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Peru's Fujimori takes power; determines to improve entire system

Detailed News On Page-08

KP governor, US envoy talk about economy

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Abu Baker to lead Pakistan hockey team

Detailed News On Page-06



Friendly connection

Pakistan, Kuwait resolve to boost bilateral relations

“The two leaders reviewed the full spectrum of Pakistan–Kuwait bilateral relations and reaffirmed their shared commitment to further strengthening the longstanding brotherly partnership,” it said

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The situation in the Middle East came under discussion as Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar on Wednesday met Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who is on an official visit to the country. According to the Foreign Office (FO), the two held a “warm and productive” tête-à-tête at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “The two leaders reviewed the full spectrum of Pakistan–Kuwait bilateral relations and reaffirmed their shared commitment to further strengthening the longstanding brotherly partnership,” it said. “They also held in-depth discussions on regional and international developments, with particular focus on the evolving situation in the Middle East,” it added. Later, the two leaders co-chaired delegation-level talks, the FO posted on X, adding that both sides reviewed the entire spectrum of Pakistan-Kuwait bilateral relations and discussed ways to further strengthen cooperation in trade, investment, energy, labour, agriculture, information technology, health, mining and minerals, defence and the broader economic partnership. “They agreed to further institutionalise bilateral cooperation through enhanced institutional linkages and regular high-level exchanges,” the FO said. It added that the two sides also “reaffirmed their commitment to close coordination and cooperation at multi-lateral forums on issues of mutual interest”. According to the FO, the Kuwaiti FM thanked the government and people of Pakistan for the “warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to him and his delegation”.

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Citizens to get access to all facilities

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Wednesday that the government's vision for national digitalisation aims to provide citizens access to all public facilities under a single digital identity. Chairing a review meeting in Islamabad on the implementation of a national-level integrated digital policy framework, PM Shehbaz said that implementing this vision in line with modern-day demands held “key importance” in forming an integrated society, according to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). “After the full implementation of the national digital vision, citizens will be able to access all public facilities, including government verification of documents, banking services, health, transfers, and all other facilities, under a single digital ID at one place,” the statement cited the premier as saying. It added that a meeting of the National Digital Commission (NDC) should be convened soon in order to take

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ISLAMABAD: Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

Pezeshkian urges Iranians to ‘stand firm’

“In the same way, we cannot oppress our citizens or commit injustice against them,” the IRNA news service quotes him as saying.

DNA

TEHRAN: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has called for Iranians to “fight the enemy and stand firm against them so that we do not submit to injustice and oppression”, Al Jazeera reports. “In the same way, we cannot oppress our citizens or commit injustice against them,” the IRNA news service quotes him as saying. Pezeshkian added Iran has proven it is a “unique model of resistance”. Meanwhile, Four Iranian Revolutionary Guard military advisers were killed in overnight US-Saudi strikes on Iraq, Reuters reports citing Iran's Hamshahri newspaper. Iranian authorities have yet to confirm the losses.

US-Iran war

Middle East tensions surge as Iran rejects Hormuz Oman deal

While Oman proposed a shared 50-50 regional administration with voluntary fees for both inbound and outbound shipping lanes, Iran countered by demanding exclusive Iranian operational control

DNA

TEHRAN / WASHINGTON: Escalation in the Middle East reached a critical flashpoint on Wednesday as Iran formally rejected an Oman-backed proposal to manage transit through the Strait of Hormuz. The diplomatic stalemate coincided with fresh joint US-Saudi military strikes against Iranian-backed groups in Iraq, triggering a sharp 5 percent spike in global crude prices and raising fears of broader regional conflict. Tehran issued a strong rebuke following joint air raids conducted by the United States and Saudi Arabia targeting facilities in eastern Iraq. Iranian officials claimed the strikes hit official

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US, Saudi forces strike ‘Iran-aligned terrorists’ in Iraq

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: US and Saudi Arabian forces said they struck “Iran-aligned terrorists” in Iraq on Wednesday in retaliation for recent attacks, following a short pause in Iran war hostilities. The combined air operation came as President Donald Trump met with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington for their first in-person talks since

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Briefs

Indonesians file complaint against Netanyahu

NEWS DESK

JAKARTA: Nine Indonesians among global activists detained while trying to take aid to Gaza in May filed a complaint against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday alleging crimes against humanity, their lawyer told AFP. The men were part of the Global Sumud Flotilla intercepted by Israel and detained along with more than 400 other activists, some for days. The group asked Indonesia's Attorney General on Wednesday to investigate Israel for offenses including piracy at sea and crimes against humanity, lawyer Kafin Muhammad said. Indonesia's criminal code gives the country's courts “universal jurisdiction” over cases that involve crimes committed beyond the country's borders, he said.

Nominal cut in petrol price

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) updates petroleum products prices on a daily basis on its website to ensure transparency and allow the immediate impact of international price fluctuations to be passed on to consumers. New fuel rates effective for July 30 under daily price mechanism: Effective date Products Old rates New rates. **Change in prices Rs/litre 30-07-2026: Petrol 335.81, 335.06, -0.75 High-speed diesel 388.38, 390.62, +2.24** Amid volatility in global oil rates on the back of renewed hostilities in the Middle East, the government decided to switch to a daily fuel price review mechanism.

32 terrorists killed in KP, Balochistan

Comprehensive joint operations being carried out in two provinces to weed out terrorists, says military's media wing

NEWS DESK

PESHAWAR: Security forces have eliminated 32 India-backed terrorists during operations conducted in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan over the last 24 hours, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Wednesday. In a statement, the military's media wing said that comprehensive joint operations were being carried out in different parts of KP and Balochistan to weed out Fitna al-Khawarij and Fitna al-Hindustan terrorists and their facilitators. “In [the] last 24 hours, security forces have successfully eliminated 32 terrorists of these Indian proxies,” read the communique. “On night [of] 28/29 July, multiple intelligence-based area sanitisation and targeted operations were conducted in district Khyber of KP,” the ISPR said. During these targeted operations, security forces effectively engaged different terrorist locations, killing 24 terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Khawarij, it added.

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Cop martyred, 4 terrorists killed

DNA

SWAT: A policeman has been martyred and four terrorists have been killed during an ongoing operation in Swat's Matta tehsil, police and security said on Wednesday. An initial statement issued by Swat police spokesperson Nasir Iqbal Karimi said Elite Force Constable Gulfam had embraced martyrdom while “bravely fighting the terrorists” on Tuesday night during the operation. Later, security sources said four terrorists had also been killed in the operation, while the operation being carried out by the Pakistan Army, police and other security agencies was ongoing. The sources said four other terrorists had taken refuge inside a house and were using its residents as human shields.

Bilawal calls Punjab CM, PM ‘products’ of Form-47

Maryam calls PPP “master” of rigging; Bilawal says PML-N has history of benefiting from “rigged” polls



STAFF REPORT

BAGH: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) continued to trade barbs over the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections on Wednesday, with both parties accusing each other of electoral rigging. The exchange of heated words between the allies at the Centre has continued since the first phase of AJK elections held on July 17. According to the results, the PML-N won nine seats while the PPP secured four of the 13 seats of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly

elections in the Mirpur division. The PPP had criticised PML-N and the conduct of the AJK elections, saying that the state must decide whether national interest or the PML-N interest was more important. Taking to X, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz rejected allegations of electoral rigging levelled against her party, saying the claims were ironic coming from the PPP. Maryam said the PPP, which she described as the “master” of sophisticated rigging, was now complaining about electoral manipulation. Meanwhile, addressing a public gathering in Muzafarabad — where the second phase of the elections is scheduled for August 2 — PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari accused the PML-N of “having a history” of coming to power through “electoral rigging”. He said that the PML-N is “the product of rigging from one generation to the next” and vowed the PPP would not allow any manipulation of the electoral process in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

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Bharth announces reforms to strengthen accountability

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Communication and Works (C&W) Malik Sohaib Ahmad Bharth on Wednesday announced a major shift in the department's operational approach, replacing the existing "Road Constructor" model with a "Road Custodian" culture to ensure the long-term maintenance and protection of road infrastructure. Chairing a meeting on departmental reforms here, the minister said the Communication and Works (C&W) Department would now be responsible not only for constructing roads but also for their sustained upkeep. Secretary C&W Raja Jahangir Anwar, senior departmental officers and field formation officials, who joined via video link, attended the meeting.

Under the new policy, each Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) and Sub Engineer will be assigned specific roads and held fully accountable for their maintenance and improvement. Their responsibilities would include immediate repair of potholes, restoration of road shoulders and regular monitoring of road conditions. The minister directed that, in addition to departmental inspection teams, independent teams would also inspect roads and submit photographs and reports on damaged sections to ensure effective monitoring and timely action. He said strict disciplinary action would be taken against field officers found negligent or showing poor performance, adding that protecting road infrastructure was a key priority under the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. He also announced the introduction of modern technology, advanced monitoring systems and a new accountability framework to strengthen oversight of road assets.—APP

Punjab providing Rs 20b subsidy at flour

ATTOCK: The Punjab government is providing more than Rs20 billion in subsidies to ensure affordable flour and stable bread prices across the province, District Food Controller Azhar Abbas said on Wednesday. Speaking to the media, Abbas said this year's bumper wheat harvest has stabilised prices, benefiting both farmers and consumers. Punjab's wheat production exceeded provincial consumption requirements by approximately 33 per cent, enabling the province to meet local demand and support other provinces as well. He rejected claims of large-scale wheat hoarding, stating the impression was contrary to facts. According to him, the Food Department has already procured around 500,000 metric tonnes of wheat. The DFC said wheat was selling at Rs3,300 to Rs3,400 per 40 kg at the start of the marketing season. After the Punjab government announced a minimum support price of Rs3,500 per 40 kg, the market stabilised and wheat is now trading at around Rs4,500 per 40 kg, providing direct financial benefits to growers. On the directives of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, operational flour mills are being supplied with 5,000 metric.—APP

Kundi, Natalie discuss investment, sports diplomacy

Natalie A. Baker acknowledged the province's strong economic potential despite prevailing security perceptions and encouraged the Governor to engage with members of the U.S. Congress, officials of the U.S. Department of State and leading policy think tanks during his proposed visit to the United States.

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday held a meeting with United States Chargé d'Affaires to Pakistan Ms. Natalie A. Baker at Governor House to discuss ways to enhance cooperation in investment, education, sports diplomacy, tourism, regional peace and economic development. The meeting was attended by U.S. Consul General for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Thomas Eckert, PPP Parliamentary Leader in the KP Assembly Ahmed Karim Kundi and Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shahab Ali Shah. During the meeting, the Governor highlighted the province's vast investment potential, particularly in minerals, gemstones, hydropower, natural gas, water resources and tourism, with special emphasis on religious tourism. He said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa possessed abundant reserves of precious stones and gemstones, offering significant opportunities for international investment and private-sector participation in value-addition projects in the mines and minerals sector. Governor Kundi also proposed promoting business-to-business collaboration and partnerships with local communities to facilitate investment. Referring to recent regional developments, he said peace and stability would enable Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to fully capitalize on its natural resources and attract greater foreign investment. Natalie A. Baker acknowledged the province's strong economic potential despite prevailing security perceptions and encouraged the Governor to engage with members of the U.S. Congress, officials of the U.S. Department of State and leading policy think tanks during his proposed visit to the United States. She also suggested that the Governor be accompanied by a business delegation to showcase Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's investment opportunities and proposed exploring sister-city partnerships, including with Houston. The meeting also discussed sports diplomacy, with Ms. Baker appreciating the Governor's efforts to promote cricket and other sports in the province. Governor Kundi briefed the delegation on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Champions League and his planned Governor XI cricket and football matches involving members of the diplomatic community, saying the initiatives were aimed at strengthening people-to-people contacts through sports. The two sides also exchanged views on the security situation in the province and the fight against terrorism. The Governor stressed that alongside effective security measures, expanding access to quality education and creating em-



ployment opportunities were essential to preventing extremism and ensuring lasting peace. The meeting concluded with both sides reaffirming their commitment to enhancing cooperation in investment,

trade, education, sports diplomacy and people-to-people exchanges while exploring new avenues of partnership between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the United States.—DNA

COMSTECH, IOFS to hold two-week Future Farming Training Program

ISLAMABAD: OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), in collaboration with the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS), has announced a two-week Future Farming Training Program aimed at enhancing agricultural capacity and promoting climate-smart farming across OIC Member and Observer States. The hybrid training program, scheduled from October 19 to 30 will combine in-person sessions in Islamabad with online participation, bringing together agriculture professionals, researchers, students, entrepreneurs and farmers from across the OIC region. The initiative seeks to address key challenges facing agriculture, including climate change, water scarcity, low productivity and limited adoption of modern technolo-

gies by equipping participants with advanced knowledge and practical skills in precision and digital agriculture, plant biotechnology, sustainable farming, post-harvest management and agri-value chains. A total of 20 participants will attend the program in person, including 10 from OIC Member and Observer States and 10 from Pakistan, while up to 1,000 participants are expected to join online. The applicants must possess at least 16 years of education (BS) in agricultural sciences or a related field, have a minimum of two years of relevant professional experience, and be between 20 and 40 years of age. The program is open to agriculturists, farmers, agribusiness professionals, students and young entrepreneurs from both the public and private sectors. Women agri-entrepreneurs and progressive farm-

ers have been particularly encouraged to apply. Selected participants from OIC Member and Observer States will receive support covering air travel, visa fees, accommodation and meals. The participants who successfully complete the training and final assessment will be awarded certificates. The program will be organized with the support of leading Pakistani institutions, including Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University, National Agricultural Research Centre, Allama Iqbal Open University, National University of Sciences and Technology and Quaid-i-Azam University. The last date for submission of applications is August 20, 2026. The applicants can access the web link <https://comstech.org/oic-comstech-future-farming-training-program-for-oic-member-states-2-weeks/> for further information.—APP

Punjab CM approves 800 mini dams

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday approved the construction of 800 additional mini dams in the Potohar region over the next three years to enhance rainwater harvesting and strengthen the province's long-term water conservation strategy.

Chairing a meeting on the Transformation of Agriculture and Water Management, here on Wednesday, the CM reviewed progress on water conservation and groundwater management. She was informed that 110 mini dams had already been completed across Punjab under the government's water preservation initiative.

CM Maryam Nawaz directed the authorities to prepare a comprehensive plan for developing surface water bodies to maximise rainwater storage and called for further strengthening of the legal framework governing groundwater management. The meeting decided to

deploy dedicated human resources for water conservation and monitoring, while the agriculture, irrigation, housing and local government departments were directed to work in close coordination to promote efficient water management across the province.

The CM approved the construction of 800 new mini dams in Potohar, which were expected to create storage capacity of 32,000 acre-feet of rainwater over the next three years.

Reviewing agricultural support measures, the meeting also decided to provide 1,000 laser land levellers to farmers at a 50 per cent subsidy during the current financial year to improve land productivity and water-use efficiency. Photographic evidence of recently completed mini dams in Attock, Talagang, Gujar Khan and Rawalpindi was presented during the meeting. Addressing participants, the CM said prosperous nations were those that valued

and protected every drop of water, stressing that water conservation was essential for ensuring food security and sustainable agricultural growth. Officials informed the meeting that a comprehensive strategy had been prepared to reduce 30 per cent water losses during conveyance and 25 per cent losses during on-farm use across Punjab. The briefing further revealed that lining of 2,600 watercourses covering 7,000 kilometres had been completed, resulting in 20 per cent water savings. Over the next three years, another 4,500 watercourses, spanning 11,500 kilometres, would be rehabilitated and lined. The meeting was informed that the adoption of high-efficiency irrigation systems had already saved 18,000 acre-feet of water while increasing crop yields by 50 per cent. An additional 30,000 acres would be brought under modern drip and sprinkler irrigation systems during the next three years.—APP

CM Bugti chairs meeting to review law & order

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Wednesday chaired a meeting of the provincial cabinet at the Chief Minister Secretariat in which several important decisions related to public welfare, law and order, education, local government system, development projects and administrative matters were approved. At the beginning of the meeting, prayers were offered for the elevation of the ranks of the officers and personnel of the security forces and civilian martyrs who were martyred in various incidents, forgiveness and patience for their families. The provincial cabinet approved Phase three of the Chief Minister Scholarship Program to provide quality educational opportunities to the children of the working class, under which 300 children of registered workers of Balochistan would be admitted to a standard boarding school in Islamabad so that they could get high-quality education and better future opportunities. Local Government to make the institutions more functional, the cabinet approved the granting of municipal committee status to Union Council Mesizai and Union Council Mayzai, while establishing a new municipal committee in Gulistan, to make the law and order system more strong and effective, the provincial cabinet approved declaring the entire province as a regular police area after the merger of the Levies Force with the police. The cabinet also approved the appointment of SP Nabil Ahmed as the Chief Operating Officer of the Balochistan Safe City Authority, while the formation of a parole board was also approved as per the recommendations of the Home Department. The cabinet also approved the establishment of a new police station at Marble City in Hub District so that the protection of industrial and commercial activities and the law enforcement system could be made more effective. The meeting also approved the Balochistan Planning Manual for better planning and effective implementation of development projects in the province. Similarly, to further strengthen the system of rights and protection of children, the Balochistan Child Protection Rules 2026 were also approved, which was described as a major breakthrough in this sector. The provincial cabinet also approved the Balochistan Cadet Colleges Amendment Act 2026, while in the light of the recommendations of the Prosecution Department, an extension of the contract tenure of the Prosecutor General for another two years was approved. The Balochistan Hybrid Weight Procurement Policy 2026 was approved to promote transparency, competition and effective financial management in the government procurement system, while the Service Level Agreement for the Quetta Safe City Project was also approved to ensure timely and effective implementation of the project.—DNA

NSC commander calls on Naval, PAF chiefs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Commander National Strategic Command (CNSC) General Syed Aamer Raza, HI (M), S Bt called on Admiral Naveed Ashraf, NI (M), T Bt, Chief of the Naval Staff at Naval Headquarters (NHQ) and later on Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, NI (M), HJ, at Air Headquarters, Islamabad. CNS and CAS congratulated General Syed Aamer Raza on assuming command of National Strategic Command as its first Commander. Matters of professional interest were discussed during the meetings.



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY

July 01/Japan Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada National Day

July 01/Somalia Independence Day

July 04/USA Independence Day

July 05/Algeria Independence Day

July 09/Argentina Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium National Day

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July 23/Egypt National Day

July 26/Cuba National Day

July 26/Liberia National Day

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Bomb Disposal.....15

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Motorway Police.9270601-20

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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: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani meeting with Humza Tabani, Chairman, Tabani Group along-with delegation led by Xu Xiang, Chairman SDHS and country Director, Wang Zhenrong At Parliament House.

NAB briefings demanded over prolonged delays in PHA, FGEHA projects

Following the formal termination of the joint venture agreement due to persistent violations, FGEHA has taken over the project and is actively pursuing its revival through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) framework utilizing commercial inventory to prevent additional financial burdens on allottees

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Housing and Works met under the Chairmanship of Senator Nasir Mehmood at Parliament Lodges, to conduct a comprehensive oversight review of major ongoing public housing projects, joint ventures, and civil infrastructure directives across Islamabad and some projects in Quetta Expressing profound concern over long-standing structural, legal, and administrative bottlenecks that have stalled key development initiatives for years, the Committee reiterated its firm commitment to safeguarding the financial interests and legal rights of public sector allottees. During the deliberations, the Secretary for Housing and Works presented a detailed briefing on the status of various housing schemes managed by the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) and the PHA Foundation (PHAF). Committee Directs to call NAB Chairman Briefing on Bara Kahu and Sky Garden Schemes in the next meeting. Reviewing the Green Enclave-I project in Bara Kahu, Islamabad where land acquisition commenced as far back as 2009 covering 3,375 kanals, the Committee observed with grave concern that despite the signing of a construction agreement in 2019, physical work remains suspended due to ongoing disputes regarding contractual modes, work execution percentages, and performance security revisions. Members

highlighted that aggrieved allottees have been making payments since 2008 without receiving physical possession of their plots. Although the Housing Secretary indicated that development work could resume following formal Board approval once contractual disputes are resolved, the Committee expressed deep dissatisfaction with the persistent delays. Consequently, the Committee decided to summon the Chairman of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to provide a personal briefing during the next meeting regarding all pending investigations, inquiries, and legal clearances associated with the FGEHA joint venture projects. The Committee also conducted an in-depth review of the Sky Garden Housing Scheme (Green Enclave-II), involving 7,300 kanals in Mauza Kathar and Mauza Mangal, where over 2,455 consent notices have been issued and over PKR 4.21 billion collected from members across various categories. Acknowledging that land issues in Mauza Kathar stand resolved and Mauza Mangal litigation was successfully concluded in favour of FGEHA by the court in April 2026, the Committee examined the ongoing infrastructure development and the proposed timeline targeting block-wise plot handovers between December 2026 and March 2027. To ensure seamless administrative

alignment and clear procedural bottlenecks, the Committee decided to call the Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi for a comprehensive briefing at the upcoming meeting to reach a definitive conclusion. Examining the status of the EHFPRO Lifestyle Residency Apartments in Sector G-13, Islamabad, the Committee noted that while approximately 70 percent of physical work on the 10-acre site was completed, progress suffered severe disruption due to post-COVID-19 market escalation, financial constraints, and the subsequent demise of the private contractor. Following the formal termination of the joint venture agreement due to persistent violations, FGEHA has taken over the project and is actively pursuing its revival through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) framework utilizing commercial inventory to prevent additional financial burdens on allottees. With the PC-I approved by the Development Working Party and the Expression of Interest (EOI) process currently underway, the Committee directed the Ministry to maintain continuous, step-by-step reporting to the Senate body throughout the selection and execution phases. Addressing compliance on prior directives, the Committee evaluated implementation reports concerning the PHA-F Residencia Project on Kuchlak Road,

Quetta, and the maintenance of Federal Lodges. The Ministry reported that work on the Quetta project has reached overall 50 percent physical progress, supported by four formal contracts signed with M/s NLC and FK Builders, with structural works completed on 161 grey-structure houses and 20 apartment blocks, alongside the completion of re-tendering for 216 three-bed units. Additionally, the Committee reviewed measures taken at Federal Lodge-I Quetta to enforce daily sanitation standards and noted the progress achieved in major civil and electrical repair works across Federal Lodges I, II, and III in Islamabad. On matters regarding the PHA-F Residencia Project on Kurri Road, Islamabad, the Ministry presented updates on joint consultative mechanisms established between PHAF management and the Officers Residencia Management Committee to resolve water supply, drainage, and amenity infrastructure challenges, while affirming that allottees executing unauthorized structural modifications must seek formal regularization directly from the Capital Development Authority. The meeting was attended by the Senators Hidayat Ullah khan, Muhammad Aslam Abro, Abdul Shakoor khan, Khalida Ateeab, Husna Bano, Naseema Ehsan, Jan Muhammad, Saifullah Abro along with Secretary Housing and Senior officials. —DNA

Police organises free medical camp

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police organised a free medical camp for police officers and personnel at the Security Division, Diplomatic Enclave, in collaboration with Integral Global, as part of its ongoing welfare initiatives aimed at promoting the health and well-being of the force. An ICT Police spokesperson told on Wednesday that the medical camp was arranged on the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi to facilitate police personnel by providing quality healthcare services at their workplace. The spokesperson said doctors conducted free medical examinations of police officers and officials and offered professional medical consultations and health-related advice to help them maintain better physical well-being. He said the initiative reflected the Islamabad Police's commitment to the welfare of its personnel, recognising that a healthy and motivated workforce was essential for delivering effective policing services. —APP

33 detained, 5 structures removed

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration teams intensified operations against encroachments and illegal constructions across the capital, resulting in the detention of 33 individuals, the removal of 5 structures, and action against illegal installations in several areas. The campaign was carried out by assistant commissioners in different zones of the city under directions from the Deputy Commissioner to ensure daily enforcement against encroachments, said the spokesman of the ICT administration here. According to the district administration, Assistant Commissioner Rural conducted an anti-encroachment operation in Soan Garden with support from relevant teams. During the operation, illegal boards installed as part of encroachments in Naval Anchorage were removed and demolished. In another operation, Assistant Commissioner Secretariat, along with Capital Territory Administration (CTA) enforcement teams, carried out action in Barakahu. A truck and related materials used in encroachments were confiscated and shifted from the site. Assistant Commissioner Industrial Area conducted an operation in H-9, where three individuals were taken into custody for setting up encroachments. —APP

Islamabad Police recruitment enters second day

ISLAMABAD: Senior officers of Islamabad Police intensified monitoring of the ongoing recruitment process as physical endurance and running tests entered the second day at multiple test centres, directing officials to ensure merit, transparency, effective security arrangements and maximum facilitation for candidates. An ICT Police spokesperson told APP on Wednesday that, on the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, senior officers were personally supervising recruitment activities at test centres across the country to ensure every stage was conducted in a fair, transparent and well-organised manner. The spokesperson said DG Safe City/

DIG Traffic Muhammad Haroon Joiya visited the Police Lines Headquarters recruitment centre, where he reviewed the physical and running tests, security arrangements and overall administrative measures. He directed the staff to provide the best possible facilities to candidates, treat them courteously and ensure continuous monitoring of the recruitment process. DIG Headquarters Muhammad Ateeq Tahir and DIG Security Rana Umar Farooq visited the F-9 recruitment centre to inspect the physical endurance and running tests, security arrangements and overall management. They directed the officers concerned to complete every stage of the recruitment process

in accordance with the prescribed procedures while upholding merit and transparency. Meanwhile, DIG Islamabad Muhammad Jawad Tariq visited the Police Lines Headquarters recruitment centre, where he reviewed the administrative arrangements and instructed officers to ensure that all stages of the recruitment process, including the physical endurance tests, were conducted strictly on merit and with complete transparency. SSP Security/Operations Suleman Zafar monitored the ongoing physical endurance and running tests, security arrangements and overall management at the Peshawar recruitment centre to ensure the smooth conduct of the recruitment exercise. —APP

Call for uniform marriage age

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Human Rights Wednesday called for adopting a uniform minimum marriage age across the country and directed the Ministry of Human Rights to strengthen coordination among relevant ministries and departments to effectively address social issues that are affecting the society. The committee, which met at Parliament House under the chairpersonship of MNA Asiya Naz Tanoli, also appreciated the Ministry of Human Rights for successfully organizing the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women in Islamabad, saying the event would contribute to promoting women's socio-economic

empowerment, digital inclusion and political participation. Expressing concern over different minimum marriage ages prescribed under federal and provincial laws, the committee directed the Ministry of Human Rights to take concrete measures, in consultation with all provinces, to make the marriage age uniform across the country. The committee also voiced concern over what it described as the poor performance of ministries and departments responsible for addressing social evils, attributing the situation to inadequate coordination among institutions. It observed that many policies remained confined to paper with little implementation at

the grassroots level. The committee directed the Ministry of Human Rights to establish effective coordination among all relevant ministries and departments to curb social issues, including rape, harassment, child abuse, drug abuse and begging. It also asked the ministry to launch a comprehensive media awareness campaign highlighting the services it provides to improve public awareness and enhance institutional performance. Earlier, officials briefed the committee on the performance of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) and the Child Protection Institute (CPI), highlighting challenges faced by the organizations. —DNA

MP hold road safety session at Ghora Gali Murree Scout Camp

The scouts appreciated the awareness initiative and pledged to act as road safety ambassadors by promoting safe driving practices and spreading road safety awareness within their families and communities



DNA
ISLAMABAD: The National Highways Motorway Police (NHMP), through its Road Safety Awareness Team at Police Lines Headquarters (PLHQ), organized a road safety awareness session at the Punjab Boys Scouts Summer Training Center, Ghora Gali. A large number of scouts participated in the event and received practical guidance on traffic rules, pedestrian safety, and responsible road use. During the session, the NHMP team highlighted the serious consequences of underage driving and urged participants to strictly follow traffic laws to prevent road accidents. The scouts appreciated the awareness initiative and pledged to act as road safety ambassadors by promoting safe driving practices and spreading road safety awareness within their families and communities.

Briefs

Imran to address on poverty alleviation in Chicago

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Syed Imran Ahmad Shah will participate in the two-day Turkish Festival, being held in Chicago on August 1-2 under the auspices of the Zakat Foundation of America. The festival will bring together members of the Turkish, Pakistani, Arab and wider Muslim communities, providing a platform for dialogue on issues of shared social and humanitarian importance. During the festival, the federal minister will address an international session titled "Poverty: A Global Threat." He will highlight Pakistan's efforts in poverty alleviation, outline the government's social protection initiatives, and discuss the role of the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety in supporting vulnerable communities. He will also share Pakistan's experience and recommendations for addressing poverty through international cooperation.

On the second day of the festival, Syed Imran Ahmad Shah will participate in a special session on the life and teachings of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi. His remarks will focus on Rumi's enduring message of love, peace, spirituality and humanity, while highlighting the shared cultural and spiritual heritage between Pakistan and Türkiye.—APP

AIOU, NLPD partner to promote Urdu language

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) and the National Language Promotion Department (NLPD) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote the national language Urdu through collaborative efforts in research, teaching and academic activities. The collaboration aims to promote Urdu language, initiate joint research projects, exchange educational publications and research reports, organize academic activities by mutual consent and utilize the expertise and resources of both institutions to improve the quality of research and community services. The MoU was signed by Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood on behalf of Allama Iqbal Open University and Director General NLPD, Prof. Dr. Mazhar Saleem on behalf of the National Language Promotion Department. Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that strong cooperation among institutions for the promotion of the national language is the need of the hour. He expressed hope that this partnership would provide new opportunities for Urdu teaching, research and academic development, benefiting students, teachers and researchers. Director General NLPD, Prof. Dr. Mazhar Saleem, termed the collaboration an important step towards the promotion and effective implementation of the national language. He said that joint initiatives by both institutions would contribute significantly to enriching Urdu's academic and research resources and enhancing its usage.—APP

China donates \$2m reproductive health supplies to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Government of China, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), on Wednesday handed over reproductive health and family planning supplies and equipment worth \$2 million to Pakistan. These equipment were handed over in order to improve maternal and newborn healthcare services and expanding family planning access in 10 underserved districts across the country. The reproductive health and family planning supplies and equipment were handed over to the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (MoNHSR&C) during a ceremony held at the Rural Health Center (RHC) Tarlai in Islamabad. Minister of State for National Health Services Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharat received the supplies from Zhang Datuo, Second Secretary at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, in the presence of UNFPA Pakistan Deputy Representative Dr. Gulnara Kadyrkulova, Director General of the Population Programme Wing Dr. Shabana Saleem, and District Health Officer Islamabad Dr. Syeda Rashida Batool.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr Khalid Maqbool with the position holders of Secondary School annual examination.

Kazakh envoy, maritime minister discuss boosting trade

Junaid Chaudhry said Pakistan was keen to enhance engagement with Kazakhstan in ports, shipping, trade facilitation and regional connectivity, adding that stronger maritime links could create new opportunities for businesses in both countries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Kazakhstan's Ambassador Yezhan Kistafin and Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry discussed ways to expand bilateral trade through Pakistani ports, enhance regional connectivity and strengthen maritime ties at

a farewell meeting. The minister appreciated Mr Kistafin's contribution to strengthening Pakistan-Kazakhstan relations during his tenure and expressed hope that cooperation in the maritime sector would continue to grow. Junaid Chaudhry said Pakistan was keen to enhance engagement with Kazakhstan in ports, shipping, trade facilitation and regional connectivity, adding that

stronger maritime links could create new opportunities for businesses in both countries. He said Pakistan was ready to provide port infrastructure and support for Kazakh cargo through Karachi, Port Qasim and Gwadar, including potential joint ventures in free zones. "Pakistani seaports can act as transit hubs for Kazakhstan and the wider Central Asian region, offering access

to markets in the Persian Gulf, Africa and Southeast Asia," the minister said. Mr Kistafin highlighted the potential for expanding bilateral trade and said closer engagement in the maritime and port sectors could open new avenues for commerce. The two sides also discussed strengthening institutional linkages and exploring practical measures to facilitate Kazakh trade through Pakistani ports.

President ICCI bids farewell to Indonesian trade Counsellor

ISLAMABAD: The President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood, hosted a farewell reception in honour of Axelsyah R. Miraza, Economic and Trade Counsellor at the Embassy of Indonesia in Islamabad, marking the successful completion of his three-year diplomatic tenure in Pakistan. On the occasion, President ICCI Sardar Tahir Mehmood presented a commemorative shield to Miraza in recognition of his outstanding services and valuable contribution to strengthening economic and trade relations between Pakistan and Indonesia. The farewell ceremony was attended by prominent business leaders, members of the diplomatic corps, senior officials, and Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma, former Chargé d'Affaires and Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Indonesia. Addressing the gathering, ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood paid rich tribute to Miraza for his tireless efforts in promoting bilateral trade, investment, and economic cooperation between the two countries. He praised his instrumental role in bringing the business communities of Pakistan and Indonesia closer and creating new avenues for commercial engagement. President ICCI described Miraza as a highly competent, dedicated, and approachable diplomat who performed his responsibilities with professionalism and sincerity. Tahir noted that Miraza's deep understanding of economic diplomacy and his constructive engagement with stakeholders had earned him widespread respect in both diplomatic and business circles. "Mr. Miraza has made remarkable contributions towards enhancing trade relations between Pakistan and Indonesia. His commitment to promoting economic cooperation has left a lasting impact, and his efforts will continue to benefit both nations," said Sardar Tahir Mehmood. The ICCI President also extended his best wishes to Miraza for continued success in his diplomatic career and a prosperous future for him and his family. He added that Miraza's strong affinity for Pakistan and his practical approach to economic diplomacy had helped create new opportunities for trade, investment, and institutional collaboration. Business leaders attending the reception also paid glowing tribute to Miraza's dedication and commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation and fostering stronger economic partnerships between the two friendly countries. In his remarks, Axelsyah R. Miraza thanked ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood and his team for organising the farewell reception and honouring him.—DNA

SC preparing to integrate AI into case scheduling system

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court is working to integrate its case scheduling system with artificial intelligence (AI) to ensure that cases are fixed automatically in accordance with the approved case allocation policy, eliminating human intervention in the process. Briefing the media on the Supreme Court's services, digi-

tal reforms and complaint redressal mechanism, Supreme Court Registrar Sohail Laghari and Secretary to the Chief Justice Mushtaq Ahmed said the initiative was aimed at making the case scheduling process more transparent, efficient and policy-driven. Mushtaq Ahmed said the Supreme Court was currently providing 35 services, most of which had already been made available online. Work was also underway to digitize another 12 services to further facilitate litigants. He said the Supreme Court's complaint cell had so far received 50,830 complaints, of which only two were directly related to Supreme Court officials. He added that the Court now acted only on relevant complaints, noting that disciplinary action had been taken against a Supreme Court official following a corruption complaint. He said overseas Pakistanis had responded positively to the Supreme Court's complaint cell. The Overseas Complaint Cell had received 1,063 complaints, including 22 related to the Supreme Court, of which 14 had already been resolved. Registrar Sohail Laghari said that following the recent judgment of the Federal Constitutional Court regarding National Accountability Bureau (NAB) matters, the Supreme Court had initiated the categorization of pending cases. He said around 300 NAB-related cases were currently pending before the Supreme Court and were being processed further in light of the constitutional court's judgment.—APP

Pak-China Friendship Hospital succeeds in endoscopic operation

He said that endoscopic band ligation is another testament to this commitment. He added that the hospital would continue introducing such advanced medical facilities in the future so that the public could benefit from high-standard healthcare services.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pak-China Friendship Hospital, managed by Indus Hospital & Health Network, has achieved another important medical milestone by successfully performing endoscopic hemorrhoid band ligation. This procedure marks a significant advancement in providing modern and minimally invasive medical treatment to the people of Gwadar

and Balochistan, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. Dr. Mohsin Ali Baloch, Consultant Gastroenterologist and Hepatologist, along with his team, successfully treated a patient suffering from internal hemorrhoids using this advanced technique. During the procedure, a flexible endoscope is used to identify the hemorrhoids, after which a small rubber band is placed around their base. This cuts off the blood supply, caus-

ing the hemorrhoid to shrink and eventually fall off within a few days. Dr. Mohsin Ali Baloch said that this procedure is safer, less painful, and less time-consuming than conventional surgery. Patients generally do not require a prolonged hospital stay and can return to their normal routine much sooner. The procedure usually causes only minor discomfort and has a low risk of serious complications. On the occasion, Head of Cam-

pus Dr. Nasir Sheikh said that their objective is to provide patients with high-quality healthcare services through modern technology and trained staff.

He said that endoscopic band ligation is another testament to this commitment. He added that the hospital would continue introducing such advanced medical facilities in the future so that the public could benefit from high-standard healthcare services.

Plea dismissed to cancel bail of man accused of links with BLA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed a petition seeking cancellation of the bail granted to Bilal, an accused in a case involving alleged links with the banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), while raising questions over the prosecution's evidence connecting him to the outlawed group. A two-member bench headed by Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan heard the case. During the proceedings, the state counsel sought additional time to submit further documents, arguing that the prosecution intended to place on record evidence regarding the accused's alleged connection with a suicide bomber. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan questioned how the prosecution had established Bilal's alleged links with the BLA. "The accused is a bank manager. How does transferring money for the purchase of a vehicle amount to a criminal offence?" the judge remarked. He further observed that the bank manager had merely processed the transfer of funds and could not have known that the vehicle would allegedly be used in a bombing.—APP

Gwadar port completes 2nd bunkering operation

ISLAMABAD: Gwadar Port has successfully completed its second commercial bunkering operation on Wednesday, marking another significant milestone towards strengthening Pakistan's Blue Economy and transforming Gwadar into a regional maritime hub. During the bunkering operation, approximately 1,150 metric tonnes of Low Sulphur Fuel Oil (LSFO) was successfully supplied to the LNG carrier M.V. EXCELERATE SHENAN-DOAH (IMO No. 9321768) at Gwadar Port. The operation, which continued throughout the day, was completed in accordance with international safety, environmental and operational standards. The bunker barge M.T. MARINE ISTA arrived at Gwadar from Karachi to supply marine fuel to the vessel, according to a Gwadar Pro's report on Wednesday. The bunkering operation was successfully completed with the cooperation of the Gwadar Port Authority, Pakistan Customs, and other relevant institutions, with full compliance ensured with all legal, regulatory, safety and environmental requirements. On the occasion, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Junaid Anwar Chaudhry said that the successful completion of the second commercial bunkering operation at Gwadar Port was clear evidence that Gwadar is rapidly emerging as an important centre for international maritime trade and maritime services.—APP

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US smart move to keep Israel out of war

HANI HAZAIMEH

As tensions between the US and Iran continue to escalate, Washington faces a strategic choice that could determine whether the current confrontation remains a limited military operation or evolves into a broader regional conflict. At the heart of that decision lies one crucial question: Should Israel become a direct participant in the war? The answer, from both a military and political perspective, should be no. For all the strength of the US-Israeli alliance, involving Israel directly in military operations against Iran would fundamentally alter the nature of the conflict. What is currently framed as a confrontation with defined military and strategic objectives could quickly transform into a wider regional war, driven by multiple agendas and increasingly difficult to control. Once that transition occurs, Washington's ability to dictate the pace, scope, and eventual endgame of the conflict would diminish considerably. President Donald Trump has consistently demonstrated a preference for maintaining control over escalation rather than allowing events to dictate American strategy. Despite his willingness to use military force when necessary, his approach has generally favored operations with clear objectives over open-ended military campaigns. That strategic discipline would be severely tested if Israel entered the battlefield as an active participant. Iran has long sought to portray every regional confrontation through the prism of its conflict with Israel. Whenever Tehran faces growing international pressure or military setbacks, it attempts to shift the narrative from its own actions to what it describes as a broader struggle against Israel and its Western allies. Bringing Israel into the current conflict would hand Tehran exactly the political narrative it has spent decades trying to construct. Instead of defending its own conduct, Iran would be able to recast itself as the leader of resistance against Israel, redirecting attention away from the original causes of the conflict. Such a shift would resonate across parts of the region, energize Iranian-backed proxy groups, complicate diplomatic efforts, and make deescalation significantly more difficult. The challenge for Washington extends beyond Iran's propaganda. It also concerns the broader international coalition the US may need if the crisis deepens. Should Washington seek to build or expand a coalition involving Arab partners, Israel's direct participation would dramatically increase the political cost for many governments considering joining such an effort. Although several countries have strengthened relations with Israel in recent years, public opinion throughout much of the region remains highly sensitive to military cooperation involving Israel. Governments that might otherwise support US security objectives could face significant domestic political pressure if the conflict became widely perceived as an American-Israeli war rather than a limited operation addressing specific security threats. Successful coalitions are built not only on shared military interests but

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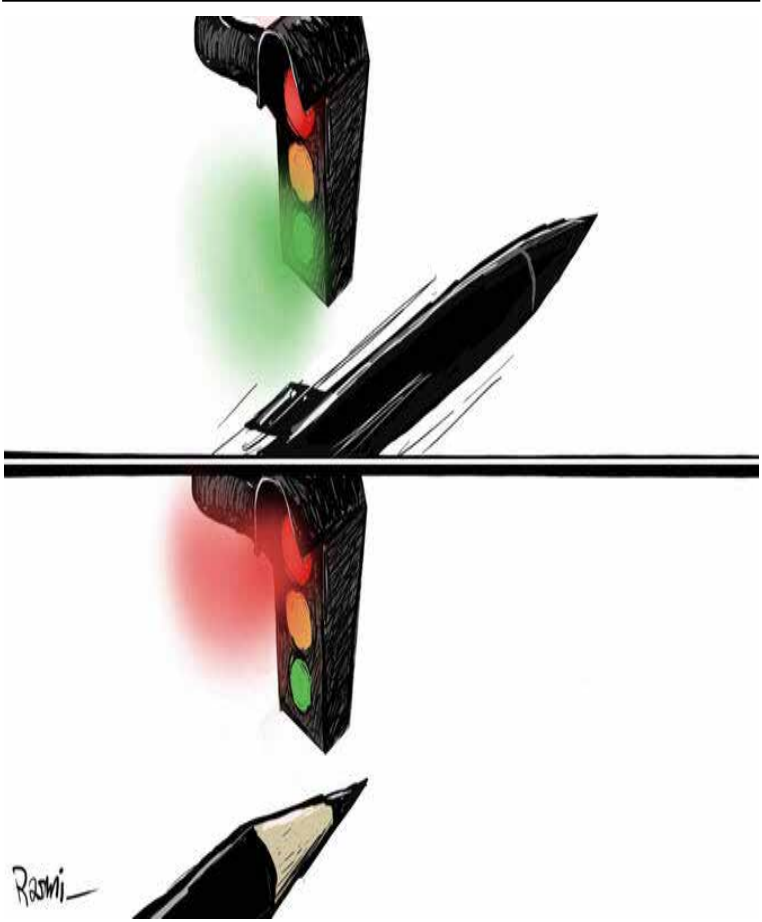
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Iran war, pickaxe and the erosion of American Might

Qamar Bashir



Iranian officials, tired of their above-ground facilities being vulnerable, vowed to move their most sensitive work into the “heart of the mountain”. Satellite imagery and expert analysis, including assessments from the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, suggest the facility lies between 80 and 100 meters – or potentially deeper – beneath the summit

IN the arid expanse of Iran's Central Plateau, a mountain known as Kuh-e Kolang Gaz La, or “Pickaxe Mountain,” has become the central pivot upon which the fate of the Middle East now turns. More than just a geological formation, it represents a new, terrifying phase in the long-standing conflict between Iran, the United States, and Israel. As President Donald Trump publicly threatens to bomb the site—a facility buried so deep it may be impervious to America's most powerful conventional weapons—the world is witnessing the failure of military hegemony and the birth of a new, multipolar reality. Pickaxe Mountain is not a new site of uranium enrichment, but a fortress carved out of desperation. Its construction was a direct response to years of sabotage and strikes, including a 2020 attack on the Natanz centrifuge manufacturing plant widely attributed to Israel. Iranian officials, tired of their above-ground facilities being vulnerable, vowed to move their most sensitive work into the “heart of the mountain”. Satellite imagery and expert analysis, including assessments from the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, suggest the facility lies between 80 and 100 meters—or potentially deeper—beneath the summit. To put this in perspective, the U.S. military's premier bunker-buster, the 30,000-pound GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator (MOP), is designed to penetrate up to 60 meters of earth before detonating. The depth of Pickaxe Mountain is deliberately engineered to render this technological marvel obsolete. Despite the attacks on Iran's main nuclear sites—Fordow, Isfahan, and Natanz—during the 2025 and 2026 conflicts, Pickaxe Mountain has remained untouched. This has led to intense speculation about what lies inside. While Iran insists the facility is merely a centrifuge manufacturing plant to replace the destroyed site at Natanz, experts are skeptical. The scale of the construction, spanning 2.7 square kilometers and featuring multiple entrances and hardened defenses, suggests it is capable of housing a full-scale uranium enrichment plant. Israeli intelligence now claims that thousands of centrifuges were moved into the mountain's tunnels last fall, representing a “fallback” nuclear capability that could allow Iran to continue its program even under relentless bombardment. This intelligence has sparked a very public spat between the leaders of the United States and Israel. When Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanya-

hu arrived in Washington to present evidence of Iran's activities at Pickaxe Mountain, he was met not with gratitude, but with a sharp public rebuke. Trum , appearing on Fox News, dismissed the necessity of Netanyahu's intelligence, stating, “I don't need Bibi to tell me that. Bibi is telling me that because he wants me to stay involved.” He added, “I know exactly what's going on at Pickaxe. It's not a big problem” . This public dressing down highlighted a fundamental fracture in the alliance . American officials reportedly view Netanyahu as unreliable, and there is a growing sense in Washington that Israel “sees what it wants to see” in the intelligence, pushing for an escalation that the U.S. may not want . Trump's irritation was palpable; he questioned why Netanyahu had to “announce it to the world” instead of simply telling him privately . This rupture is significant. It suggests that the U.S. is weary of a war that has failed to deliver decisive results, while Israel, fearing an Iranian bomb, is desperate to see the military campaign through to its conclusion. However, the reality on the ground suggests that brute force—specifically air power—is no longer the decisive factor it once was. Iran's resilience, demonstrated through its ability to survive decades of sanctions and major military strikes, is a testament to the limitations of American firepower. The Biden administration's stated goal of preventing a nuclear-armed Iran has been thwarted not by a lack of will, but by Iran's strategic patience and its ability to harden its assets. The conflict has now entered a paradoxical phase: the weapons designed to destroy Iran's program, like the MOP, may be insufficient to penetrate its new defenses, rendering billions of dollars in military hardware ineffective . Iran's message is clear: if it truly wishes to cross the threshold to a nuclear weapon, no conventional force on Earth can stop it. Simultaneously, Iran has demonstrated its strategic prowess in another theater: the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran has been engaging in a high-stakes diplomatic and military confrontation with the U.S. and its allies, fundamentally rewriting the rules of the waterway that carries one-fifth of global oil. Iran has forcefully ejected the United States from any role in managing the strait. Through negotiations with Oman, Tehran has proposed a new arrangement where the northern shipping lane remains entirely under Iranian control . When Oman suggested a 50-50 joint control formula, Iran rejected it outright . Deputy Foreign

Minister Kazem Gharibabadi has declared that the strait “will never return to its pre-war arrangements,” warning that any European warship attempting to approach would be a “legitimate target” . This is not merely a military blockade; it is a geopolitical revolution. By seizing control of the Hormuz waterway, Iran is undermining the hegemonic design of the United States, which has long controlled the flow of oil and gas to the world. The U.S. naval dominance in the region, once unquestioned, is being challenged by a nation that has demonstrated it is willing to close the strait to force a new status quo. The economic hardship inflicted by the war and the soaring energy prices have put immense pressure on the Trump administration, forcing it to pause attacks and engage in “good talks” with a regime it has spent years trying to cripple . The “pause” in the war, rather than being a genuine diplomatic breakthrough, has been cynically perceived as a way to restock depleted American weapons stores—a cycle of attrition that has already proven costly. Ultimately, the saga of Pickaxe Mountain and the seizure of the Strait of Hormuz reveals a profound truth: the era of unipolar military dominance is over. Iran, a nation subjected to severe economic hardship for over 30 years, has built a resilient economy, a formidable defensive system, and an effective offensive strategy that has blunted the full might of the U.S. military. The failure of the U.S. and Israel to break the will of the Iranian people or secure their strategic objectives is a landmark event. It signals that military force alone cannot dictate the outcome of modern conflicts, a lesson already evident in the standoffs between Russia and Ukraine. The world is witnessing the decline of brute force as the ultimate arbiter of international disputes. As Iran prepares to continue its nuclear program, shielded by mountains and defended by a nation that has proven its mettle against a superpower, it stands as a potent symbol that the future of global conflict will be decided not just by bombs, but by endurance, strategy, and an unyielding defense of sovereignty. —Press Secretary to the President (Rtd) Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France Former Press Attaché to Malaysia Former MD, SRBC | Michigan, USA

Swat: Where the mountains stole hearts

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Hidden beneath the Salt Range, the mine remains one of Pakistan's remarkable natural and industrial landmarks. Descending into its vast chambers, where walls shimmer under carefully placed lights, one is reminded that nature often conceals extraordinary beauty beneath ordinary ground. The underground tunnels, the cool air and the centuries-old history of salt extraction offered a fascinating introduction to our journey. The mine has long been recognised as both an economic asset and a tourist attraction and its careful preservation

THE roads that lead to Pakistan's northern mountains have a curious way of changing the traveller. Long before the valleys appear, the crowded towns begin to give way to open plains, the air grows lighter and the mind gradually sheds the weight of routine. It was with this anticipation that five friends Abdul Rehman Chishti, Khan Shahbaz Ahmad, Malik Sabir Hussain, Burhan Chishti and I set out on the morning of July 10, 2026, on a journey that would take us through some of the country's most celebrated landscapes. What began as a recreational trip eventually became an opportunity to reflect on Pakistan's immense natural wealth, its rich traditions of hospitality and the persistent challenges confronting domestic tourism. Our first destination was the Khewra Salt Mine. Hidden beneath the Salt Range, the mine remains one of Pakistan's remarkable natural and industrial landmarks. Descending into its vast chambers, where walls shimmer under carefully placed lights, one is reminded that nature often conceals extraordinary beauty beneath ordinary ground. The underground tunnels, the cool air and the centuries-old history of salt extraction offered a fascinating introduction to our journey. The mine has long been recognised as both an economic asset and a tourist attraction and its careful preservation demonstrates how heritage and tourism can complement one another. From Khewra we travelled towards Attock, where we spent the night. Few places in Pakistan carry the historical symbolism of Attock. Standing near the mighty Indus, one cannot help but think of the countless armies, traders and travellers who crossed this region over the centuries. The meeting of geography and history gives the city a character unlike any other. Our brief stay provided a welcome pause before we began the longer drive towards Swat the following morning. The road to Mingora unfolded like a changing landscape painting. Wheat fields gradually disappeared behind rolling hills, streams accompanied the highways and forests began to dominate the horizon. Every turn seemed to reveal another picture worthy of admiration. Such journeys remind us that Pakistan's natural diversity is one of its greatest strengths. Within a single day's drive, one can travel from the plains of Punjab to the cool valleys of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By evening we reached Mingora, where we were warmly received by Khan Riaz Ahmad Khan. Hospitality is often described as a defining feature of Pakhtun culture, but descriptions rarely capture its genuine warmth. Our host welcomed us not as visitors but as members of his extended family. Traditional tribal cuisine was served with remarkable generosity and every conversation reflected sincerity rather than formality. The experience reminded us that while scenic beauty attracts travellers, it is often the kindness of local people that leaves the deepest impression. The following day Khan Riaz Ahmad Khan accompanied us to Shangla Top. The winding mountain road tested both patience and driving skills, yet every kilometre rewarded us with breathtaking scenery. Dense forests covered the slopes while clouds drifted lazily across the peaks. At Shangla Top we were welcomed by Mr Sultan Ahmad Khan, whose gracious reception reflected the

same generous spirit we had experienced throughout the valley. A traditional lunch, prepared with great care, transformed an already memorable visit into an unforgettable one. Standing at Shangla Top, surrounded by mountains stretching endlessly into the distance, it was impossible not to feel a profound sense of pride. Nature has blessed Pakistan with landscapes capable of competing with any tourist destination in the world. Yet these blessings also impose responsibility. Such places deserve careful preservation, thoughtful planning and responsible tourism if future generations are to experience the same beauty. Our journey continued towards Malam Jabba, one of Pakistan's best-known hill resorts. On the way we stopped at Jahanabad, where the giant rock carving of the Buddha stands as silent testimony to the region's Buddhist heritage. The sculpture reminds visitors that Swat has, for centuries, been a meeting point of different civilisations and faiths. Preserving such archaeological treasures is not merely an academic exercise; it strengthens our understanding of the country's plural historical legacy. Malam Jabba itself offered magnificent views. The forests, cool mountain breeze and panoramic landscape fully justified its popularity. Visitors crowded the chairlift station while families enjoyed the pleasant weather. Yet alongside these attractions emerged a troubling reality that deserves serious attention. The operation of local transport and recreational facilities has increasingly fallen into the hands of groups that appear more interested in short-term profits than in promoting tourism. Jeep operators demanded excessive fares with little transparency, while chairlift charges seemed disconnected from the quality of services offered. Visitors unfamiliar with local conditions often found themselves with little choice but to accept unreasonable prices. Tourism flourishes where visitors feel respected and fairly treated; it suffers where they feel exploited. This issue extends beyond individual complaints. Domestic tourism is becoming an important contributor to local economies, but its long-term success depends upon regulation. Provincial authorities should establish clear fare structures for jeep services, recreational rides and parking facilities. Publicly displayed rate lists, regular inspections and accessible complaint mechanisms would go a long way towards restoring visitors' confidence. From Malam Jabba we travelled onwards to Kalam, perhaps one of the most picturesque valleys in Pakistan. During the summer season the town appears to host visitors from every corner of the country. Hotels remain fully occupied, markets bustle with activity and vehicles crowd the narrow roads. Such popularity demonstrates the enormous potential of Pakistan's tourism sector. Unfortunately, Kalam also revealed familiar shortcomings. Hotel tariffs frequently bore little relation to the quality of accommodation provided. Food prices remained unusually high while standards often failed to justify the expense. Some service providers responded discourteously when customers questioned charges or attempted reasonable bargaining. Such behaviour damages the reputation of destinations that otherwise possess extraordinary appeal.

It is important, however, to distinguish between commercial practices and the conduct of ordinary residents. Throughout our journey we encountered villagers whose warmth, honesty and willingness to help reflected the finest traditions of Pakistani society. Whether offering directions, sharing local knowledge or simply exchanging greetings, rural communities consistently demonstrated generosity that no commercial establishment could replicate. The following morning we travelled to Mahodand Lake and Saifulah Lake. Few experiences compare with witnessing the crystal-clear waters surrounded by towering mountains and dense forests. Families enjoyed boating while younger visitors eagerly crossed zip lines suspended above the landscape. The cool breeze, flowing streams and quiet beauty created an atmosphere that photographs alone can never capture. Yet even these remarkable locations were not free from problems. Litter scattered across certain areas, inadequate waste management, traffic congestion and poor crowd control all pointed towards weak administrative planning. Tourism cannot thrive where cleanliness and discipline receive insufficient attention. Environmental neglect not only diminishes the visitor experience but also threatens fragile ecosystems that require careful protection. Responsibility does not rest solely with government institutions. Visitors themselves must recognise that tourism carries civic obligations. Throwing plastic bottles into rivers, leaving food waste behind and damaging natural surroundings reflect attitudes that ultimately harm everyone. Clean tourist destinations are built through shared responsibility between authorities, businesses and visitors alike. Pakistan frequently celebrates its natural beauty and rightly so. From the Salt Range to the valleys of Swat, our landscapes possess extraordinary appeal. Yet beautiful scenery alone cannot sustain a successful tourism industry. Efficient management, transparent pricing, environmental protection and respectful treatment of visitors are equally essential. Countries that have transformed tourism into a major source of national income did so through consistent planning rather than relying solely on natural advantages. As our journey drew to a close, the memories that remained strongest were not confined to mountains, lakes or forests. They included the generosity of our hosts, the conversations shared over traditional meals, the pride inspired by Pakistan's landscapes and the disappointment caused by avoidable administrative failures. The contrast between unmatched natural beauty and persistent mismanagement was impossible to ignore. Pakistan does not need to search for paradise elsewhere; much of it already exists within its borders. The challenge is not discovering these treasures but preserving them with wisdom and presenting them with dignity. If public authorities enforce fair regulations, businesses recognise that satisfied visitors are their greatest asset, and tourists themselves respect the places they visit, then the country's tourism potential can become a lasting source of prosperity and national pride. The mountains have already done their part. It is now for us to prove that we are worthy custodians of the extraordinary homeland we proudly call our own.

Briefs

Pakistan, Kuwait resolve...

FROM PAGE 01

"He also expressed appreciation for Pakistan's support to Kuwait during the Covid-19 pandemic," during which Pakistan had signed an agreement to send hundreds of medical workers to the Gulf country at its request. The FO further said that DPM Dar reaffirmed "Pakistan's deep commitment to its longstanding brotherly relations with Kuwait and underscored Pakistan's desire to further expand the mutually beneficial partnership across all areas of cooperation". "The two sides also exchanged views on regional and international developments of mutual interest, including the situation in the Middle East and Palestine. The Kuwaiti foreign minister also appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in promoting regional peace and stability," it said.

Citizens to get access to all facilities

FROM PAGE 01

all stakeholders into confidence on the policy, including the provinces. The prime minister directed that the digital vision first be implemented in priority sectors including health, agriculture, utilities, housing, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to provide better facilities to the public "as soon as possible". After its implementation in the housing sector, a central identification number will be available for all private and public properties, according to the briefing. "The implementation of the digital system in the SMEs sector will establish an integrated system for the unique legal identity of businesses, which will contribute to an increase in the country's overall production," it said. The PMO statement added that all legal, administrative and institutional measures for the vision's full implementation were being completed "rapidly", with input being sought from international experts and organisations alongside prevailing best global practices. The premier directed "immediate and effective measures" to make the facilities of the newly established central data centre, Sky 47, available to all federal institutions. The data centre was inaugurated last week and has a capacity of 8.5 megawatts.

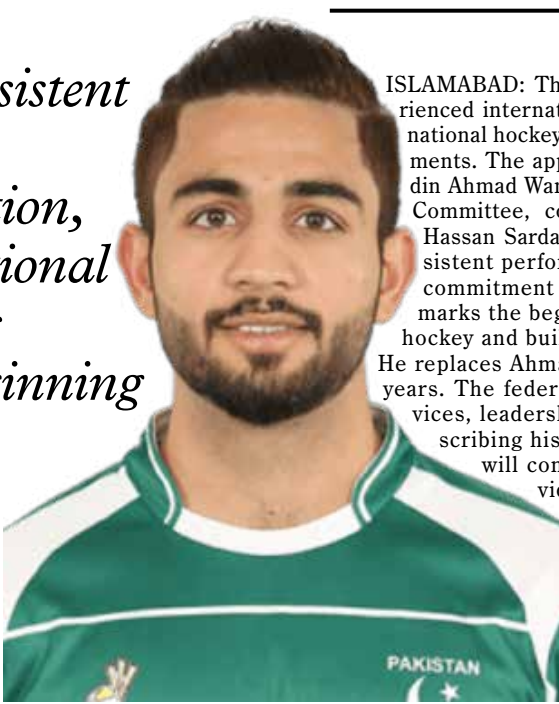
US, Saudi forces strike...

FROM PAGE 01

the Middle East war began in late February. Crude oil prices leapt more than four per cent as the fresh Middle East flare-up revived fears over global supplies usually shipped through the pivotal Strait of Hormuz. The US military said US and Saudi forces carried out precision strikes against "Iran-aligned terrorists" the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) "directed to attack US forces and Saudi energy infrastructure". "US and Saudi fighter aircraft struck multiple terrorist logistics and weapons sites across eastern Iraq in a strong response to over 30 IRGC-directed aerial drone attacks in the last 72 hours," it said. "The IRGC and its terrorist proxies must cease these attacks to avoid further US military response," it added. Saudi Arabia's defence ministry said the "terrorist militias loyal to Iran" were linked to attacks on the kingdom's oil facilities. A days-long pause in hostilities ended late Tuesday, when US forces reported intercepting missiles launched by Iran at American bases in the Gulf. 'Full control' Washington had said the cessation in fighting was aimed at kickstarting a new round of negotiations, including over the Strait of Hormuz. Iran's IRGC said on Wednesday it attacked and stopped three tankers in the strait, maintaining it has "full control" of the waterway. Trump hosted Netanyahu at the White House on Tuesday for closed-door talks that the administration described as "positive and productive".

PHF appoints Abu Bakar to lead national hockey team

Abu Bakar has earned the captaincy following his consistent performances, exemplary leadership qualities, dedication, and commitment to the national team. The PHF believes his appointment marks the beginning of a new chapter aimed at strengthening Pakistan hockey and building a competitive squad for future international events



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has appointed experienced international player Abu Bakar as the new captain of the Pakistan national hockey team ahead of the country's upcoming international assignments. The appointment was approved by PHF Adhoc President Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani on the recommendation of the Professional Development Committee, comprising legendary Olympians Islahuddin Siddiqui and Hassan Sardar. Abu Bakar has earned the captaincy following his consistent performances, exemplary leadership qualities, dedication, and commitment to the national team. The PHF believes his appointment marks the beginning of a new chapter aimed at strengthening Pakistan hockey and building a competitive squad for future international events. He replaces Ahmad Butt, who led Pakistan with distinction for the past 14 years. The federation paid rich tribute to Ahmad Butt's outstanding services, leadership, and unwavering commitment to Pakistan hockey, describing his contribution as invaluable. The experienced campaigner will continue to serve the national team as a senior player, providing guidance to the younger members of the squad. The PHF expressed confidence that Abu Bakar, supported by experienced senior players and a talented group of emerging youngsters, will help develop a united, disciplined, and highly competitive team capable of delivering improved performances on the international stage. The federation extended its heartfelt congratulations to Abu Bakar on his appointment and wished him success in leading Pakistan hockey towards a brighter future.

ICC penalises Khurram Shahzad, Mohammad Abbas

LONDON: The International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Wednesday that it had penalised Pakistan's Khurram Shahzad and Mohammad Abbas for breaching Level 1 of the ICC code of conduct during the first match of their ICC World Test Championship series against the West Indies in Tarouba. "Khurram was fined 15 per cent of his match fee and Abbas handed an official reprimand for breaching Article 2.5 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to 'using language, actions or gestures which disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction

from a batter upon his/her dismissal during an International Match," the ICC said in a press release. It added that one merit point had also been added to the disciplinary records of each of the players, both of whom did not have any previous offences in a 24-month period. ICC said Khurram was fined for "celebrating aggressively close to dismissed batter Shai Hope during the 17th over of the West Indies' second innings, an action deemed capable of provoking an aggressive reaction". Abbas was penalised for celebrating in an "animated manner" near dismissed

batter Jomel Warrican, the final wicket of the innings, it added. "Both players admitted their offences and accepted the sanctions proposed by Jeff Crowe of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees, so there was no need for formal hearings. "On-field umpires Alex Wharf and Richard Kettleborough and third umpire Jayaraman Madanagopal levelled the charges," the press release said. It also explained that Level 1 breaches carried a minimum penalty of an official reprimand, a maximum penalty of 50pc of a player's match fee, and one or two merit points. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on 29 July, 2026. – DNA

Bilawal calls Punjab CM, PM 'products'..

FROM PAGE 01

Without naming PML-N President Nawaz Sharif, Bilawal said that the party's first chief minister in Punjab had assumed office through rigged elections. "Those holding the offices of prime minister and Punjab chief minister today – everyone knows they are there not because of their performance or the people's votes, but because of Form-47." He also urged the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf not to boycott the elections, saying they should instead participate in the electoral process. Bilawal argued that by boycotting the polls, PTI supporters were creating opportunities for others. Bilawal said that only the PPP had the solution to the challenges facing the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan through to World Junior Squash C'ships quarter-finals

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan booked their place in the quarter-finals of the World Junior Squash Championships 2026 team event after defeating Canada 2-0 in the pre-quarter-finals in the Niagara-on-the-Lake, Canada on Wednesday. According to information made available here by Pakistan Squash Federation, Nauman Khan gave Pakistan a flying start with a convincing 3-0 victory over Colten McLaughlin, winning 11-5, 13-11, 11-9 in the opening singles match. Abdullah Nawaz then sealed Pakistan's passage to the last eight after battling past Calder Murray in a thrilling five-game contest. He won 9-11, 11-7, 11-9, 6-11, 11-3 to complete a memorable team victory. Pakistan will face defending champions Egypt in the quarter-finals on Thursday. – APP

Boxer Fatima Zahra earns Pakistan's first Commonwealth Games medal

Pakistani boxer outclasses New Zealand's Jordan Wilson in quarterfinals

KARACHI: Pakistan have secured their first medal at the Commonwealth Games, with boxer Fatima Zahra guaranteeing a place on the podium after a dominant quarterfinal victory. Fatima Zahra advanced to the women's 60kg boxing semifinals at the Commonwealth Games. Competing in the quarterfinals, Fatima outclassed New Zealand's Jordan Wilson, claiming a unanimous 5-0 victory on points at the SEC Hall 5 in Glasgow.

The Pakistani boxer impressed throughout the three-round contest, earning the judges' verdict by margins of 29-28, 29-28, 30-27, 29-28 and 29-28.

With her place in the semifinals confirmed, Fatima Zahra is now guaranteed at least a bronze medal, marking Pakistan's first medal of the Commonwealth Games. She will now aim to continue her winning run and fight for a place in the final. – APP



32 terrorists killed in KP, Balochistan

FROM PAGE 01

According to the ISPR, security forces also conducted multiple intelligence-based operations in District Nushki of Balochistan, where, after an intense engagement, eight terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Hindustan were eliminated. Security forces also recovered and destroyed weapons, ammunition, and improvised explosive devices used by terrorists. Sanitisation operations were being conducted to eliminate any other Indian-sponsored terrorist found in the area, the ISPR said. A report by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) showed KP and Balochistan were the epicentres of violence, with the former recording as the worst hit region, during the second quarter of 2026. Jointly, the two provinces accounted for almost 96% of all violence-linked fatalities, with over 61% (475) recorded in the former and 34% (265) in the latter province, according to the report. KP recorded the highest number of violent incidents in the second quarter, with 151 cases (57%), followed by Balochistan with 94 incidents (35%), accounting for the majority of reported violence.

Middle East tensions surge as...

FROM PAGE 01

Iraqi infrastructure as well as stations set up for religious pilgrims. In an official statement, Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the operations as a gross violation of the UN Charter and international law, accusing Washington and Riyadh of infringing upon Iraq's national sovereignty. The ministry stated that these attacks are in line with the aspirations of the United States and the Zionist regime to expand the scope of war and conflict in the West Asian region, holding the US administration and its regional allies responsible for the escalation. US and Saudi authorities countered that the precision strikes were launched to neutralize militia groups responsible for recent cross-border drone and missile attacks targeting Gulf energy facilities. Hopes for a diplomatic solution to secure the world's most critical maritime choke point suffered a major setback after Tehran rejected a compromise plan proposed by Oman. The Omani proposal—backed by several Gulf states—sought a 50-50 joint regional framework for overseeing shipping lanes through the Strait of Hormuz, modeled after multi-nation management systems used in the Strait of Malacca. While Oman proposed a shared 50-50 regional administration with voluntary fees for both inbound and outbound shipping lanes, Iran countered by demanding exclusive Iranian operational control. Tehran insisted that the entire primary inbound shipping route must remain under Iranian control, with only partial outbound oversight left to Oman. Senior Iranian official Kazem Gharibabadi stated that the Omani compromise failed to meet Tehran's security requirements, warning that maritime transit through the waterway would remain restricted until their terms were met. Energy markets reacted immediately to the twin shocks of diplomatic impasse and renewed military strikes. Global crude oil benchmarks jumped over 5 per cent (\$3+ per barrel) in early trading as traders priced in heightened risks of supply disruptions.

Fifa mulls stake sale through new \$20bn entity, Uefa not happy

Fifa seeks to raise up to \$4.2 billion by selling minority non-controlling stakes in the subsidiary

FIFA plans to create a new commercial subsidiary valued at \$20 billion, world soccer's governing body said on Tuesday, as it seeks backing from its 211 member associations for the proposal in a move already criticised by Uefa. The ambitious plan would see Fifa establish Fifa Forward Enterprise (FFE), a wholly-owned subsidiary consolidating the organisation's commercial and event operations. Fifa said it would retain sole control as well as "exclusive authority" over football governance, competitions, the match calendar and all regulatory and sporting decisions. Under the proposal, Fifa would invite external investors to purchase minority, non-controlling stakes in FFE to raise up to \$4.2 billion, with the body saying all net benefits will be reinvested in the game. "Football is the world's most popular sport

and an extraordinary engine of human and social development," Fifa President Gianni Infantino said in a statement. "Parts of the game have turned that popularity into remarkable commercial value – and we celebrate that success and want it to continue, because it lifts the whole game. "Our job is to make sure the rest of football grows with it: Fifa exists to support sustainable, inclusive development in every corner of the world." Fierce criticism from Uefa However, the proposal has drawn fierce criticism from European soccer's governing body Uefa. "This crosses a line that football's governing institutions should never cross," Uefa said in a statement. "Uefa takes it extremely seriously. So should every National Football Association. So should every stakeholder: leagues, clubs,

players, supporters, governments and everyone who cares about the future of the game. "The soul and governance of football are not assets to trade – especially with zero transparency as to who gains financially. None of us are the owners of football. It is not Fifa's to sell." Infantino, however, said every member association should have the opportunity to seek a fair share of the available funding to shape its own future. "This is about the democratisation of football worldwide," he added. A Fifa spokesperson said the proposal will soon be presented to the 211 Member Associations and the Fifa Council, which will be the sole final decision-makers on the matter. External investors Fifa is working with bankers at JPMorgan to raise billions of dollars by bringing in external investors to take as much as a 20% stake

in the entity, a source said. The source added that former Liberty Media CEO Greg Maffei has been involved as a commercial adviser on the creation of the Fifa enterprise. Thrive Eternal, a new investment strategy launched by venture capital firm Thrive Capital, is expected to be a lead investor in the entity, the source said. The strategy is a permanent capital vehicle focused on making a small number of long-term investments in franchises and cultural institutions. Thrive Eternal took a minority stake in Major League Baseball's San Francisco Giants this year. The vehicle was founded by Joshua Kushner, the brother of Jared Kushner, US President Donald Trump's son-in-law. Former Walt Disney DIS.N CEO Bob Iger serves as an adviser. Jared Kushner, however, is not a potential investor, the source said. – APP

Briefs

PSX extends losses, sheds over 1,580 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) remained under selling pressure on Wednesday, losing 1,580.90 points, a negative change of 0.89 percent, to close at 176,042.99 points against 177,623.88 points recorded in the previous trading session. The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 574.076 million shares, compared to 958.014 million shares traded on Tuesday, while the traded value declined to Rs25.369 billion from Rs41.566 billion. Market capitalisation also fell to Rs19.778 trillion from Rs19.951 trillion recorded a day earlier. Out of 495 companies that traded in the ready market, 129 posted gains, 330 suffered losses, while 36 remained unchanged, reflecting a predominantly bearish trend across the market. Cnergyico PK led the volume chart with 58.656 million shares, followed by Siddiqsons Tin with 50.224 million shares and World-Call Telecom with 48.952 million shares. Among the top gainers, Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited surged by Rs177.08 to close at Rs25,480.00, while Khyber Textile Mills Limited advanced by Rs90.12 to settle at Rs2,088.41. On the losing side, PIA Holding Company Limited declined by Rs495.32 to close at Rs17,674.68, while Khairpur Sugar Mills Limited fell by Rs133.71 to Rs1,203.44. In the futures (DFC) market, turnover stood at 400.821 million shares with a traded value of Rs18.079 billion, compared with 510.216 million shares worth Rs21.937 billion in the previous session. Of the 304 companies traded in the futures market, 37 advanced, 266 declined and one remained unchanged.—APP

Rupee gains 03 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Wednesday appreciated by 03 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.82, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 277.85. 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 increased by Rs 0.74 and closed at Rs 316.64 against the previous day's closing of Rs 315.91, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.69, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs 0.04 and closed at Rs 369.61 compared to the previous day's Rs 369.57. The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 02 and 01 paise, closing at Rs 75.63 and Rs 74.00, respectively.—APP

FIA, IOM mark new partnership milestone under Japan-funded project

Japan-funded 4-year project ends as FIA receives equipment for 21 border points, 3 transport vans

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The International Organization for Migration (IOM) handed over border management equipment and transport vehicles to Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). The ceremony was held at the FIA Headquarters in Islamabad, marking the culmination of a four-year project funded by the Government of Japan aimed at enhancing Pakistan's border management capacity.

The ceremony was attended by the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, H.E. Akamatsu Shuichi, the Chief of Mission of IOM Pakistan, Mio Sato, the Director General of FIA, Dr Usman Anwar, and representatives of the Embassy of Japan, IOM, and FIA.

The handover forms part of IOM's broader support to the Government of Pakistan in strengthening migration governance, facilitating safe, regular and orderly migration, and enhancing protection-sensitive responses to trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.

The equipment delivered includes biometric, IT, security, surveillance, communication, and solar systems, reaching 21 FIA operational points nationwide. This includes equipment supporting FIA's National Command and Control Centre at Headquarters, established to strengthen coordinated, intelligence-led responses to transnational crime, including human trafficking, smuggling of migrants, and cybercrime. IOM also handed over three dedicated transport vans, deployed at the international airports in Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore, to support the safe and dignified handling of returning migrants at the country's busiest points of entry.

This equipment handover was complemented by investments in institutional capacity, including the refurbishment of the FIA Training Academy, completed in March 2026. With upgraded IT infrastructure, enhanced security systems, and renovated training facilities, the Academy now provides a modernized learning environment for both new recruits and in-service officers. As the



Academy trains an average of 1,000 officers annually, these improvements will help sustain the project's impact by strengthening FIA's long-term capacity in protection sensitive and rights-based border management.

The project also delivered institutional support through sustained capacity-building activities. Over 150 FIA officials were trained, covering rights- and gender-based approaches to border management, investigation techniques, and document and biometric verification. The initiative built a sustainable pool of FIA master trainers, including women, now equipped to independently build capacities within the institution. The project further strengthened FIA's protection-sensitive response to trafficking and smuggling, reaching over 200 participants, including FIA officials,

provincial police, and civil society representatives, through training on victim identification, screening, and referral, with women making up more than half of the participants.

"This partnership demonstrates the importance of sustained international cooperation in addressing increasingly complex migration and border management issues," said Dr Usman Anwar, Director General of FIA. "The support to our National Command and Control Centre is particularly important, as it strengthens our ability to improve operational monitoring and coordinated responses to transnational crime." "We believe that security and human rights are not competing values — they are complementary ones. Strong, capable, and humane border management institutions protect the integrity of the state and protect

the dignity of individuals at the same time. That is the model this project has worked to build, and it is the model Japan will continue to support," said H.E. Mr. AKAMATSU Shuichi, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan. "This partnership demonstrates the importance of sustained international cooperation in addressing complex migration and border management challenges." "Border management today extends far beyond the movement of people across borders. It sits at the intersection of national security, economic connectivity, regional cooperation, and the protection of human dignity," said Mio Sato, Chief of Mission, IOM Pakistan. "Through the generous support of the Government of Japan, this project has enabled institutions and improved systems that will serve Pakistan's border management needs."

CDA chief assures to review FAR charges

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark move to strengthen the ease of doing business in the federal capital, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) have reached a principled agreement to establish a Business Facilitation Centre (BFC) at the CDA, offering the business community a one-window platform for faster, more efficient resolution of regulatory and administrative matters. The breakthrough was achieved during a meeting between Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Lt. (Retd.) Sohail Ashraf, who also serves as the Chief Commissioner of Islamabad, and an ICCI delegation led by President Sardar Tahir Mehmood, said a press release. Establishment of the proposed business centre was reflecting a shared commitment to creating a more investor-friendly business environment, streamlining public services, and removing obstacles to commercial growth. Under the proposed Business Facilitation Centre, entrepreneurs, investors and traders will be able to access multiple CDA-related services through a single platform, significantly reducing procedural delays and improving coordination with relevant departments. In another major decision, the CDA Chairman agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of Floor Area Ratio (FAR) charges in response to concerns raised by the business community. He assured the delegation that all legitimate issues affecting traders, developers and investors would be addressed through practical, transparent and business-friendly measures aimed at encouraging investment and accelerating commercial activity. Reaffirming the Authority's commitment to the private sector, the CDA Chairman said the business community is a key driver of Pakistan's economic growth and assured that the CDA would continue to facilitate investment, promote ease of doing business, and provide every possible support for sustainable economic development. The meeting also featured detailed discussions on a wide range of issues, including Estate Management-I (EM-I), Estate Management-II (EM-II), affectees, land-related matters, rehabilitation, the Building Control Section (BCS), the real estate sector.—APP

Energy security must be Pak's top priority

LAHORE: Pakistan should make energy security its foremost national priority by seeking US guarantees for uninterrupted and affordable gas imports from Iran, provided Washington and Tehran resolve tensions over the Strait of Hormuz, said prominent Pakistani-American entrepreneur Mossadaq Chughtai in a media statement here Tuesday. He added, "To break free from energy insecurity, Islamabad must pursue a single-point agenda: secure a US-led international exception for gas imports under the Iran-Pakistan pipeline." Chughtai, an investor in advanced technologies and agricultural projects, argued that expediting the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline represents the most practical path toward reducing Pakistan's chronic energy shortages and stabilizing its economy. Pakistan's recent diplomatic engagement, he said, should now translate into tangible economic gains with energy security serving as the foundation for long-term growth. While acknowledging the importance of diversifying energy sources, Chughtai said Pakistan should prioritize the most affordable option available — Iranian natural gas. "The Middle East is likely to remain in prolonged turmoil, with no major power willing to compromise. Stability, let alone business as usual, remains a distant prospect. Even if the region stabilizes, energy producers will increase output to recover losses, but Iran is expected to remain among the most competitive suppliers due to its large production capacity and established international buyers," he observed. Mossadaq Chughtai, Vice Chairman of KiNRG, a US-based energy company that recently acquired a data-center construction firm to expand its integrated energy solutions business, said Pakistan had been presented with a rare opportunity. "I believe Pakistan has been presented with a rare opportunity that could take the country to unprecedented levels of economic growth, beyond anything in its modern history," he viewed. He identified the proposed Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline, entering through the Gabd-Kumb Border Crossing, as the country's most significant strategic energy project, noting that the pipeline had already been completed on the Iranian side of the border. "If there is one strategic initiative Pakistan should pursue, it is the proposed gas pipeline from Iran, entering through the Gabd-Kumb Border Crossing," Chughtai said. The project has the potential to transform Pakistan's economy, provided it was implemented with strategic foresight and long-term discipline. Chughtai proposed that Pakistan seek a non-revocable 50-year US sanctions waiver to ensure uninterrupted gas imports from Iran. He also called for a long-term pricing agreement with Tehran, suggesting a gas price capped at USD 2.25 per MMBtu, with a maximum ceiling of USD 5.00 per MMBtu over the 50-year period. He further recommended establishing a domestic pricing framework that would limit consumer and industrial gas tariffs to no more than 10 percent above the government's procurement cost. Such a policy, he argued, would improve the competitiveness of Pakistani manufacturers and exporters in global markets. "If executed effectively, such a framework could fundamentally reshape Pakistan's economic trajectory by accelerating manufacturing growth, attracting mid to large scale investment, and increasing exports to levels comparable to Vietnam's within five to ten years," Chughtai said. He projected that the strategy could create more than 11 million jobs, broaden the tax base, support sustained GDP growth, and deliver long-term economic prosperity. "Now is the time for Pakistan to open a dialogue with the White House to secure reliable energy supplies capable of meeting the country's growing development needs in an evolving regional environment filled with both opportunities and challenges," he concluded.—DNA

West Bank violence, annexation 'only getting worse'

GENEVA: Two years after the International Court of Justice said Israel's occupation of the West Bank was unlawful, settler violence and territorial annexation is "only getting worse," the UN said Wednesday. "With attacks by Israeli settlers, and the creation of settlements and outposts, hitting an all-time high, third states must act urgently and in unison to halt the continuing killing and dispossession of the Palestinian people, and to bring an end to the Israeli occupation," UN human rights office spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani said in a statement.—APP

Grand Egyptian Museum architects design India's first startup museum

NEW DELHI: The award-winning architects behind the Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza will design India's first startup museum in Bengaluru, the country's leading tech and IT hub set to open in 2028, the Museum of Innovation and Startup Technology is a public-private partnership project between the Karnataka state's Department of Electronics, Information Technology, Biotechnology and Science and Technology and UnboxingBLR Foundation, a Bengaluru-based non-profit co-founded by venture capitalist Prashanth Prakash and journalist Malini Goyal. A \$35 million project set in a 105-acre urban forest, MIST will be housed in one of the original switchgear factory sheds of the former New Government Electrical Factory industrial complex in Bengaluru's Baiyappanahalli area. The Heneghan Peng Architects, an architectural practice based in Dublin, will develop the museum together with India's Cadence Architects and DROO Da Costa Mahindoo Architects and "transform the historic industrial site through adaptive reuse," the Irish firm said on Tuesday, as it released its design vision. "The project reimagines heritage as a platform for future innovation, bringing together culture, technology, entrepreneurship and public life within a single dynamic ecosystem." The Heneghan Peng Architects is known for its designs of major civic and cultural projects, among which are the Versailles Prize-winning Grand Egyptian Museum, one of the world's largest archaeological museums, which opened last year in Giza, as well as the Palestinian Museum in Birzeit, West Bank, which won the prestigious 2019 Aga Khan Award for Architecture. In 2026, the practice was named among TIME's 100 Most Influential Companies. Priyank Kharge, Karnataka's home minister who also oversees IT and biotechnology, has welcomed the announcement of the Heneghan Peng Architects' role, saying that the museum will "tell the story of India's innovation, startup and technology ecosystem, celebrating the ideas, people and institutions that shaped it.—APP



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Briefs

France
appoints
Jean-Noël
Poirier new
ambassador
for Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: France has nominated senior career diplomat Jean-Noël Poirier as its new ambassador to Pakistan. Poirier is currently the French Consul General in Greenland. The incumbent, French Ambassador to Pakistan Nicolas Galey shall be completing an eventful four-and-a-half-year diplomatic mission, leaving behind a legacy marked by revitalized bilateral engagement, expanding economic ties, and landmark educational exchanges between Paris and Islamabad. During his term, bilateral cooperation between the two nations expanded significantly into strategic, economic, and cultural spheres. Under Ambassador Galey's leadership, academic mobility saw unprecedented growth, with the number of Pakistani students pursuing higher education in France soaring from just 200 at the beginning of his tenure to over 7,000. On the economic front, France actively supported Pakistan's development efforts, working alongside local leadership to attract French investments, bolster commercial initiatives, and contribute 50 million euros to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in Pakistan. Beyond economic and educational initiatives, Ambassador Galey championed cross-cultural exchanges through art exhibitions and cultural partnerships, fostering mutual understanding between both nations.

Houthi
planning
to impose
fees for Red
Sea transit

RIYADH: A minister in Yemen's internationally recognized government on Wednesday accused Houthi rebels of working under Iranian guidance to establish a system to impose fees for ships transiting the Red Sea and the Bab Al-Mandab Strait. Information minister Moammar Al-Eryani described "the move as a dangerous escalation aimed at transforming one of the world's most strategic maritime corridors into a permanent source of funding for the militia's military and terrorist activities." Eryani said the assessment was provided by recently obtained "confirmed intelligence" indicating that Iran's Revolutionary Guards were helping manage the effort. "The intelligence indicates that IRGC experts and advisers are directly involved in designing the technical and administrative framework of the project," the minister added in comments exclusive to AFP. - APP

Peru's
Fujimori
takes power

LIMA: Keiko Fujimori was sworn in as Peru's president on Tuesday, becoming the latest in a string of conservative leaders elected across Latin America by voters frustrated by crime, weak economic growth and political instability. The 51-year-old daughter of former President Alberto Fujimori is Peru's first-ever elected female head of state. Her victory in June's presidential runoff marked the return of one of Peru's most influential and polarizing political dynasties and capped a political comeback after years of failed bids. "I assume office with the firmness needed to govern, but also with the sensitivity required to listen to and heal the wounds of our people," Fujimori said in her first address as president, calling for reconciliation after a close election race marked by allegations of fraud. "We must have the courage to face our reality head-on, without anesthesia, without makeup, and without half-truths," she said. - APP

MONAL'S FAREWELL FOR KAZKH, AZERI ENVOYS



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Monal Group Luqman Ali Afzal hosted farewell dinner for the Ambassadors of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov and Kazakhstan Yerzhen Kistafin, at his residents. A large number of guests hailing from various walks of life gathered to bid farewell to the outgoing ambassadors. President RCCI Usman Shaukat and Group Leader Sohail Altaf also in the picture. - DNA

12.9 million people are living
with hepatitis in Pakistan

With 9 million of the 47 million estimated cases worldwide, Pakistan bears the heaviest burden of hepatitis C globally. Only 3 out of 10 people affected know it, which prevents millions from receiving life-saving treatment

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of World Hepatitis Day, the World Health Organization (WHO) called on all stakeholders to take urgent science-based action and renewed its support for Pakistan's efforts to advance towards the goal of ending hepatitis as a public health problem by 2030. Hepatitis is a deadly disease that affects an estimated 12.9 million people in Pakistan, including 9 million with hepatitis C and 3.8 million with hepatitis B. Every year, more than 48,000 people die in Pakistan due to hepatitis infections that are preventable and curable. This equals one death every 11 minutes. With 9 million of the 47 million estimated

cases worldwide, Pakistan bears the heaviest burden of hepatitis C globally. Only 3 out of 10 people affected know it, which prevents millions from receiving life-saving treatment. The high burden is largely the result of historical health care-associated transmission, particularly the widespread reuse of needles for injections and unsafe blood transfusions. In 2024, over 88,000 people were infected with hepatitis C across the country. Under the international theme "Hepatitis: Let's break it down", WHO reiterated its full support for Pakistan's efforts to fight the disease, including the Prime Minister's National Programme for the Elimination of Hepatitis C Infection. "WHO will continue to partner with Pakistan to promote medical science to protect and save lives and adapt the

best practices and lessons learned from around the world to the national context. WHO stands with Pakistan to accelerate research and innovation, integrate hepatitis services into universal health coverage, enhance prevention - including vaccination - and ensure equitable access to quality hepatitis testing and treatment for every family, regardless of social or economic status," said WHO Representative in Pakistan Dr Luo Dapeng. Hepatitis B and C are preventable and treatable. However, if left untreated, they can lead to medical complications - including liver cancer - and death. In Pakistan, the most common modes of transmission include unsafe procedures and materials used in blood transfusions - resulting from unregulated private blood banks and a lack of

universal screening, injections with re-used, non-sterile syringes and needles, surgical procedures, dental care, body piercing and tattooing, and shaving - including at barber shops. According to the WHO Global Hepatitis Report 2026, viral hepatitis B and C - the two infections responsible for 95% of hepatitis-related deaths worldwide - claimed 1.34 million lives in 2024. At the same time, transmission continues, with more than 4,900 new infections every day. WHO will continue to partner with Pakistan to provide science-based guidance and support to strengthen prevention - including the vaccination of newborns against hepatitis B within 24 hours of birth - and diagnosis and treatment for all, no matter where they live or who they are.

Law enforcers continue
operations against
armed groups in
Rawalakot

Armed attackers have taken positions in different buildings across city, says spokesperson SSP Shaukat

NEWS DESK

RAWALAKOT: Law enforcement agencies continue operations against armed groups carrying out attacks against security personnel in Azad Jammu and Kashmir's (AJK) Rawalakot, a top police official said on Wednesday. Addressing a press conference in Rawalakot, AJK police spokesperson, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Khawar Ali Shaukat, said that armed attackers have taken positions in different buildings across the city.

His remarks come amid violent clashes in the city involving supporters of the proscribed Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) amid general elections in the region. The AJK government had declared JAAC a proscribed organisation on June 5 under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), accusing the group of involvement in terrorism. The ban was imposed days before the committee's planned June 9 protest demanding the abolition of 12 AJK Assembly seats reserved for refugees from Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) who migrated to Pakistan after 1947. During today's presser, SSP Shaukat said that armed groups continue carrying out attacks on law enforcement personnel in different areas, adding that no concession would be given to "miscreant elements". According to the official, at least one Rangers personnel was martyred in the attacks as enforcement agencies continue operations against the armed groups. The AJK police spokesperson said that police arrested several miscreants during the ongoing operations and recovered sophisticated weapons. Terming the attacks on security forces and state institutions "unacceptable", he maintained that state institutions had consistently exercised restraint.

Kuwaiti FM meets Army Chief
to boost bilateral ties

RAWALPINDI: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Jarrhah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, met Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi to discuss regional security and ways to strengthen cooperation between the two countries. The Kuwaiti foreign minister was accompanied by Kuwait's Ambassador to Pakistan, Nassar Abdul Rahman J. Al-Mutairi. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the two sides exchanged views on matters of mutual interest, the regional security environment, and opportunities

to further deepen bilateral cooperation. During the meeting, the Kuwaiti foreign minister appreciated Pakistan's continued support and its constructive role in promoting regional peace and stability. He also highlighted the longstanding fraternal relationship between Pakistan and Kuwait. Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening ties with Kuwait, stressing that both countries share a common vision for regional peace, stability, and prosperity. He expressed confidence that the enduring partnership between the two nations would continue to grow across multiple areas of cooperation. -APP

Wildfire
response
must evolve
to keep pace
with climate
change,
EU says

BRUSSELS: The European Union's response to wildfires needs more funding, greater focus on forest management and enhanced education about fire risk as the climate changes, the head of the bloc's crisis response said, as France and Spain battle deadly blazes. Wildfires have forced unprecedented evacuations of tens of thousands of people across France and Spain, and torn through a region already battered by a blisteringly hot and dry summer. "Climate change is accelerating. So our response must evolve just as quickly," Hadja Lahbib, the EU's Crisis Management Commissioner, told Reuters. "We must prepare for risks before disasters strike, and not simply react afterwards." Lahbib said it was not enough to just purchase more firefighting equipment, and that countries should also be investing more of their EU funding in forest management practices that reduce wildfire risk, and should better educate citizens on "what behavior they absolutely must avoid," to reduce fire risk. Around 90 percent of wildfires are started by human activities, such as campfires or discarded cigarettes. - APP

Zelensky
hails 'good'
Trump talks

WASHINGTON: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky sought licenses to produce Patriot air-defense interceptors during a "good meeting" with US counterpart Donald Trump on Tuesday, as he underscored Russia's Vladimir Putin's loss of initiative on the war front due to heavy losses. Zelensky spent just over an hour with Trump at the White House, in talks that came with Kyiv and Moscow intensifying long-range strikes as US-led diplomatic efforts to end the war stalled. "Today we had good meeting with President Trump," Zelensky told Fox News host Sean Hannity in a broadcast interview late Tuesday. - APP



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