining uninterrupted wheat supplies and safeguarding national food security. The minister emphasized that all provinces would be fully taken into confidence during the import process, particularly regarding the quality specifications of the imported wheat. He further said that the imported wheat would be distributed among the provinces strictly in accordance with their respective requirements to ensure transparency, fairness, and equitable allocation. Rana Tanveer Hussain reaffirmed the government's commitment to working closely with all federating units to maintain a stable wheat supply, protect consumers' interests.

Services at Pak-China hospital impored

DNA

GWADAR: The Balochistan government has decided to expand specialist, diagnostic and critical-care services at the GDA Pak-China Friendship Hospital in Gwadar, according to officials. The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by Balochistan Chief Secretary Shaheel Qadir Khan on July 27 to review the hospital's existing services, funding requirements and expansion plans. Officials called for early action to purchase and install an MRI scanner and to expand dialysis, intensive-care, neonatal, emergency, surgical and laboratory facilities. The plan also covers additional incubators for newborn babies and stronger specialist services in ophthalmology, ear, nose and throat care, and cardiology, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. The meeting agreed that steps should be taken to secure the release of outstanding funds so that the planned work could proceed. The amount involved and a timetable for procurement or completion were not disclosed. Khan said the hospital had become an important healthcare centre for residents of Gwadar and the wider Makran region, providing treatment without charge. He said the availability of more services locally had reduced the need for some patients to travel to Karachi, Quetta and other cities for treatment. The chief secretary directed the relevant departments to arrange the required equipment, staff and funding and to improve the hospital's capacity to provide timely care.



GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
AND INTERFAITH HARMONY
8 Floor, Green Trust Tower, Blue Area, Islamabad

SITUATION VACANT

Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) is a statutory body working under the administrative control of Ministry of Religious Affairs & Interfaith Harmony. Its main function is management and disposal of evacuee trust properties attached to the charitable, religious or educational trusts or institutions.

2. The Ministry intends to appoint the **Secretary, Evacuee Trust Property Board on contract basis** and invites application from professionals/experts who fulfill the following criteria:

QUALIFICATION:

a. Second class masters degree or equivalent qualification recognized by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) in a discipline relating to business administration, public administration or social sciences having preferably five years experience in the relevant field; or

b. Bachelor degree in law from an accredited foreign or local university recognized by HEC, having preferably five years experience in business administration, public administration, asset management or law; and

c. Out of five years relevant experience as prescribed above, a candidate shall have at least three years experience pertaining to administration and functioning of body corporate or a public body.

ELIGIBILITY/CRITERIA:

No person shall be eligible for appointment as Secretary unless he...

is a citizen of Pakistan;

has not been by a court of law declared defaulter in respect of re-payment of a loan;

has not been by a court of law declared as undischarged insolvent;

has not been by a court of law convicted for an offence involving moral turpitude;

is neither less than forty years nor more than sixty years of age on closing date fixed for receipt of applications;

possesses unimpeachable reputation, financial integrity, judicious devotion and moral propriety.

TERMS & CONDITIONS FOR APPOINTMENT AS SECRETARY, ETPB:

The Secretary shall be entitled to such pay, allowances, privileges and other terms and conditions of service as are admissible to the government servants appointed in BPS-19 on contract.

A special ETPB allowance maximum upto one & half of basic pay may also be admissible subject to ToRs/criteria set by the ETP Board.

The Secretary shall be appointed on contract basis on the recommendation of performance evaluation and selection committee.

The Secretary shall hold office for a term of three years, extendable by two years on the recommendations of performance evaluation and selection committee.

On completion of his term unless extended for specific reasons or on attaining the age of sixty-five years, whichever is earlier the Secretary shall cease to hold office forthwith.

PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION:

The eligible Candidates should submit their applications by post at the address given below by enclosing detailed Curriculum Vitae alongwith attested copies of CNIC, all degrees/testimonials showing date of birth etc. and two photographs within **fifteen (15) days** of publication of this advertisement.

Incomplete applications will not be entertained.

Only short listed candidates fulfilling the laid down criteria will be called for interview by the Performance Evaluation and Selection Committee.

No TA/DA will be admissible.

PID (I) 805/26

Section Officer (ET), Tel: 051-9205457



Briefs

DC inspects public facilities in Kallar Syedan

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Captain (Retd) Nadeem Nasir conducted a comprehensive visit to Tehsil Kallar Syedan on Monday to review healthcare, civic, and administrative services at the Tehsil Headquarter (THQ) Hospital, Tehsil Office, and Municipal Committee. During his inspection of the THQ Hospital's emergency unit and various wards, the Deputy Commissioner interacted with patients and their attendants to inquire about healthcare delivery, medicine availability, sanitation, and staff conduct. He directed the hospital management to ensure top-tier medical care, courteous behavior, timely treatment, and strict cleanliness standards. Proceeding to the Tehsil Office, DC Nadeem Nasir inspected the water filtration plant and issued directives to maintain a continuous supply of clean drinking water for citizens. At the Municipal Committee Kallar Syedan, he reviewed sanitation operations and local civic projects before inaugurating a tree plantation drive by planting a sapling.—APP

SC disposes of appeals

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Tuesday disposed of the Punjab government's appeals seeking cancellation of the bail granted to former Punjab chief minister Pervez Elahi and Muhammad Khan Bhatti, while ruling that the trial court may revoke their bail in accordance with the law if they fail to appear before it. A bench headed by Chief Justice Yahya Afridi heard the case. During the hearing, the Punjab prosecutor submitted that the accused had secured adjournments on 18 occasions so far. The Chief Justice asked why the accused were not appearing before the trial court. Counsel for Pervez Elahi, Ali Zafar, disputed the prosecution's claim, describing it as contrary to the facts. He argued that Pervez Elahi had remained in jail for one year, yet neither had charges been framed nor had any witnesses or evidence been produced in the case. The Chief Justice observed that it was the prosecution's responsibility to produce evidence, but stressed that the presence of the accused before the trial court was mandatory and that no one would be allowed to misuse the law. In its order, the Supreme Court directed the trial court to proceed with the case and complete the hearing within two weeks. The court further clarified that if the accused failed to appear before the trial court, it would be at liberty to cancel their bail in accordance with the law.—APP

IG Islamabad reviews police recruitment

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi on Tuesday visited the recruitment test centres established for induction into Islamabad Police and reviewed the arrangements, directing officers to ensure that every stage of the recruitment process is conducted strictly on merit, with complete transparency and in accordance with the prescribed rules and procedures. An ICT Police spokesperson told APP that the IGP Rizvi inspected the ongoing physical measurement and running tests, where candidates' physical fitness was being assessed under a well-organized and standardized mechanism to ensure a fair and transparent selection process. During the visit, Rizvi instructed the officers concerned to maintain merit, transparency and professionalism throughout the recruitment exercise so that the selection process remained fair, impartial and well-organized at every level. Meanwhile, DIG Islamabad Muhammad Jawad Tariq and DIG Security, Rana Umar Farooq also visited the recruitment test centre and reviewed the arrangements in detail. The two senior officers directed the officials concerned to ensure that every stage of the recruitment process was completed in accordance with the prescribed rules and procedures, while upholding the principles of merit, transparency and equal opportunity for all candidates.—APP

Japan, UNICEF reaffirm partnership to deliver results for children in Pakistan

Ambassador Akamatsu also underscored Japan's longstanding commitment to eradicating polio through support to vaccination campaigns that have reached millions of children in some of the most remote and difficult-to-access corners of this country

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan and UNICEF reaffirmed their long-standing partnership, highlighting decades of collaboration to protect children's rights in Pakistan. Japan is one of UNICEF's longest standing and largest global partners. In Pakistan, this enduring partnership has supported children and families across health, nutrition, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, and child protection. Together, Japan and UNICEF have responded to major emergencies, Pakistan's ongoing polio eradication efforts, while continuing to invest in stronger systems that improve children's lives. Following the 2022 floods, Japan contributed US\$6.48 million to support UNICEF's emergency response in some of the hardest-hit communities in Sindh and Balochistan enabling vulnerable children and families to access safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services, healthcare, and nutrition support, helping communities recover and better respond to



future shocks. "Japan and UNICEF have walked a long road together. Ours is one of the most enduring partnerships in international development cooperation, built over decades on a shared belief that every child, no matter where they are born or what circumstances they are born into, deserves a fair chance at a healthy, safe, and dignified life. Japan's foreign policy is guided by the deep conviction

that human development, especially the wellbeing of children, is the true measure of progress," said H.E. Mr. Akamatsu Shuichi, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan. Ambassador Akamatsu also underscored Japan's longstanding commitment to eradicating polio through support to vaccination campaigns that have reached millions of children in some of the most remote and difficult-to-access corners of this country. "Japan has



been a steadfast partner for children in Pakistan for decades. From responding to emergencies to strengthening essential services and supporting long-term development, Japan's commitment has helped millions of children survive, recover and thrive. Together, we are not only meeting the urgent needs of today but also helping build stronger, more resilient systems that give every child the

opportunity to survive and thrive in the future," said Sharmeela Rasool, Acting UNICEF Representative in Pakistan. Japan's continued investment ensures that essential services for children continue during and after emergencies, meeting urgent humanitarian needs while supporting sustainable recovery and stronger systems that benefit children and families for years to come.

Need to shift from reactive to anticipatory action stressed

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan must abandon its firefighting approach to disasters and instead invest in anticipatory action, early warning systems, and climate-resilient land use to ensure beefed up climate resilience of the nation. This was the crux of the discussion at a webinar, titled: "Climate Extremes in Pakistan: Heatwaves, Monsoon Variability and Compound Risks", organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here, said a press release issued on Tuesday. The speakers underlined that Pakistan's forecasting and scientific capacity has improved, but institutional follow-through, land-use planning, and public preparedness have lagged behind. They said public preparedness necessitates a shift towards anticipatory climate action. Key requirements, they added, included enhanced coordination among agencies, strict land-use planning, mapping vulnerable areas, and developing community-specific contingency plans for at-risk populations. Zainab Naeem, Head of Ecological Sustainability and Circular Economy Unit at SDPI, argued that disasters could no longer be treated as isolated events separate from Pakistan's broader development and economic planning. She described the country as trapped in a vicious cycle in which climate shocks and development failures reinforce one another and demanded concrete strategies to cope with increasingly abnormal rainfall patterns Ms. Naeem noted that flooding and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) were damaging agricultural land in the Punjab and Gilgit-Baltistan respectively, driving migration in both regions. She said water scarcity was now hitting industry and agriculture alike, thus Pakistan needed a genuine behavioural shift supported by better public awareness to prepare for the monsoon season. Dr. Furrukh Bashir, Principal Meteorologist and Director of Research and Development at the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), discussed as to how Pakistan's flood risk was evolving. Floods have historically struck in August, driven by weather systems originating over the Bay of Bengal, he said, adding that while Pakistan and the wider region were currently in a positive ENSO phase and have received below-average rainfall overall, this did not rule out flooding a warning underscored by recent events. The basic question, Dr. Bashir said, was whether the public was taking PMD's early warnings seriously.—DNA

Govt's digital reforms to boost connectivity

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD :Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Tuesday said the government had accelerated digital transformation through policy reforms, the expansion of fibre infrastructure, spectrum reforms and nationwide collaboration, expressing confidence that these measures would strengthen connectivity, attract investment and contribute billions of dollars to the economy in the coming years. Speaking at the GSMA Digital Nation Pakistan event, the minister said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had demonstrated a strong commitment to technology even during his tenure as Chief Minister of Punjab by introducing e-facilitation centres, e-libraries, e-employment centres and free public Wi-Fi hotspots She said he also used teleconferencing to conduct meetings with officials in South Punjab, reflecting his early focus on technology-driven governance. Shaza Fatima said that after assuming office, one of the government's first

priorities was to accelerate digital transformation and improve nationwide connectivity. She said the Prime Minister extended full support to the government's fibreisation programme and spectrum reforms, while Pakistan also landed new submarine fibre-optic cables and introduced Sea-WE fibre-related licences to strengthen international connectivity. Shaza Fatima said the spectrum auction generated \$509 million in revenue while securing 480 MHz of spectrum, which she described as the largest spectrum auction in the world. She said the government's pricing strategy, policy framework and rollout obligations would produce long-term dividends by improving digital connectivity across the country. The minister said the telecom industry had already begun the rollout following the auction, enabling the introduction of 5G services in Pakistan for the first time. She said the success of the spectrum auction reflected a whole-of-government approach involving the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), regulators, the Spectrum Auction Committee, the Prime Minister, the Chief of Defence Staff, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, and other stakeholders.

Ahsan urges districts to create 'green channels'

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday urged every district to establish dedicated "green channels" for climate change and flood-related projects to ensure their swift approval and guaranteed funding, stressing the need for stronger institutional preparedness to tackle the growing impacts of climate change. "We are living right through the eye of climate change," the minister said, warning that Pakistan must adopt a proactive, whole-of-government approach to minimise the human and economic losses caused by increasingly frequent extreme weather events. The minister was talking to the media during his visit to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) after receiving a detailed briefing on the prevailing flood situation in the country. He was accompanied by Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain, Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Malik, Minister for Water Resources Mian Muhammad Mueen Wattoo, Minister for Finance Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar. Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan had witnessed devastating floods in 2022 and again in 2025, while this year the country was experiencing extreme temperatures and localized cloudbursts that had triggered flash floods, landslides and urban flooding in different parts of the country. Describing Pakistan as one of the five countries most vulnerable to climate change despite contributing less than one per cent to global greenhouse gas emissions, he said the government had launched coordinated preparedness measures well before the onset of the monsoon season. On the directions of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, he said, an inter-ministerial emergency response committee comprising all relevant stakeholders was constituted about two months ago to monitor emerging threats, coordinate with provincial governments and Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs), and ensure timely preparedness.

The committee, which initially met on a weekly basis, is now holding daily meetings to assess the evolving flood situation and further strengthen the national response, he added. Sharing the latest figures, he said 109 people had lost their lives while around 360 others had been injured in weather-related incidents across the country. He noted that nearly 57 per cent of the fatalities were caused not directly by flooding but by the collapse of houses, walls and other structures, underscoring the urgent need to improve the country's resilience to climate-related disasters. Although floods and extreme temperatures could not be prevented, effective planning, preparedness and timely response could significantly reduce the loss of human lives, he said. He said NDMA's disaster preparedness and response capacity had improved steadily over the years, enabling authorities to carry out timely rescue and relief operations that helped keep casualties comparatively low despite large-scale flooding. The government, he said, was strengthening glacier monitoring systems and, in collaboration with China.—APP

Power sector reforms cut circular debt

ISLAMABAD: The Power Division on Tuesday said circular debt in Pakistan's power sector declined significantly during the last fiscal year, while losses of power distribution companies (DISCOs) continued to fall due to ongoing reforms. According to the Power Division spokesperson, the power sector's circular debt declined from Rs 2,393 billion in fiscal year 2023-24 to Rs 1,614 billion in FY 2024-25. In the federal budget for FY 2025-26, a total of pkr 893 billion was allocated for the power sector; however, a deduction of pkr 98 billion was subsequently made. Had the power sector received the full allocated budgetary payment, the circular debt would have further reduced to pkr 1,577 billion. Due to the budget deduction of pkr 98 billion, the circular debt witnessed an increase of pkr 61 billion during this fiscal year. The losses of Power Distribution Companies (DISCOs), which stood at pkr 591 billion in FY 2023-24, dropped by pkr 193 billion to pkr 397 billion in FY 2024-25. During the current fiscal year, the Power Division has further reduced these losses from pkr 397 billion to pkr 326 billion. Over a two-year period, the Power Division has successfully curtailed overall losses by pkr 265 billion, bringing them down from pkr 591 billion to pkr 326 billion.—APP

Mustafa urges Hepatitis C decisive action to eliminate disease

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Mustafa Kamal, has declared Hepatitis C a national emergency, stressing that the time for silence has passed and that Pakistan must now take decisive action to eliminate the disease. Speaking on the occasion of World Hepatitis Day, the Minister said the country can no longer afford to lose precious lives to a disease that is preventable, detectable and curable. The Minister stated that the gathering was not merely to observe an international day but to reaffirm Pakistan's commitment to ending Hepatitis C. He emphasized that Hepatitis C is no longer just a public health issue but a national emergency requiring an urgent and coordinated response. Highlighting the scale of the challenge, Mustafa Kamal said Pakistan carries high burden of Hepatitis C, with more than 10 million people living with the virus and approximately 110,000 new infections reported each year. He stressed that these figures cannot be treated as routine statistics and require immediate national attention.—APP

CDA chief opens monsoon tree plantation campaign

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA), in collaboration with the Clean and Green Islamabad Movement, formally launched the Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign in Islamabad. During the inaugural ceremony held at Parade Ground, 1,000 saplings were planted to mark the beginning of the campaign. The campaign was inaugurated by Lt. (Retd.) Sohail Ashraf, Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, and Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Chairman, Clean and Green Islamabad Movement, by planting a sapling. The ceremony was attended by Abdullah Khurram Niazi, Member Environment CDA; Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI); Tariq Sadiq, Chairman Founder Group ICCI; Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General United Business Group (UBG); former FPCCI President Zubair Ahmad Malik, presidents of various Islamabad markets, members of the business community, and a large number of citizens. During the event, Abdullah Khurram Niazi, Zafar Bakhtawari, Sardar Tahir Mehmood, Tariq Sadiq, Zubair Ahmad Malik, and Khalid Iqbal Malik also participated in the plantation drive by planting saplings. A special documentary highlighting the social, environmental, and community welfare initiatives of the Clean and Green Islamabad Movement was screened for the audience and received widespread appreciation. Addressing the ceremony, Lt. (Retd.) Sohail Ashraf said that the objective of the Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign was not merely to plant trees but to ensure their proper care and growth so they become a lasting part of Islamabad's green landscape. He said the CDA is undertaking comprehensive initiatives for tree plantation, park development, and environmental sustainability, adding that the support of organizations like the Clean and Green

Islamabad Movement further strengthens these efforts. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that transforming Islamabad into a true Green Capital requires the collective efforts of government institutions, the business community, educational institutions, and the public. He announced that the Movement aims to plant 10,000 trees across the federal capital. He urged the CDA to include the business community in the city's decision-making process and emphasized the need to improve city cleanliness, desilt drainage channels, and ensure the provision of clean drinking water. He further stated that the Clean and Green Islamabad Movement has been actively working for



several years on tree plantation, cleanliness campaigns, environmental protection, installation of water filtration plants, and public awareness initiatives. He reaffirmed the Movement's commitment to continue working closely with the CDA to make Islamabad cleaner, greener, and more beautiful. Abdullah Khurram Niazi, Member Environment CDA, paid tribute to Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari for his outstanding public service. He said he was deeply impressed after watching the documentary showcasing the Movement's achievements, adding that with dedication and commitment, an individual can bring about remarkable positive change. He assured that the CDA would fully support every initia-

tive aimed at improving the city and called upon the business community to actively contribute towards making Islamabad greener and more environmentally sustainable. He further said that traders would be taken into confidence in future policy and decision-making. He informed participants that the city's sanitation system has been outsourced and expressed confidence that visible improvements in cleanliness would soon be witnessed not only in the urban areas but also in Islamabad's rural regions. Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that the business community would continue to play a significant role not only in strengthening the economy but also in protecting the environment and would extend full support for making Islamabad greener and more sustainable. Tariq Sadiq remarked that trees symbolize life, health, and prosperity. He said the plantation campaign would not only improve the environment but also promote environmental awareness and responsibility within society. Concluding the ceremony, Zafar Bakhtawari thanked all participants for their presence and appreciated the efforts of Abdullah Khurram Niazi, noting that he is the son of former Deputy Commissioner Chakwal Dr. Liaqat Niazi, who left a lasting legacy of public service. He expressed confidence that Abdullah Khurram Niazi would follow in his father's footsteps and play a vital role in Islamabad's development and in transforming it into a clean and green city. He added that tree plantation is a form of Sadaqah Jariyah (continuous charity) that plays an important role in reducing environmental pollution. He also thanked the Chairman CDA, Sardar Tahir Mehmood, and all distinguished guests for participating in the campaign. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Lt. (Retd.) Sohail Ashraf, Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, along with other distinguished guests, was presented with commemorative shields in recognition of his support and services toward environmental conservation.

How Burnham can make devolution work

MARIANA MAZZUCATO

ON his first morning as prime minister of the UK, Andy Burnham visited a charity for the homeless and pledged to end rough sleeping nationally by expanding the “Housing First” strategy he pursued as mayor of Greater Manchester. In doing so, he offered an early glimpse of his model of government: a state that provides resources from the center, then entrusts delivery – and the lessons that come with it – to local authorities. The discourse surrounding Burnham’s devolution agenda often presents a false dichotomy between Manchester and Westminster, or localism versus centralism. But there is not necessarily a contradiction between handing power back to “the place where you live” and presiding over the machinery of a capable state at the national level. Consider Burnham’s pledge to “oversee the biggest council house-building program since the postwar period.” The clarity of vision and financing mechanisms come from the center, but implementation is expected to rest with councils and combined authorities on the ground. Each piece is equally critical to successful delivery, as is the connective tissue between them. The choice was never between a strong center and strong councils, cities, and regions. The more important question is whether the two are built to work together, with the center creating leverage that other places can use, and with the lessons those places generate finding their way back to the center. Get this interplay right and the model will be self-reinforcing; get it wrong and you will perpetuate what Britain has had for the past two years: bold ambitions announced from the center, only to be quietly abandoned or compressed into short-term wins that fail to become enduring solutions. Fortunately, cities are already engaged in learning by doing regardless of whether anyone at the center is watching. Manchester’s Bee Network brought buses under public control and taught the combined transit authority how to plan routes and fares as one network, rather than through a patchwork of private contracts. Camden’s pandemic response demonstrated what it actually takes to get people off the street and into shelters. The key question in such cases is whether specific lessons – which capabilities mattered, which relationships had to be built first, which approaches struggled – are captured and transmitted to where they are needed next. What is learned in one place strengthens others. The Public Sector Capabilities Index, which my institute has been developing with Bloomberg Philanthropies across dozens of cities worldwide, was created to close the transmission gap. Rather than simply ranking governments, the index provides a common language and understanding of which capabilities – in-house negotiation, data use, and cross-departmental coordination – are driving results, and which are missing. Such insights are what turn a good local experiment into a transferable one, and scattered pilots into a coherent, self-improving system.

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: 445

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394

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



Burnham is not wrong to make devolution a key priority for the new government. Economic growth cannot show up only in aggregate figures from the Treasury. It must actually be felt in places like Rochdale and Sunderland. But devolved power still needs an engine. Local institutions can convert autonomy into meaningful outcomes only if they have the right capacities and capabilities. To that end, they will need negotiators who can confidently shape deals in the public interest, instead of signing off on terms set by private-sector partners; procurement teams that understand how to maximize the public value of their purchasing power; and public-finance vehicles that function as investors of first resort, rather than merely derisking private capital. The Greater Manchester Good Growth Fund contains seeds of this approach, as does the Camden Community Wealth Fund, a £30 million (\$40 million) place-based social investment fund that is designed to give residents a say in investment decisions. At the same time, only the state can define national missions and catalyze activity across sectors through an outcomes-oriented industrial strategy, bringing various local strategies into a coherent framework that is larger than the sum of its parts. These should be built around shared, clearly articulated challenges, such as achieving net-zero emissions or creating good jobs and resilient supply chains, that give local institutions something worth aligning behind. Equally important, a reformed fiscal framework can distinguish strategic, long-term investment from day-to-day spending, so that a local authority borrowing to build is not judged by the same headline number as one borrowing to cover a shortfall. The Office for Budget Responsibility estimates that a sustained increase in public investment of 1 percent of gross domestic product could boost output by 2.5 percent over 50 years. A Treasury that sees this potential and treats national missions as whole-of-government undertakings rather than as line items for one department can prevent ambitious objectives from being the first thing discarded under pressure. None of this reform vision is in tension with devolution. On the contrary, it is what would give devolution staying power. The harder, less discussed challenge is to make the flow of local lessons back into the system routine rather than incidental. To facilitate this, the UK needs not only new fiscal rules that reward long-term investment, but also a civil service reequipped to negotiate rather than outsource, and mechanisms – like our capabilities index – that will let local experimentation feed back into the broader system instead of evaporating at the boundary of whichever council or combined authority ran it. This does not require choosing between the center and the periphery. It calls for creating connective tissue between them, so that what is learned in one place strengthens others. “Place first, not party first” is the right instinct. But a mayor who becomes prime minister has a rarer opportunity than most of his predecessors. Burnham can build a state where the center’s job is not to control the periphery, but to scale the most promising solutions that the periphery generates. The test of the next 100 days lies not just in whether power moves from Whitehall to Manchester, but in how different authorities work together. These implications extend beyond Westminster, and indeed beyond the UK itself. When Britain takes the G20 presidency in December 2026, it will have an opportunity to demonstrate how place-based policies and national industrial strategies can drive inclusive growth together. By bringing local lessons to the world stage, the UK can make a major contribution to the global conversation about good growth.

Trump’s Unilateral Pause, as Ukraine Enters the Iran War

Qamar Bashir



This distrust is now the conflict’s most dangerous force. At its center lies the Strait of Hormuz. Political scientist Robert Pape argues that Iran’s ability to selectively control passage—without permanently sealing the waterway—could elevate it into a fourth center of global power alongside the United States, China and Russia. Ships and governments prepared to accommodate Tehran may receive passage, while those supporting military action against it face delay, diversion or attack. Geography thereby becomes political leverage

FOR nearly two weeks, the United States has presented the renewed air campaign against Iran as a demonstration of overwhelming military superiority. President Donald Trump, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine have described relentless attacks involving hundreds of aircraft, cruise missiles, drones and precision-guided weapons. Judged exclusively through Western briefings, one might conclude that Iran should already have been rendered militarily helpless. Yet the battlefield is producing a different picture. Iran has neither capitulated nor accepted Washington’s political conditions. It continues launching missiles and drones, threatening American bases and challenging shipping arrangements in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran has now offered its own account of the campaign. Iranian military officials claim that their objective is to “blind” the American war machine by attacking the systems that enable it to detect, interpret and respond. They list command-and-control centers, satellite communications, early-warning radars, Patriot-associated systems, maintenance installations, aircraft hangars, fuel tanks, missile depots and logistical facilities among the targets struck. Tehran also claims to have destroyed an Amazon Web Services facility in Bahrain, which it describes as an important data-processing and intelligence-support center. The vulnerability of U.S. deployments has also emerged in Washington. During a tense congressional exchange, Representative Pat Ryan cited surviving soldiers who said their position lacked meaningful counter-drone, counter-rocket and overhead protection despite earlier requests for stronger defenses. The contradiction between official assurances and accounts attributed to survivors has intensified questions about force protection and command accountability. The argument that every American position is heavily fortified has consequently become difficult to sustain. Advanced systems such as Patriot and THAAD are formidable, but they are neither unlimited nor impenetrable. They can be strained by saturation attacks, maneuvering warheads, decoys and the economics of firing costly interceptors against comparatively inexpensive drones. Trump has acknowledged meetings with major manufacturers—including Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon and Northrop Grumman—to accelerate or even quadruple production. These concerns over munitions stocks formed part of the background to the latest bombing pause, although the administration

presents that pause as an opportunity for diplomacy. However, Tehran suspects that previous ceasefires and negotiations allowed the United States to reorganize, replenish and attack again. Washington says talks are progressing; Iran denies that direct negotiations are underway and remains deeply skeptical. Trump has simultaneously offered diplomacy and threatened renewed “strong military action” if no agreement is reached. This distrust is now the conflict’s most dangerous force. At its center lies the Strait of Hormuz. Political scientist Robert Pape argues that Iran’s ability to selectively control passage—without permanently sealing the waterway—could elevate it into a fourth center of global power alongside the United States, China and Russia. Ships and governments prepared to accommodate Tehran may receive passage, while those supporting military action against it face delay, diversion or attack. Geography thereby becomes political leverage. Pape’s description of Iran as an emerging world power is not a provocative thesis but increasingly supported by the war’s strategic outcome. Iran cannot yet match the United States, China or Russia in economic size, worldwide military reach or nuclear capacity. But power must also be measured by a state’s ability to resist coercion, impose costs and compel other governments to alter their behavior. By surviving the combined military pressure of the United States and Israel, continuing its retaliation and helping force Washington into another pause amid reported pressure on targets and munitions, Iran has frustrated the objectives of a superpower and its most capable regional ally. Iran’s ability to withstand superior forces, disrupt global energy flows and influence the calculations of states far beyond the Middle East supports Pape’s central thesis: the war intended to reduce Iran may instead be accelerating its emergence as the world’s fourth major power. The conflict is also expanding dangerously. Iran has accused Ukraine of attacking an Iranian-flagged vessel in the Caspian Sea, while Kyiv maintains that the targeted ships were carrying military cargo connected to Russia. Iran has promised consequences. Interestingly, Ukraine has risks opening another front while Kyiv remains heavily engaged against Russia. Iran also possesses economic leverage as Kyiv is highly dependent on imported fuel. Ukraine already has defense-for-fuel arrangements with Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE, with additional agreements reportedly being pursued with Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain. Much of the Gulf-origin crude

or petroleum products leave the Gulf through Hormuz before reaching Ukraine. Iran could therefore delay, restrict or threaten Ukraine-linked cargoes, increasing shipping and insurance costs and aggravating Ukrainian fuel shortages. Such sustained disruption at Hormuz would give Tehran a potent means of inflicting economic and logistical pressure on Kyiv. Moreover, Tehran has already demonstrated its ability to launch missiles at Diego Garcia, approximately 4,000 kilometres, or 2,500 miles, from Iran, whereas, Kyiv is closer to Iranian territory and could therefore fall within the range of Iran’s longer-range systems. If Tehran joined Moscow in attacking Ukrainian military or energy infrastructure, Kyiv could face coordinated pressure from Russia in the north and east and Iran from the south, further stretching Ukraine’s limited air-defence interceptors. That would not necessarily mean the “end of Ukraine,” but it could seriously worsen its already precarious military and economic position. Kyiv therefore has a compelling strategic interest in repairing relations with Tehran, explaining or limiting its Caspian operations and avoiding actions that could transform one formidable adversary into two. Against this background, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is again in Washington today (July 27) with Iran at the top of his talks with Trump. Netanyahu continues to frame the desired outcome in terms of ending Iran’s nuclear ambitions and fundamentally weakening its governing system. Yet almost five months of war have shown that bombing may destroy facilities without compelling political surrender. Iran has absorbed enormous punishment, but it has also demonstrated that it can impose costs on the United States, Israel and their regional partners. It demonstrates something strategically more important: superior firepower has not produced submission. The war intended to reduce Iran to weakness may instead be teaching the world how much leverage Iran possesses. Peace will not emerge from another tactical pause designed merely to reload. It requires credible negotiations, reciprocal security guarantees and faithful implementation of whatever is agreed. Otherwise, every pause will become preparation for the next round—and the war meant to contain Iran may continue expanding both Iran’s influence and the battlefield itself.

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

The Fading Fabric of Family

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Festivals like Eid shone as luminous expressions of this unity. Homes were cleansed with care, lamps lit, and the air filled with the aroma of special dishes prepared by loving hands. Families gathered in their finest attire, exchanging embraces that spoke louder than any words. Youngsters sought the elders’ blessings, pressing foreheads to hands worn by labour and prayer

IN days of yore, the family stood as the unshakable foundation of life, its fabric woven with threads of reverence, tenderness, and mutual reliance. The presence of elders within the home was regarded as a divine blessing, their wrinkled brows and measured words carrying the distilled wisdom of decades. They had seen seasons of plenty and seasons of want; their counsel was never hasty, but rooted in experience both sweet and bitter. Matters great and small—marriages, disputes, harvests, or the education of the young—were laid before the family circle. Voices rose and fell in earnest consultation, differences were aired with respect, and decisions emerged strengthened by collective thought. Sharing every joy doubled its brightness; confiding every sorrow lightened its burden. Such openness was not mere habit but a sacred trust, binding hearts as firmly as blood itself. Festivals like Eid shone as luminous expressions of this unity. Homes were cleansed with care, lamps lit, and the air filled with the aroma of special dishes prepared by loving hands. Families gathered in their finest attire, exchanging embraces that spoke louder than any words. Youngsters sought the elders’ blessings, pressing foreheads to hands worn by labour and prayer. Visiting relatives was no burdensome custom but a joyful obligation. One would travel dusty paths or crowded streets to enquire after an ailing uncle, to carry sweets to a widowed aunt, or to offer a strong shoulder in times of grief. To be useful in one another’s sorrows and celebrations was considered not charity but a natural duty, the very pulse of kinship. Then the world shifted. Modernity, with its cease-

less demands and glittering innovations, began to loosen these ancient ties. Technology arrived as a herald of progress, and the internet promised to shrink distances, allowing voices to reach across oceans in an instant. Yet in bridging the far, it often widened the gulf between those who dwelt beneath the same roof. The thoughtful purchase of Eid cards, selected with a discerning eye and inscribed with heartfelt sentiments penned in one’s own hand, has given way to instant messages generated by artificial intelligence—polished, abundant, yet strangely hollow. What once touched the soul now risks becoming mechanical routine. Worse still, we have turned our gaze outward, forgetting the sorrows and joys nearest to us. We scroll endlessly through the lives of strangers, offering likes and comments to people whose names we barely know, while the quiet struggles of our own parents or the silent longings of our children pass unnoticed. We share stirring posts about kindness, patience, and gratitude—words that stir the conscience for a fleeting moment—yet how rarely do we live even a fraction of their wisdom. Our digital connections resemble bubbles upon still water; shimmering, fragile, and empty at the core. They burst without warning, leaving behind only the memory of illusion. Within the walls of many homes today, a poignant scene unfolds. In one modest room, a father pores over his telephone, chasing distant conversations or business affairs. Beside him, the mother engages with images and voices from afar, her gentle smile reserved for the screen. The children, heads bent over glowing devic-

es, laugh at jests from unknown companions or compete for admiration among virtual friends. Though seated within arm’s reach, they inhabit separate worlds. The warmth of real voices, the comfort of a shared glance, the simple pleasure of recounting the day’s small events—these have grown rare. We have learned the art of being present in absence, and absent in presence. The truth, spoken plainly, wounds the heart; we have changed profoundly. We know little of one another now beyond the bare fact that we yet live. The elder’s stories gather dust on forgotten shelves; the family consultation has fallen silent; the spontaneous visit to a relative’s home feels like an inconvenience rather than a delight. Our loved ones, who would stand beside us when fortune smiles or when tempests rage, receive only fragments of our attention. It is they, not the distant crowd, who truly matter. We must therefore resolve to reclaim the substance of life. Let us set aside the screens at certain hours, lift our eyes to those around us, and rediscover the irreplaceable value of real companionship. Let consultation return to the family table, visits become frequent once more, and festivals regain their former glow of devotion. Technology need not be our master; it can serve if we command it with wisdom. Only by nurturing the bonds with those who share our daily bread and our deepest affections can the family fabric regain its former strength and beauty. In such renewal lies our truest happiness, for the heart finds its home not in the applause of multitudes, but in the quiet fidelity of kin.

Briefs

Iran's
Bushehr
airport still
out of order

FROM PAGE 01
Observers note that Iran's response to Oman's proposal will be closely watched, as it could signal whether Tehran is willing to compromise on its long-held position of dominance over the strait.

Oil prices
fall 1% as
investors
weigh...

FROM PAGE 01
compared with 5.9 million in the previous week. Elsewhere, US crude oil stockpiles likely fell last week alongside gasoline, while distillate stocks likely rose, a preliminary Reuters poll showed on Monday.

Bilawal
Bhutto
alleges
rigging in...

FROM PAGE 01
that reconciliation and dialogue were the only way forward. Bilawal's fiery speech reflects growing frustration within the PPP over what it sees as systematic efforts to sideline the party in AJK politics. His remarks also highlight the broader challenge of ensuring free and fair elections in the region, where political tensions, ethnic divisions, and security concerns often overshadow democratic processes. The PPP chairman's call for accountability and reconciliation underscores the urgency of addressing the grievances of the Kashmiri people. His criticism of the state's approach—favoring one party, using force against protestors, and ignoring the need for dialogue—resonated strongly with the crowd in Muzaffarabad.

Pakistan,
Qatar
pledge...

FROM PAGE 01
They also reiterated their resolve to further strengthen cooperation between the interior ministries of the two countries, emphasizing the importance of sustained engagement in addressing shared security challenges. Regional developments and the broader security environment also featured prominently in the discussions. Both sides exchanged views on the prevailing situation in the region and underscored the need for continued cooperation in promoting peace, stability, and collective security. The two ministers agreed to reinforce mutual collaboration and partnership in matters relating to internal security, reflecting the growing strategic convergence between Pakistan and Qatar. Speaking on the occasion, Naqvi said Pakistan remains firmly committed to expanding cooperation with Qatar in the fields of security and other areas of mutual interest, adding that closer institutional coordination would further strengthen the longstanding relationship between the two friendly nations. During the meeting, Naqvi also conveyed his heartfelt condolences to his Qatari counterpart on the passing of his father, former Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

Fresh spell
of monsoon
from today

FROM PAGE 01
most upper and central parts of the country. Rain and thundershowers, accompanied by scattered heavy falls and at times very heavy rainfall, are expected in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Murree, Galliat, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Mandi Bahaudin, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Wazirabad and Sialkot from July 29 to August 4, with occasional gaps. Narowal, Lahore, Okara, Kasur, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Faisalabad, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh, Chiniot, Khushab, Mianwali, Layyah, Bhakkar, Noorpur Thal, Sargodha, Sahiwal and Pakpattan are likely to experience similar weather patterns.

UN Secy General urges full
international support for Syria

*“We have no agenda in Syria,” Guterres said.
“Our role is to support progress that is led by Syrians”*

DNA

DAMASCUS: United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres called on the international community to fully support Syria's reconstruction and mobilize the resources needed to help its people rebuild after years of destruction, stressing that the country's next phase must be led by Syrians themselves. In an interview with the Syrian Al-Ikhbariya TV channel on Monday during his visit to Damascus, Guterres said one of his main priorities is to encourage greater international engagement with Syria and rally support for rebuilding infrastructure and restoring essential services. “We have no agenda in Syria,” Guterres said. “Our role is to support progress that is led by Syrians.” Guterres described his return to Syria as “a special moment,” saying he was encouraged by what he viewed as the country's progress following liberation and emphasizing that his visit reflected

the United Nations' solidarity with Syria. He said rebuilding the country's infrastructure and restoring education, healthcare and social services would require substantial international assistance beyond the Syrian government's financial capacity. The UN chief said continued regional tensions make international support for Syria increasingly important, adding that despite the challenges, the country is moving in the right direction. On the occupied Syrian Golan, Guterres reaffirmed that the Golan is Syrian territory and said Israeli violations are unacceptable. He added that Israel's actions extend beyond its occupation of the Golan to include repeated violations of the 1974 Disengagement Agreement, causing unnecessary suffering for Syrians in the area, and the United Nations continues to monitor those violations. Addressing transitional justice, Guterres said the Syrian government is determined to move forward with accountability for crimes committed in the country while cre-

ating conditions that support meaningful national reconciliation. He stressed that justice and reconciliation should advance together rather than be seen as conflicting objectives. He also called for greater international support for victims, survivors and the families of the missing, noting that hundreds of thousands of people remain unaccounted for. He emphasized the importance of supporting the mechanism responsible for determining the fate of the missing, saying uncertainty over loved ones remains one of the greatest tragedies facing Syrian families. Guterres said he was deeply affected by his visit to Saydnaya Prison, describing it as “horrific” and noting that many people had been killed and tortured there. He urged the international community to support Syrian efforts to assist victims and survivors and uncover the fate of those still missing. On displacement, Guterres said hundreds of thousands of Syrians have returned to their communities and that the number

of internally displaced people has begun to decline. He said Syria requires broad support from UN agencies and the international community to facilitate their reintegration into society and the economy, while encouraging the private sector to help create small businesses that contribute to recovery. The UN chief praised his discussions with President Ahmad al-Sharaa, the foreign minister and other Syrian officials, saying he would do everything possible to mobilize international support for Syria.

He described Syria as a historic crossroads of civilizations and expressed confidence that the country can overcome its current challenges through transitional justice and national reconciliation. Earlier Monday, at the conclusion of his visit to Syria, Guterres reaffirmed that the United Nations stands alongside Syria and called on the international community to support the Syrian people during what he described as a pivotal stage in the country's future.

PCB unveils schedule, squads for
National Champions Cup 2026

*Seven-match 50-over tournament will mark start
of Pakistan's 2026-27 domestic cricket season*

THE Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Monday announced the squads and schedule for the National Champions Cup slated to be held from August 11 to 18 at the Multan Cricket Stadium. The seven-match 50-over List A tournament will mark the start of Pakistan's 2026-27 domestic cricket season, with all fixtures to be played as day-night encounters. Each match is scheduled to begin at 3pm local time.

The competition will feature four teams – Pakistan Greens, Pakistan Whites, Pakistan Blues and Pakistan Gold – competing in a single round-robin format. The top two sides at the end of the league stage will qualify for the final on August 18. The national selection committee has named fixed playing XIs for each team, alongside a 13-player reserve pool. Teams must field the announced elevens throughout the tournament, with reserve players eligible to replace only injured or concussed players. The reserves will remain with their respective squads during training sessions and on match days. The tournament will be led by four prominent captains, with Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shadab Khan, Saim Ayub and Sahibzada Farhan entrusted with leading their respective sides. According to the PCB, the 44-player squad and reserve pool have been

selected as part of Pakistan's preparations for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2027, with the domestic competition expected to play a key role in identifying and assessing talent ahead of the global event.

Squads: Pakistan Greens

Playing XI: Shadab Khan (c), Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Farhan Yousuf, Mehran Mumtaz, Mohammad Hasnain, Mohammad Salman Mirza, Naseem Shah, Omair Bin Yousuf, Saad Baig (wk) and Sameer Minhas.

Support staff: Ijaz Ahmed Jnr (head coach), Rehan Riaz (bowling coach), Khurram Shahzad (batting coach) and Fahad Iqbal (fielding coach).

Pakistan Whites

Playing XI: Saim Ayub (c), Akif Javed, Ali Raza, Haris Rauf, Hasan Nawaz, Khushdil Shah, Mohsin Riaz, Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Saad Masood, Shahzaib Khan and Usman Khan (wk). Support staff: Iqbal Imam (head coach), Samiullah Niazi (bowling coach), Faisal Athar (batting coach) and Saqib Faqir (fielding coach).

Pakistan Blues

Playing XI: Sahibzada Farhan (c), Abdullah Shafique, Ahmed Daniyal, Arifat Minhas, Hasan Ali, Hussain Talat, Jahandad Khan, Rohail Nazir (wk), Shamiy Hussain, Sufyan Moqim, Taimur Khan (wicketkeeper).

Support staff: Aiazaz Cheema (head coach), Fahad Masood (bowling coach), Naveed Latif (batting coach) and Hussain Khosa (fielding coach).

Pakistan Gold

Playing XI: Shaheen Shah Afridi (c), Abdul Samad, Abdul Subhan, Faisal Akram, Haider Ali, Kamran Ghulam, Maaz Sadaqat, Mohammad Nawaz, Muhammad Akhlaq (wk), Muhammad Imran and Saad Khan. Support staff: Misbah-ul-Haq (head coach), Waqas Ahmed (bowling coach), Riffatullah Mohmand (batting coach) and Atiq-ur-Rehman (fielding coach).

Reserve pool

Batters: Tayyab Tahir, Mohammad Suleman, Mohammad Faiq and Muhammad Irfan Khan

All-rounders: Mubasir Khan, Danish Aziz

Pacers: Arshad Iqbal, Muhammad Salman, Razaullah, Saqib Khan, Mohammad Amir Khan, Shahnawaz Dahani

Wicketkeeper: Haseebullah

Tournament schedule (All matches at Multan Cricket Stadium; starts at 3pm local time)

- August 11: Pakistan Greens vs Pakistan Whites
- August 12: Pakistan Blues vs Pakistan Gold
- August 13: Pakistan Blues vs Pakistan Whites
- August 14: Pakistan Gold vs Pakistan Greens
- August 15: Pakistan Blues vs Pakistan Greens
- August 16: Pakistan Gold vs Pakistan Whites
- August 18: Final (top two teams).

– APP

EU to fall five million
ICT workers short of
2030 target: Eurofound

BRUSSELS: Europe is set to fall five million jobs short of its 2030 Digital Decade target of having 20 million information and communications technology (ICT) specialists employed in the European Union by 2030, according to EU research agency Eurofound. A new Eurofound report, “IT sector in focus: Evolution of the EU's digital workforce”, found that education and vocational education and training systems in most EU member states are failing to meet current and projected demand for ICT skills.

As a result, labour migration from non-EU countries has become a primary, and increasingly important driver for recruitment in the sector. The report said the number of ICT specialists in the EU rose from 5.6 million in 2011 to 10.3 million in 2024, an increase of 81 percent. Their share of total EU employment also increased from 3 percent to 5 percent over the same period. Women made up fewer than one in five (19 percent) ICT specialists in the EU27 in 2024, while the gender pay gaps in the broader information and communication sector were just below 20 percent in 2022, compared with 13 percent for the workforce in general. The report said addressing labour shortages requires policy measures focused on expanding the domestic supply of digital talent and facilitating labour mobility, rather than improving job quality, as ICT jobs already offer above-average pay and working conditions. – APP

FC Balochistan
continues relief work

QUETTA: FC Balochistan (North) continued rescue and relief operations in District Naseerabad amid severe weather conditions. As part of the ongoing relief efforts, FC Balochistan evacuated affected families to safer locations and ensured the timely delivery of assistance to flood-affected communities across the district. During the operation, relief teams distributed food, clean drinking water, medical assistance, and other essential items are distributed among the affected people. Rescue and relief activities are continuing uninterrupted through the coordinated efforts of FC Balochistan (North) and the district administration. FC Balochistan (North) said it is taking all possible measures to protect the lives and property of residents in the flood-affected areas. – APP

South Korean hockey
team arrives

ISLAMABAD: The South Korean National Hockey Team arrived in Islamabad on Monday night for a four-match FIH-approved international test series against Pakistan, marking the first bilateral hockey tour of the country in nearly 20 years. The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) said the four matches will be played in Islamabad on July 30, August 2, August 4 and August 7. PHF President Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani welcomed the Korean team, calling the tour a landmark moment for the revival of international hockey in Pakistan. “This is a proud and memorable occasion for Pakistan hockey. After almost two decades, we are once again welcoming an international team to our home grounds,” Wani said. “We extend a warm welcome to the Korean National Hockey Team and are confident that this series will strengthen the longstanding friendship between our two countries while promoting high-quality international hockey.” The PHF said the series would provide valuable international exposure to both sides and contribute to Pakistan's preparations for upcoming major competitions. It described the tour as reflecting growing confidence within the international hockey community in Pakistan's ability to host world-class events in a safe and professional environment. The federation expressed gratitude to the Government of Pakistan, security agencies and other stakeholders for their support in making the tour possible. The PHF invited hockey fans across the country to attend the matches in large numbers and support the national team as Pakistan takes another step toward restoring its standing on the international hockey map. – APP

Pentagon says it will not finish
spending Ukraine funds until
year Trump leaves office

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's administration has told members of Congress it will not finish spending \$400 million Congress has authorized for aid to Ukraine until fiscal year 2029, even as Kyiv runs critically low on weapons it needs to fend off Russian missile attacks. In May, the Department of Defense sent a letter to lawmakers outlining its spending plan, a source familiar with the document said on Monday. Democrats and some of Trump's fellow Republicans had criticized the Pentagon for sitting on aid for Kyiv, which members of both parties had backed last year. Two months after the letter was sent, the funds still have not been disbursed or even obligated by being put on contract, the source said. Congress has repeatedly complained about the slow pace of spending. The letter has not been previously reported. Zelensky is expected to meet with Trump at the White House on Tuesday, where he will keep pressing for urgently needed air defense capabilities and completing a drone deal with the US, a source familiar with the plans said. After that meeting, he is expected to come to the US Capitol for a meeting with all 100 senators. The House of Rep-

resentatives is out of Washington for its summer recess. Two sources said members of Congress were unhappy about the Pentagon's timeline, which they consider unusually slow for an ongoing conflict.

The delivery timeline in the letter said the funds would be obligated during fiscal 2026, which ends on September 30, and final delivery of all assistance is estimated in the year ending September 30, 2029.

Trump's second term ends on January 20, 2029.

The US president has lately taken a positive tone toward Ukraine, signing off on a proposal to give a license for Ukraine to manufacture Patriot interceptor missiles and signaling that he would sign a Russia sanctions bill put forward by the late Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, a close Trump ally in the Senate. Zelensky will attend Graham's funeral on Tuesday. Graham's sudden death this month raised the question of whether Trump's recent tilt in favor of Kyiv would last without Graham's advocacy, especially legislation to sanction Russia and military assistance for Ukraine. The Pentagon did not immediately respond to a request for comment. – APP

PM Shehbaz
Sharif orders
expansion...

FROM PAGE 01

The meeting was informed that the amendments made to the policy aimed to ensure the production of environment-friendly petrol and diesel compliant with Euro-V standards and to reduce furnace oil and low-quality petroleum products. Federal ministers Ahmad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ali Pervaz Malik, Ahsan Iqbal, relevant federal secretaries, and senior government officials attended the meeting, commitments, reducing air pollution, and providing better-quality fuel to the public. PM Shehbaz directed that reforms be introduced to improve the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority's (Ogra) performance to promote competition, transparency, and investment in the energy sector. He emphasised that effective and timely implementation of the new policy must be ensured, saying no negligence or delay in this regard will be tolerated under any circumstances. The prime minister directed relevant ministries and institutions to expedite the reform process while maintaining close contact with all stakeholders. He affirmed that the government will continue to take all possible measures to introduce sustainable reforms in the energy sector, promote modern technology, and provide a conducive environment for investment. To promote the amended policy regarding brownfield refineries, the premier directed that roadshows be held in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf countries. PM Shehbaz appreciated the petroleum minister and his team's performance over the amendment to the refining policy on brownfield refineries. The meeting was given a detailed briefing on the progress of upgradation of oil refineries in the country, reforms in the energy sector, and implementation of the policy.

‘Militants
elements
perusing...

FROM PAGE 01

public rallies and conducted their election campaigns as usual. “The response from the people was spectacular.” However, he said, the banned outfit could not accept this political activity and the peaceful and transparent elections. He also referred to the press conference held earlier in the day by senior AJK officials. “A violent group that does not accept progress, development and Kashmir's unbreakable relationship with Pakistan resorted to violence and tried to sabotage peace,” the information minister said, adding, “The reason was that the people of Kashmir had rejected them and chosen the path of elections.” Tarar added that arms had also been recovered from the violent elements, who had also resorted to firing earlier. “From day one, we have been saying that they are not peaceful protesters. This is a violent group. They are militants working on a foreign agenda and receiving Indian funding,” he stated. He said that these violent actors had now been “exposed”.

Global electric
car growth
slows in H1

MUNICH: Global electric vehicle registrations continued to rise in the first half of the year, but growth slowed sharply, according to a study by consultancy PwC covering 43 major markets. Around 6.6 million fully battery-powered electric vehicles, or BEVs, were newly registered, up 9 percent from the same period last year. While that still represents growth, the pace has slowed considerably. Registrations had risen by more than a third in the first half of 2025 and by almost a third over the whole of last year. China was the main factor behind the slowdown. The world's largest electric vehicle market by far shrank by 5 percent in the first half of the year to just under 3.6 million BEVs, according to PwC. However, registrations edged up again in the second quarter. As the overall car market contracted at the same time, fully electric vehicles accounted for 44 percent of all new registrations in China during the quarter. – APP

POA Rescues Neglected Sprint Star Faiqa Riaz

*Faiqa justified the POA's decision with a record-breaking performance, clocking
11.64 seconds in the women's 100m event to establish a new national record*

AFZAL JAVED

GALSGOW: In what is being described as a glaring example of official negligence, Pakistan's newly crowned national 100m record holder, Faiqa Riaz, was reportedly denied sponsorship for the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2026 by the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) and the Athletics Federation of Pakistan (AFP). According to the details, the Athletics Federation of Pakistan, reportedly in coordination with PSB officials, refused to sponsor Faiqa's participation despite her outstanding performances and her recent achievement of setting a new national record in the women's 100m event. Following the refusal, the Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) stepped in to ensure the talented sprinter's participation by bearing all of her expenses. Acting on the special directives of POA President Arif Saeed, the NOC facilitated her inclusion in the Commonwealth Games, giving Pakistan's fastest woman the opportunity to showcase her talent on the international stage. Faiqa justified the POA's decision with a re-



cord-breaking performance, clocking 11.64 seconds in the women's 100m event to establish a new national record. She eclipsed the previous mark of 11.81 seconds, jointly held by Olympian Sadaf Siddiqui and Naseem Hameed, officially becoming Pakistan's fastest woman in the event.

Expressing her gratitude, Faiqa Riaz thanked POA President Arif Saeed and Secretary General Khalid Mahmood for their timely support, saying that without the POA's intervention she would not have been able to compete at the Commonwealth Games or achieve her historic national record. She said representing Pakistan at prestigious international events is the dream of every athlete, as nothing is more inspiring than raising the national flag and making the country proud on the global stage. Despite limited facilities and resources, Pakistani athletes continue to work tirelessly and give their best to bring honour to the nation. She stressed that talented athletes must be provided with opportunities to compete internationally if Pakistan expects them to improve their performances and win laurels for the country.

Briefs

PSX sheds
over 638
points amid
selling
pressure

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to a bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 638.45 points, a negative change of 0.36 percent, to close at 177,623.88 points against 178,262.34 points recorded in the previous trading session. The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 958.014 million shares, compared to 1.032 billion shares traded on Monday, while the traded value increased slightly to Rs41.566 billion from Rs41.020 billion. Market capitalisation declined to Rs19.951 trillion from Rs20.021 trillion recorded a day earlier. Out of 495 companies that traded in the ready market, 156 posted gains, 306 suffered losses, while 33 remained unchanged, reflecting a predominantly bearish trend across the market. Cnergyco PK led the volume chart with 273.054 million shares, followed by WorldCall Telecom with 72.250 million shares and Trust Brokerage with 63.665 million shares. Among the top gainers, Khairpur Sugar Mills Limited surged by Rs121.56 to close at Rs1,337.15, while Baba Farid Sugar Mills Limited advanced by Rs49.72 to settle at Rs546.95.—APP

Rupee gains
01 paisa
against Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.85, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs277.86. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 278.75 and Rs 278.95, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 0.75 and closed at Rs 315.91 against the previous day's closing of Rs316.66, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).—APP

Israeli forces
arrest 25
Palestinians
across West
Bank

LONDON: Israeli forces arrested at least 25 Palestinians across the occupied West Bank on Tuesday, Palestinian media reported. Eight people were detained in Nablus, seven in Tulkarem and its suburbs, three south of Hebron and one in Kafr Qaddum, according to the Palestinian Wafa news agency in Ramallah, three young Palestinians and three former prisoners were also arrested during raids, while additional operations took place in Jenin and nearby towns. The arrests come amid a broader Israeli security crackdown following a July 24 settler raid in the village of Tal, southwest of Nablus, that left at least four Palestinians and two Israelis dead.—APP

Aurangzeb chairs GM Corn meeting to boost agriculture

The Finance Minister acknowledged the concerns raised by various stakeholders and emphasized that technological advancement and protection of existing industries must progress together through practical and evidence-based solutions.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired the second meeting of the Committee on Genetically Modified (GM) Corn to review progress on the Committee's mandate and deliberate on the way forward for adoption of GM corn technology in Pakistan. Opening the meeting, the Finance Minister called for focused and constructive deliberations, emphasizing that the Committee should build consensus through scientific evidence, technical expertise, and international best practices while addressing the concerns of all stakeholders. The Committee reviewed the follow-up actions from its previous meeting, including the circulation of policy documents and written submissions received from stakeholders. Members exchanged views on the opportunities presented by GM corn technology to enhance agricultural productivity, strengthen food security, reduce import dependence, and improve competitiveness, while also discussing the need to safeguard Pakistan's maize milling industry, export markets, and existing agricultural value chains. The meeting also considered stakeholders' recommendations regarding coexistence of GM and non-GM maize, regulatory oversight, biosafety protocols, tracea-



bility, storage infrastructure, and supply chain management. Participants highlighted the importance of developing a structured transition framework supported by effective regulatory supervision and international best practices to facilitate the adoption of new technology while preserving export competitiveness. The Finance Minister acknowledged the concerns raised by various stakeholders and emphasized that technological advancement and protection of existing industries

must progress together through practical and evidence-based solutions. He observed that the coexistence of GM and non-GM maize is a practical possibility and underscored the need for a robust regulatory framework, and appropriate supply chain arrangements to support a well-managed transition while protecting Pakistan's agricultural and export interests. To facilitate detailed technical deliberations, the Committee agreed to constitute a working group comprising representatives

from relevant government organizations, industry, exporters, and technology providers. The working group will develop consensus-based recommendations on the regulatory framework, transition strategy, biosafety measures, and supply chain requirements for consideration by the Committee. The Finance Minister emphasized that the working group should engage closely with all stakeholders and develop consensus-based recommendations on a priority basis, reaffirming the Government's com-

mitment to promoting innovation and modern agricultural technologies while safeguarding Pakistan's agricultural sector and export interests. The meeting was attended by representatives from public as well as private sector including Coordinator to Prime Minister on Agriculture and Food Security, Federal Secretary for National Food Security and Research, CEO Pakistan Green Initiative, relevant business and export sectors as well as technical and scientific experts with domain knowledge.

Oman proposes regional
mechanism with voluntary fees
to manage Strait of Hormuz

MUSCAT: Oman has presented a proposal to Iran for a joint regional mechanism to manage the Strait of Hormuz with voluntary fees, a Gulf source told Reuters on Tuesday. Iran effectively shut the strait to ships other than its own after the US and Israel attacked on February 28. A deal last month between the United States and Iran partially reopened it, but the agreement collapsed in early July after Iran fired on ships using a channel it does not approve. Under the Omani proposal, Iran would not exercise sole control of the vital waterway, the source added. Iran has said it wants to manage the strait alongside Oman, which controls the opposite shore, and charge service fees to ships that use it. Washington wants to return to the status quo prior to the war, when ships were able to pass freely with no payments, and says charging mandatory fees would be illegal. The proposal is based on the Strait of Malacca, where Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore ask ships to pay voluntary contributions to fund navigation, environmental protection and search-and-rescue operations. The US abruptly suspended a campaign of air strikes against Iran over the weekend, raising hopes of a diplomatic solution that would allow shipping to resume in the Strait of Hormuz - which carried a fifth of global energy supplies before the conflict. President Donald Trump said on Monday the United States was having "good talks" with Iran and there was a chance of a deal, but he warned that US strikes would resume if the negotiations failed to deliver. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi discussed the Strait of Hormuz with his Omani counterpart on Monday. "He emphasized the need to strengthen cooperation and advance joint diplomatic efforts to establish stability in the region, and lift the insecurity imposed on the Strait of Hormuz due to the aggressive actions of the United States," according to Iran's foreign ministry statement. A senior Iranian source confirmed to Reuters on Tuesday that Oman has presented new ideas for the management of the Strait of Hormuz, but the source said that Tehran has yet to respond.—APP

Marcon pledges support on
visit to French fire zone

LEGE-CAP FERRET, France: French President Emmanuel Macron urged fire crews to "stay strong" as they battled Monday to bring a monster wildfire under control, warning that the fight will take time but vowing, "We will win this battle together." On a visit to a coordination center for the massive firefighting effort in southwest France, Macron heard how the blaze raging since last week has been wildly unpredictable, transforming at times into a self-feeding fire storm as it burned through an area four times the size of Paris and forced 220,000 people to flee their homes. "We're facing a completely unprecedented fire," Macron said, describing the situation as France's worst fire-related crisis since World War II. He praised firefighting teams who stopped the inferno's progression Monday after days of spreading flames that edged toward the wine region city of Bordeaux. But with woodlands still smoldering, he and other government officials cautioned that the battle isn't yet won, with forests turned tinder-dry by successive heat waves this year and another forecast for this week. "The weeks ahead will be hard. We must hold firm," Macron said. With thousands of firefighters on the ground and rotations of water- and retardant-dropping aircraft, it became a race against time Monday to contain the blaze before temperatures soar, with national weather service forecasts of 35 C (95 F) and above in southwest France from Tuesday. Authorities also are working to feed, shelter and care for evacuees who fled in staggering numbers: 250,000 in the southwest, driven away by two fires. Macron spoke of displaced people "traumatized" by the upheaval and "who sometimes have lost everything." No new evacuations were announced Monday. But with France about to enter its peak August tourist season, authorities for the Gironde region around Bordeaux worked to keep vacationers away, banning holiday camps for children and for people with disabilities. Government ministers also urged people not to travel to the region that is popular for its Atlantic beaches, famous wines and some of France's largest expanses of forests. Crews using earth movers tore up strips of forest and scrubland to create barren spaces, intended to block the flames that officials said had come within 15 kilometers (10 miles) of Bordeaux's outskirts. Farmers kept fire crews supplied with water, transporting it to them in tanks. Briefing Macron, the Gironde region's fire chief explained how crews had wrestled with the blaze unlike any they'd previously tackled, extraordinarily virulent and capricious, "a fire that's going everywhere" and which generated electrical storms that sparked more flare-ups. "The last 24 hours went well, thanks to your work" Macron told firefighters.—APP

Syrian authorities
strengthen fire
prevention steps

DAMASCUS: Syrian authorities are strengthening fire prevention measures and firefighting readiness amid soaring temperatures through awareness campaigns, field operations and coordination among relevant bodies. The Ministry of Emergency and Disaster Management on May 14 launched an awareness campaign, "Your Awareness is Your Duty ... Together Let's Protect Our Crops from Fires," which informs farmers and promotes compliance with fire prevention measures ahead of the harvest season. Minister of Emergency and Disaster Management Raed Al-Saleh said protecting crops requires cooperation between authorities and citizens, adding that adherence to safety instructions helps prevention plans. According to statistics released by the ministry, 2,367 fire incidents were recorded during the first quarter of 2026, compared with 2,261 incidents during the same period last year. Wissam Zeidan, director of the Search and Rescue Program at the Syrian Civil Defense, said the growth could be partly attributed to expanded deployment of response teams and improved monitoring operations. Zeidan said that firefighting teams face several operational challenges, including difficult terrain, smoke exposure, water shortages and other hazards in some forest areas. He added that efforts are continuing to develop firefighting capabilities and expand team deployment, with the average emergency response time reaching about eight minutes, according to ministry assessments. The Forest and Fire Monitoring Platform at the General Organization for Remote Sensing warned in July of increased fire risks in several forest areas due to high temperatures, low humidity and dry vegetation.—DNA

Kerala looks
to Arab
travelers to
drive tourism
growth

NEW DELHI: Kerala will prioritize travelers from Arab countries and is setting aside 20 percent of its promotion funds to attract them to visit, the state's tourism minister said on Tuesday, as the sector plays an increasing role in the region's growth. Located on India's southwestern coast and bordered by the Arabian Sea, Kerala is one of the country's most ecologically diverse regions. To its natural mix of beaches, mountains, wildlife, and waterways, the state's tourism authorities are also investing in developing the wellness sector, as Kerala is widely regarded as the birthplace of Ayurveda, India's traditional system of medicine. Recognizing that tourists from Gulf Cooperation Council countries are among the highest-spending travelers in the world — and are increasingly interested in Kerala — the local government is stepping up its efforts and earmarking 20 percent of its marketing budget to increase arrivals from Arab states, the state's Tourism Minister P. C. Vishnunadh told Arab News. "We need to do more marketing to present our Kerala in a very honorable, respectful manner to our Arab friends — our culture, our tradition, our Ayurveda. East Kerala is the home of Ayurveda," he said, adding that the efforts will be tapping into an already growing interest in Kerala's offerings. "In the last two-three years, we've noticed that there is an increase in Arab tourists in Kerala, especially from Oman. Oman is geographically closest to Kerala, lying just across the Arabian Sea. Arab tourists also come from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE, which are home to large Malayali populations. Malayalis are the dominant ethnolinguistic group in the state. "Our Malayalis are very much into these Arab countries. So, we have good relations, historical relations, trade relations. With all these things, we decided to do more in Arab countries regarding our tourism," Vishnunadh said. "(There is) a thousand-year-long relationship between Arab countries and Kerala. So, they are all part of our great history." In 2025, the state hosted 100,000 Arab tourists, and the minister plans to increase the number to 300,000 in the near future. Next month, the state government will co-organize the 2026 Indo-Arab Connect Summit in Kochi, which will bring together more than 200 tour operators and travel agents from the Middle East.—APP

Privatisation Commission board okays
DISCOs restructuring plans

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Privatisation Commission (PC) Board, in its meeting held under the chairmanship of Mr. Muhammad Ali, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation and Chairman of the Privatisation Commission, recommended that the Cabinet Committee on Privatisation (CCoP) approve the restructuring plans and schemes of arrangement for the privatisation of the first batch of power distribution companies (DISCOs), namely Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO), Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO), and Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO). The restructuring plans and schemes of arrangement have been prepared on the basis of the audited financial statements of the three DISCOs for the period ended March 31, 2026. The proposed framework is designed to maximise value for the Government of Pakistan while ensuring that the transactions remain commercially viable and attractive to prospective private-sector investors. Under the proposed structure, a Government-owned Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) will be established to carve out selected assets and liabilities of the three DISCOs, facilitating an efficient and commercially viable transaction structure. The Board was also apprised of strong interest from both domestic and international investors in the privatisation of the first batch of DISCOs. The deadlines for submission of Expressions of Interest (EOIs) are August 7, 2026, for FESCO; August 21, 2026, for GEPCO; and September 7, 2026, for IESCO. In a separate agenda item, the Board constituted two

Transaction Committees to oversee the outsourcing process for Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi airports. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been appointed as Financial Adviser for the outsourcing of Islamabad International Airport, while the process for appointing Financial Advisers for the outsourcing of Lahore and Karachi airports is underway. The Board also approved the appointment of RSM Avais Hyder Liaquat Nauman, Chartered Accountants, as auditors for privatisation transactions completed during the financial years 2024-25 to 2026-27. The firm will undertake separate audits of each completed privatisation transaction, while the annual audit of the Privatisation Commission's financial statements for the financial years 2025-26 to 2027-28 will be carried out by BDO Ebrahim & Co., Chartered Accountants,

which was appointed earlier through a competitive bidding process. The Board reaffirmed its commitment to implementing the Government's privatisation programme in a transparent, competitive, and professionally managed manner aimed at promoting efficiency, attracting private investment, and maximising value for the Government and the people of Pakistan. Islamabad: The Capital Development Authority (CDA), in collaboration with the Clean and Green Islamabad Movement, formally launched the Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign in Islamabad. During the inaugural ceremony held at Parade Ground, 1,000 saplings were planted to mark the beginning of the campaign. The campaign was inaugurated by Lt. (Retd.) Sohail Ashraf, Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad.



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

f A M Bhatti | @EditorDnanews

✉ editor.dnanews@gmail.com | dnanews.com.pk

Briefs

Pakistan
urged to
conduct
HIV survey

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Leading public health experts and infectious diseases specialists have urged the government of Pakistan to conduct its first nationwide HIV prevalence survey, as they warned that HIV has spread beyond high-risk groups and that the country lacks accurate data on the true scale of the epidemic. Eminent public health expert and Vice Chancellor of the Health Services Academy, Prof Shahzad Ali Khan, described the situation as a major public health emergency, saying 729 children diagnosed with HIV in just six months in Sindh alone this year amounted to a paediatric HIV epidemic requiring immediate epidemiological investigation. He said poor infection prevention and control practices, including the reuse of syringes, intravenous drip sets and cannulas, along with inadequately screened blood transfusions, appeared to be the major drivers of infection among children. Prof Shahzad Ali Khan warned that HIV was increasingly spreading through a bridging population into the general community and called for nationwide epidemiological investigations, mass HIV screening, self-testing, public awareness campaigns and contact tracing similar to the Covid19 response. He added that banning reusable or 10cc syringes alone would not solve the problem without identifying the actual sources of transmission. He further said Pakistan should also review the history of recent HIV and Aids outbreaks across the country to understand how the virus had spread over time.

Chad to leave
Criminal
Court

DAKAR: Chad announced plans Monday to withdraw from the International Criminal Court, accusing the judicial body of ineffectiveness and bias against African countries. The West African country submitted a letter to the United Nations to begin withdrawing from the court, which was established to prosecute people responsible for humanity's worst crimes under its foundation treaty, the Rome Statute. The withdrawal process takes at least a year. Chad was the fourth African country since 2025 to begin withdrawing from the ICC. Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso announced last year they would stop participating with the court based in The Hague. The court is already facing daunting challenges, including the July 24 removal of its chief prosecutor, Karim Khan, over sexual misconduct allegations. Secretary of State Marco Rubio earlier this month said the U.S. was launching a campaign to dismantle what he called the threat posed to its national sovereignty by the ICC. A February 2025 executive order signed by U.S. President Donald Trump imposed sanctions on the court over investigations of U.S. ally Israel. The U.S. Bureau of African Affairs called on more of the 125 member states to withdraw from the Rome Statute in a post Monday on X. — APP

Earthquake
hits Japan

TOKYO: An earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 7.1 struck Japan's Kumamoto prefecture on Tuesday, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. A tsunami warning for a wave measuring 1 meter was issued after the earthquake, the JMA said. The Japanese government issued emergency earthquake warnings for Kumamoto, Nagasaki, Kagoshima, Fukuoka, Saga, Oita, and Miyazaki prefectures, all on Japan's southern Kyushu island. — APP

US confirms Israel-Lebanon
talks in Italy from Aug 4 to 6

Rome talks to focus on Israel's southern Lebanon withdrawal, says US official

DNA

WASHINGTON: The US State Department confirmed that the next round of talks between Israel and Lebanon will be held in Rome on August 4 through 6, as Israel prepares to withdraw from two "pilot zones" in southern Lebanon. Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani first announced the next round of US-mediated talks last week, with a State Department official detailing the talks to AFP on the condition of anonymity. "In Rome, technical groups will focus on advancing the full implementation of the framework agreement," the official told AFP, adding that the planned discussion "includes expanding the pilot zone process, resolving all outstanding border issues, and working on a comprehensive peace and security agreement." The Israel-Lebanon

Israel releases 60 detainees

They were taken to Nasser Medical Complex, the ICRC said, where they were examined by doctors and received treatment for injuries and other conditions arising from detention

LONDON: Israel released 60 Palestinian prisoners detained during its ongoing military campaign in Gaza. It was the single largest release of detainees since prisoner exchanges under a ceasefire agreement between Hamas and Israel in October, according to Palestinian media reports. The transfer, facilitated by the International Committee of the Red Cross, took place at the Kerem Shalom crossing into Khan Younis in southern Gaza, the Palestinian WAFA news agency reported. The detainees had been held at Negev Prison, according to Erem News. They were taken to Nasser Medical Complex, the ICRC said, where they were examined by doctors and received treatment for injuries and other conditions arising from detention. The Palestinian Prisoners' Media Office said the health of many of the detainees had deteriorated during captivity. Efforts were being made to reunite them with their families. The Israeli military said those released were not considered "terrorists". — DNA

framework deal emerged after war broke out between Israel and Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah on March 2, against the backdrop of the wider Middle East war. It calls for an end to the war in Lebanon, disarmament of the Lebanese movement, the deployment of Lebanese troops in the south, and for Israeli forces to steadily withdraw from the country in two "pilot zones." "The experience of the initial zones will help us perfect pilot-zone implementation so it can expand in a phased manner," the US official added. Lebanon's army on Sunday condemned Israel's ongoing military operations in the south of the country, arguing it was preventing its full deployment under the framework deal. Beirut has reported intermittent Israeli strikes and artillery shelling on the south despite the lull in fighting.

Iran hangs
two men
over protest

DUBAI: Iran has executed two men who were sentenced to death for their part in protests in Isfahan during nationwide unrest that rocked the country in January, the Judiciary's Mizan News Agency reported on Tuesday. Abolfazl Sepahi Badjani and Amirhossein Safari Hosseinabadi were among 12 men sentenced to death on charges of taking part in the killing of security force members in Alikhani Square in Isfahan on January 8. Another two in the same trial had already been executed. Nationwide anti-government protests rocked the country in January and were repressed in the biggest crackdown in the history of the Islamic Republic, during which security forces killed thousands of protesters. — APP



KARACHI: First Lady Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari, MNA visited Spencer Eye Hospital, Lyari, to review the healthcare facilities and services being provided to patients. — DNA

Improved coordination
made monsoon response
more effective: Tarar

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday said improved coordination between the federal and provincial governments, coupled with strengthened early warning systems, had made this year's response to monsoon rains more effective and helped reduce loss of life and property compared with previous years. The minister expressed these views during a visit to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), accompanied by Federal Ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Musadik Malik, Mian Muhammad Moeen Wattoo and Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb. Describing the response to the ongoing monsoon season as very effective, the minister said valuable lessons had been learnt from last year and that the whole-of-the-government approach had never been stronger. He expressed heartfelt gratitude to NDMA Chairman Lt. General Inam Haider Malik, for the authority's role in coordinating disaster management efforts. Attaullah Tarar said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had initiated timely meetings attended by NDMA officials, members of the federal cabinet and representatives of the provincial governments, including Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, to ensure



coordinated preparedness and response.

He said the NDMA had worked closely with all relevant departments and provincial governments to strengthen early warning mechanisms and ensure timely dissemination of information to the public. Highlighting the role of the National Emergency Operations Centre, the minister said such facilities were found in very few countries and described the centre as a valuable national asset for implementing the whole-of-the-government approach and issuing timely early warnings. He said delegations from across the world visited the NDMA to observe the centre and its technological capabilities. The minister said the technology deployed at the facility enabled authorities to provide timely information to the public, helping minimise loss of life and property.

He added that these efforts had contributed to reducing losses during this year's monsoon season. Tarar said public awareness had been promoted not only through traditional media but also through the Pak NDMA Alert App, which provided subscribers with real-time information on their devices. He said the government would continue working collectively with all relevant ministries, divisions and provincial governments to address the challenges posed by the monsoon season, adding that a comprehensive briefing on preparedness and response measures had already been presented.

PML-N wins nine seats, PPP four
in first phase of AJK elections

Polling held across 13 Mirpur constituencies, with PML-N leading as per unofficial results

DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) secured victory in nine constituencies in the first phase of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly elections, according to unofficial and provisional results. Polling was held on Monday across all 13 constituencies in Mirpur, Kotli and Bhimber districts. Voting officially ended at 5pm, with an additional hour allowed for voters already present at polling stations before counting began. According to the unofficial results, the PML-N won nine seats, while the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has secured four. According to the unofficial and provisional results, the PML-N won LA-1 Mirpur-1, LA-4 Mirpur-4, LA-5 Bhimber-1, LA-6 Bhimber-2, LA-7 Bhimber-3, LA-9 Kotli-2, LA-11 Kotli-4, LA-12 Kotli-5 and LA-13 Kotli-6. The PPP won LA-2 Mirpur-2, LA-3 Mirpur-3, LA-8 Kotli-1 and LA-10 Kotli-3. In LA-1 Mirpur-1, PML-N candidate Azhar Sadiq won with 15,427 votes, defeating PPP's Muhammad Afser Shahid, who secured 9,832 votes. In LA-2 Mirpur-2, PPP's Qasim Majeed was declared successful with 12,904 votes, while PML-N's Azeem Bakhsh Chaudhry finished second with 8,182 votes. PPP candidate Chaudhry Yasir Sultan won LA-3 Mirpur-3 with 11,676 votes, ahead of PML-N's Chaudhry Muhammad Saeed, who received 9,832 votes. In LA-4 Mirpur-4, PML-N's Chaudhry Rukhsar Ahmed

secured victory with 20,172 votes, while PPP's Chaudhry Sohaib Arshad obtained 13,865 votes. PML-N candidate Waqar Ahmed Noor won LA-5 Bhimber-1 with 30,259 votes, defeating PPP's Chaudhry Pervaiz Ashraf, who received 29,574 votes, by nearly 700 votes. According to the unofficial and provisional results from all 195 polling stations in LA-6 Bhimber-2, PML-N candidate Chaudhry Muhammad Razaq won the seat with 32,732 votes, while Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) candidate Ali Shan Chaudhry finished second with 26,718 votes. In LA-7 Bhimber-3, PML-N's Chaudhry Tariq Farooq secured 35,490 votes to defeat independent candidate Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq, who polled 25,100 votes. PPP's Zafar Iqbal Malik won LA-8 Kotli-1 with 19,535 votes, while PML-N's Malik Muhammad Nawaz Khan came second with 11,966 votes. In LA-9 Kotli-2, PML-N's Umair Naeem was declared successful after securing 31,080 votes, ahead of PPP's Javed Iqbal Budhanvi, who received 28,509 votes. According to the unofficial and provisional results from all 169 polling stations in LA-10 Kotli-3, PPP candidate Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin won the seat with 12,431 votes, while PML-N candidate Fateh Mehmood-ul-Hassan finished second with 9,245 votes. PML-N candidate Muhammad Asif won LA-11 Kotli-4 with 26,190 votes, defeating PPP's Chaudhry Muhammad Akhlaq, who secured 21,751 votes. In LA-12 Kotli-5, PML-N's Muhammad Riasat Khan secured 35,168 votes to defeat PPP's Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, who received 30,320 votes.

FCCP adjourns hearing in
alleged PTI 'release force' case

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court on Tuesday adjourned until after the summer recess the hearing of a constitutional petition filed against Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja and others over the alleged formation of a "release force" for the party's founder. A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, heard the petition. During the proceedings, counsel for the PTI leaders, Ali Bukhari, sought time to file his power of attorney and written reply. He informed the court that, in addition to representing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, he had also been instructed to represent Salman Akram Raja in the case and had been informed of the latter's representation only on Tuesday morning. The Advocate General for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa told the court that the matter was political in nature and requested that PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja be granted time to submit his reply. He said the constitutional petition alleged that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister was establishing a private militia. Counsel for the petitioner submitted that only one respondent had so far filed a reply before the court. He requested the court to extend its earlier order directing the parties not to disturb the law and order situation. However, Chief Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan observed that there was no need to extend the order, as it was not confined to the day's proceedings and therefore remained effective. The court subsequently adjourned further hearing of the case until after the summer recess. — APP

Spain wildfire burns campsite to ash

NAVALUENGA, Spain: Magaly Vargas sobbed as she stared down at the square of grey ash where her caravan once stood. "This is where I used to live," she cried. "There's nothing left of it. It's awful. Awful." Around her, crumpled sheet roofs and bars of twisted metal jutted from the ruins of the Pantano del Burguillo camping ground west of Madrid, ravaged by Spain's worst wildfire on record. More than 30 people were evacuated from the site on the shore of the Burguillo reservoir when the flames attacked on Friday, including Vargas, 64, who handled its public relations. They were among scores of thousands of people ordered to leave their homes across the region. "This is a house. This was a mobile home," said the site's co-owner Maria Angeles Canete, 54, pointing to the remains of the structures whose plastic walls melted and disappeared in the inferno. Along with her husband Manuel Pascual, 58, she owned this and one other nearby camping ground. Both were destroyed. "We lost everything," Canete said, fighting back tears. "We have nothing." When the fire approached on Friday, Canete and Pascual fled by boat onto the reservoir. "The trees lit up with flames," she recalled. "Then something went bang and we heard the gas canisters exploding." They returned later to find the whole camp burnt to the ground. Stacks of smashed porcelain plates and pots lay in the embers. "I don't sleep at night," Canete said. "It's a horrible memory. It's the worst thing that could happen to you in life — to see your business burning down bit by bit and no one coming to help you." On the slopes around the site stretched acres of charred earth, rocks and pines, with burnt houses and outhouses, their walls and windows scorched black. Here and there columns of grey smoke billowed from the ground and a sharp smell of smoke hung in the air. On a track up the hill from the reservoir, a baby deer lay dead where it fell, legs splayed, its hair burnt off, tongue lolling out of its mouth. In the nearby town of El Barraco, firefighters sat at a cafe in dirty overalls, exhausted after working through the night. — APP

**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	Anesthesiology	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 | generalpractice@islamabad | +92 51 6180 474 | +92 51 6181 474