



Islamabad POST

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Israel tried its best to derail US-Iran talks, says Vance

Detailed News On Page-08

Harry Kane Gutted after WC defeat

Detailed News On Page-06



KP police giving a lot of sacrifices

Detailed News On Page-02



MoU still valid

Pak urging US, Iran to hold talks

FO spox Andrabi rejects claims of stepping back from peace initiatives

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Hussain Andrabi said on Thursday that Pakistan would encourage the United States and Iran to stop violence and resume talks under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) – it helped mediate last month. “While the implementation of the MoU is facing challenges, Pakistan will continue to encourage all sides to end violence and resume technical-level talks in accordance with the MoU,” Andrabi said during a weekly press briefing in Islamabad.

Expressing deep concern over the renewed tensions between Iran and the United States, the FO spokesperson noted that Pakistan was closely monitoring the evolving regional situation and believes that negotiations remain the best way to address disputes. Rejecting the impression that Pakistan has stepped away from peace efforts, the spokesperson said that Islamabad's mediation efforts are continuing. “We express the hope for an early normalisation of

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Middle East tensions could impact Pakistan's economy: PM

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Thursday that escalating tensions in the Middle East could adversely affect the country's economic outlook, reiterating the need for vigilance and readiness across all relevant institutions. Chairing a high-level meeting to review the impact of regional tensions on the national economy, the prime minister said that by the grace of Allah, the national economy remained stable at present, but stressed the need to formulate a comprehensive strategy to enable timely action. Iran and the US exchanged intensified fire on Thursday in a week-long escalation that has all but torn up last month's truce.

For the first time since an Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) paused fighting last month,

the United States launched two big waves of air strikes in a single day on Wednesday, mostly on targets near the coast in southern Iran. Iran responded with missiles and drones fired at US military bases in neighbouring countries, including a major barrage at a recently expanded air base in Jordan. The re-escalation has once again largely halted traffic through Hormuz, the world's most important shipping route for oil and gas, pushing up global energy prices. The US and Iran signed the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding on June 17, largely mediated by Pakistan. The prime minister, chairing the meeting on Thursday, directed the relevant authorities to maintain full preparedness to counter potential challenges arising from prevailing regional uncertainty and lauded public support for the government's austerity and fuel-saving drive.

NATIONAL DAY OF EGYPT



ISLAMABAD: Chief guest Jamal Kamal, Federal Minister for Commerce, Ambassador of Egypt Dr. Ihab Abdelhamid and others cutting cake to celebrate the National Day of Arab Republic of Egypt, at Islamabad Serena Hotel. – DNA

Pakistan needs to do more for GSP+: EU

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The European Union on Thursday noted “issues” in Pakistan's compliance with its commitments under the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) and cautioned that Islamabad would have to address those shortcomings to qualify under the revised GSP framework.

The caution came in the European Commission's latest report on the implementation of the GSP over the 2023-2025 period, which said Pakistan had “been facing compliance issues with its GSP+ obligations” and had “regressed in a number of areas while positive change was limited”. Looking ahead, the Commission said Pakistan's continued access to the EU's preferential trade regime would depend on tangible improvements in areas where concerns persisted. The new preferential trade framework, which will take effect on Jan 1, 2027, requires all existing beneficiaries to reapply for the status under more stringent sustainability and governance requirements. The report, jointly published by the European Commission and the EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, is the final monitoring assessment under the existing GSP regulation and covered the period from 2023-2025. The Commission's assessment about Pakistan, which was given in an attached Staff Working Document, was dominated

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Russia voices concern

Iran-US row sparks Red Sea, regional alarm

Kuwait's military confirmed it was responding to renewed Iranian aerial attacks, underscoring the widening scope of hostilities

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Tensions in the Middle East surged further this week as Iran reportedly instructed Yemen's Houthi movement to prepare to close the Red Sea gateway if the United States targets Iran's power infrastructure. The warning comes amid a sharp escalation of strikes between Tehran and Washington, raising fears of disruption to global trade routes. According to regional sources, Kuwait's military confirmed it was responding to renewed Iranian aerial attacks, underscoring the widening scope of hostilities. The exchanges have intensified after U.S. strikes prompted the evacuation of a hospital in Iran, which Tehran condemned as a “barbaric” act. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson declared that the country would defend its national security “as long as necessary,” signaling Tehran's resolve to continue retaliatory measures. The statement followed a series of U.S. operations targeting Iranian assets, which Washington described as defensive actions in response to Iranian-backed attacks on American interests. The Kremlin voiced concern over the spiraling confrontation, stating it remains in close contact with Tehran. Moscow warned that the latest escalation poses serious risks to the global economy, particularly through

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Forces frustrate suicide attack on a military post

The sources said that the terrorists wanted to destroy the post after their persistent failure in achieving their objectives

APP

LOWER SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: Security forces have foiled an attempted suicide attack targeting a military post in the Kari Kot area of Lower South Waziristan's Wana, killing four terrorists, sources said on Thursday. According to security sources, the terrorists tried to attack the security forces' post using an explosives-laden vehicle late at night. But the attempt was foiled as the threat was detected, and the suicide attacker was killed, they said. The sources said that three other terrorists were also killed in the action taken by security forces. They said the targeted post was being used to protect the local population and to prevent the movement of Fitna-al-Khawarij – a term that the state uses for the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban – towards Wana Bazaar. The sources said that the terrorists wanted to

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Briefs

Cop martyred in attack on police station

SHAMIM SHAHID

BANNU: A police official was martyred while six security personnel and four civilians were injured after terrorists attacked a police station in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu district last night, police said on Thursday. On Wednesday night, attackers had attempted to ram a vehicle loaded with explosives into Miryan Police Station, triggering a powerful blast, which was followed by a prolonged exchange of fire between the terrorists and police personnel. According to police, the terrorists attempted to storm the police station immediately after the attack. However, police and security forces responded promptly, successfully foiling their plans. Police official Noor Jamal Khan, who was critically injured in the attack, succumbed to his injuries, Bannu police said in an official statement on Thursday.

Ishaq Dar meets Chinese foreign minister

DNA

SHANGHAI: deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar held a bilateral meeting with H.E. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Shanghai on the margins of WAIC. The two leaders reviewed the broad canvas of Pakistan-China bilateral relations and reaffirmed their shared commitment to further deepening the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership. They underscored the importance of advancing high-quality development under CPEC 2.0 and enhancing collaboration in trade, investment, science and technology, the digital economy, and artificial intelligence.

UK hints at visa restrictions for Pakistan

Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper told the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee that the Labour Government was prepared to examine “all possible levers” to force countries to accept the return of offenders whom Britain wants to deport

DNA

LONDON/ISLAMABAD: Britain has raised the prospect of imposing visa restrictions on Pakistan in an escalating diplomatic dispute over the proposed deportation of Shabir Ahmed, the convicted ringleader of the Rochdale grooming gang, as Islamabad declared that the case was entirely Britain's responsibility and had nothing to do with Pakistan.

Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper told the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee that the Labour Government was prepared to examine “all possible levers” to force countries to accept the return of offenders whom Britain wants to deport. Responding to questions about Ahmed, Cooper said the British government had repeatedly raised his case with Pakistan and would continue doing so.

“This individual should not be in the United Kingdom. He should be deported,” Cooper told the committee, strongly backing Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood's efforts to change the law to facilitate his removal. Asked specifically whether Pakistan could face visa sanctions for refusing to accept Ahmed, Cooper stopped short of announcing immediate measures but confirmed that visa restrictions remained among the options available to the government. She said previous measures involving visas had reduced immigration-system abuse involving certain countries and helped Britain secure additional agreements for the return of foreign criminals and failed asylum seekers. Cooper said she could not disclose details of confidential negotiations with individual governments,

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US approves nearly \$2 billion in weapons sales to Saudi Arabia

Proposed sale to improve KSA's capability to deter threats and improving interoperability with US: State Department

DNA

WASHINGTON: The US State Department said on Wednesday it has approved the sale of an estimated \$1.96 billion in weapons to bolster Saudi Arabia's air defences, as the war ramps up in the Middle East. “This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by improving the security of a Major non-NATO Ally that is a force for political stability and economic progress in the Gulf Region,” the State Department said in a release. Among the weapons the Gulf kingdom seeks are up to 20,000 Advanced Precision Kill Weapon Systems and their warheads, which the US Navy's website describes as “an inexpensive way to destroy targets while limiting collateral damage in close combat.”

The principal contractor will be BAE Systems in Nashua, New Jersey, the department said. “The proposed sale will improve Saudi Arabia's capability to deter current and future threats by strengthening its homeland defence, and improving interoperability with US forces, and other regional and NATO forces,” the release said. The move comes as Saudi Arabia appears to be on the brink of renewed war

Franco-German defense cooperation under strain

DNA

PARIS/BERLIN: France and Germany will discuss deepening cooperation on nuclear deterrence, missile defense, long-range strike capabilities and space at a joint ministerial retreat, the Elysee said, seeking to show that the EU's two largest defense powers can still work together despite differences over major armament programs. The meetings come weeks after industrial rivalries forced Paris and Berlin to scrap the landmark Future Combat Air System (FCAS) fighter jet program at a time the US is pressuring Europe to rearm itself. Delays to a Franco-German next-generation tank project, setbacks to the multinational Euro-drone program meant to build a drone competitor to the US Reaper and growing competition within Europe in the space sector have all underscored Europe's

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Major crackdown on illegal Friday car market

RAWALPINDI: The City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi has finalized a comprehensive crackdown against the illegal Friday car market operating on Murree Road, following directives from Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Farhan Aslam, to ease persistent traffic congestion and ensure the uninterrupted flow of traffic. According to the CTP, special traffic squads have been deployed and all operational arrangements completed to remove illegally parked vehicles and enforce traffic regulations without discrimination. The illegal car market has been operating every Friday for several years, with hundreds of vehicles parked along the main carriageway, service roads, and adjoining areas for sale. The practice regularly causes severe traffic congestion on one of Rawalpindi's busiest arteries, resulting in prolonged delays and inconvenience for commuters. Residents noted that while the CTP had carried out enforcement operations against the market on several occasions in the past, those efforts were largely temporary, with the market reappearing the following Friday and the underlying issue remaining unresolved. Thousands of commuters, including government and private-sector employees, students, patients, and business operators, rely on Murree Road daily. However, the weekly illegal market significantly disrupts traffic flow, delaying emergency services, including ambulances, and adversely affecting commercial activity in the area.—APP

Kashmiris to take vote decision on performance basis

RAWALPINDI: Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Danyal Chaudhry on Thursday said that the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir would make their decision in the upcoming elections based on performance, development, and public service, and would hand Pakistan Muslim League (N) a decisive victory. He was addressing a large Workers Convention organized by Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) Rawalpindi, for the Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections, last night. He emphasized that this election was about performance, not hollow promises. "The people know who truly served them and who only made claims. PML-N candidates will prove worthy of public trust", he added. Barrister Danyal said the people of Azad Kashmir were fully aware and would vote on the basis of real development and service, saying PML-N has always prioritized solving public issues and advancing regional development, while opponents have nothing to offer but allegations and negative politics. The convention was attended by Federal Minister for Railways, Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, Members National Assembly, Tahira Aurangzeb and Malik Abrar Ahmed, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), candidates Ahmed Raza Qadri and Yasir Lone, PML-N Rawalpindi City President Sardar Naseem Khan, former MNA Haji Pervaiz Khan, along with MPs, local leadership and a large number of workers.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs high level meeting to review different matters.

Sindh recovers 150,000 tonnes wheat from hoarders

Sharjeel urged those still hoarding wheat to hand over their stocks to the government so that sufficient supplies could be made available in the market. He said wheat prices had declined by 13 percent after the recovered stocks were released.

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon on Thursday said the provincial government had recovered 150,000 tonnes of wheat from hoarders during a province-wide crackdown aimed at stabilising prices and ensuring adequate supplies for the public. Addressing a press conference, the senior minister said Punjab and Sindh had witnessed bumper wheat harvests this season, but profiteers and hoarders purchased and stored large quantities of wheat, preventing the government from procuring the required stocks. He said the Sindh government launched a crackdown against hoarders, recovering 150,000 tonnes of wheat and compensating those from whom the grain was seized according to the government-notified procurement rates. Sharjeel urged those still hoarding wheat to hand over their stocks to the government so that sufficient supplies could be made available in the market. He said wheat

prices had declined by 13 percent after the recovered stocks were released. Responding to a question, the minister said the Sindh government had taken immediate notice of the murder of Dr. Akash Kumar, adding that police acted swiftly by arresting three suspects—Anil, Ram Chand and Suresh—and recovering the vehicle used in the crime. He praised the police for their prompt action and reaffirmed the government's commitment to taking immediate action against serious crimes. Sharjeel strongly condemned statements made against the country's martyrs and ghazis, saying Pakistan's armed forces had defended the nation on every front. Referring to the recent Pakistan-India conflict, he said the Pakistan Army, Navy and Air Force had responded effectively and defeated the enemy. He urged JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman to withdraw his remarks regarding the armed forces, saying such statements had received wide coverage in the Indian media and benefited the country's adversaries. He said Pakistan's martyrs and ghazis were national heroes whose sacrifices could not be diminished by any statement. The

senior minister said the entire nation remained united during the Pakistan-India conflict, with every segment of society playing its role. He added that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had consistently struggled against dictatorship but had never spoken against the country's armed forces. Sharjeel said Pakistan's status as the only nuclear power in the Islamic world reflected the vision of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. He stressed that all political, military, business and social segments of society should remain united on issues concerning national interest. Answering another question, he said Maulana Fazlur Rahman was a seasoned politician and withdrawing his statement would further enhance his stature. He also said the prime minister was keeping the country's economic conditions in view while making key decisions. On the wheat issue, Sharjeel said Punjab and Sindh had adopted separate procurement policies. He said there was no evidence that wheat had been transported from Punjab to Afghanistan, but there was evidence of wheat being moved from Sindh to Punjab.

FJWU starts BS programmes in fintech, forensics, data science

RAWALPINDI: Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) has announced the launching of several market-oriented BS programmes, including Data Science, Forensic Science, and Fintech to equip female students with modern global skills. The BS AI & Robotics programme which was introduced in previous academic year has received magnificent response from female students. This year, the university has introduced even more innovative faculties. FJWU Vice Chancellor Dr. Bushra Mirza (TI) informed this in an interview with the APP here on Thursday. Dr. Bushra Mirza said that the new academic programmes aimed to polish the potential of female students and provide them with excellent global employment opportunities. According to the Vice Chancellor, the university was introducing these advanced BS programmes for the first time in its history to meet local and inter-

national market demands. "This is what we are striving to bridge academia and Industry", she said. The newly launched disciplines included BS Data Science, BS Computer Systems, BS Forensic Science, BS Financial Technology (Fintech), BS Business Analytics, and BS Fashion and Interior Design. She highlighted that the BS Data Science and BS Computer Systems programmes were designed to address the rapidly growing demand in the global IT sector by combining hardware and software technologies. The Vice Chancellor further observed that BS Forensic Science would enable professional participation of women in criminal investigations and the justice system. It is worth mentioning that recently launched modern career-focused BS programs, including Forensic Science, making it a premier public-sector choice for female students in the twin cities. Fatima Jinnah university achieves a unique

status in this regard that no public sector university is offering forensic sciences in twin cities. Moreover, BS Fintech and BS Business Analytics programmes would open new economic horizons through data-driven decision-making. She maintained that the BS Fashion & Interior Design programme has been introduced for giving opportunities to learn and express creative skills of female youth. "The university administration and academic council continuously review international academic trends to adapt our curriculum and educational standards accordingly," Dr. Mirza said, adding that the primary goal is to fully align FJWU with global educational benchmarks. Highlighting the university's academic infrastructure, she underlined that state-of-the-art incubation and research centres had been established at the campus to foster academic and research capabilities under the guidance of highly qualified faculty.—APP

KP police's sacrifices a pride for nation: CM

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Sohail Afridi on Thursday strongly condemned the terrorist attacks targeting police personnel in Lower Dir and Bannu, paying tribute to the martyred officers and describing the sacrifices of the KP Police as a source of national pride. In a statement he expressed profound grief over the loss of police personnel and said the sacrifices made by the force in the fight against terrorism were unforgettable and highly valued by the entire nation. He stated that KP police continue to make immense sacrifices to maintain peace and protect the lives and property of citizens. He added that their dedication and bravery would always be remembered, and their mission would continue until terrorism was completely eradicated. The Chief Minister directed the relevant authorities to ensure that all injured police personnel received immediate and the best possible medical treatment, stressing that every necessary measure should be taken for their speedy recovery. He also instructed officials to provide every possible support and facility to the families of the martyred cops, reaffirming that the provincial government would stand by them and continue taking steps for their welfare. Reiterating the government's resolve, Muhammad Sohail Afridi said the fight against terrorism would continue with full determination until the menace was completely eliminated. He added that cowardly terrorist attacks would never weaken the resolve of the government, the police force and our people.

Nehal assures resolution of S.I.T.E. industries issues

KARACHI: Governor Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi on Wednesday assured the industrialists of S.I.T.E. area Karachi of his full support & cooperation in resolution of issues being faced by the industrial community. He also appreciated the role of the business community for their efforts to keep the wheels of industry running and for the wonderful philanthropic work being done by them. He was addressing members of the Association during visit of the SITE accompanied by high officials of Governor House. Governor Sindh paid tribute to the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for his industry-led growth of Pakistan. He said that S.I.T.E. Karachi, being the old industrial zone, is the industrial brand ambassador of Pakistan, which introduced Pakistan to the rest of the world. He further said that during the 70s, Pakistan provided loans to Germany which speaks highly of the strong economy our country

had at that time. Nehal Hashmi added that Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, being from an industrialist family, believed in prosperity through industries and he took a number of steps during his premiership to promote industrialization in the country. The current government of PM Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is following in the steps of Mian Nawaz Sharif's government. He advised the business community to make new products and enhance export. He also invited the Association to oversee the development works of S.I.T.E. area, currently under progress. Governor, while responding to the issues raised, said that the resolution of industry issues is his top priority. He suggested fixing Gates on main entry / exit points of the area. He announced to resume monthly coordination meetings at the Governor House with industry representatives and also assured to convene a meeting at the Governor House with officials of Pakistan Rail

ways to sort out the matter of crossing of water lines under the railways track in S.I.T.E. area. Earlier, S.I.T.E. President Abdul Rehman Fudda, in his welcome address, thanked the Governor Sindh for sparing time to visit the Association for interaction with industry representatives. He presented a brief introduction of S.I.T.E. area and highlighted its contribution in the national economy and exports. He also briefed the Governor Sindh on the issues facing the industry which included shortage of gas, load shedding & high power tariff and high cost of production. Fudda said that the Association has proposed reform management of S.I.T.E. Limited, by establishing S.I.T.E. Development & Management Company, at the pattern of Korangi, Landhi, Federal B area and North Karachi Industrial Area, and handover ownership to actual stakeholders as discussed multiple times. He also demanded due

share for Karachi in resources. Patron-in-Chief Zubair Motiwala speaking on the occasion, said that the priority of the Government should be to provide an atmosphere free of obstacles to industries. In particular, the utilities prices should be kept at regionally competitive levels enabling local industries to make exports. He mentioned that due to industry Zubair Motiwala added that line losses & theft of gas in the domestic sector are 47% against only 2% in the industrial sector. Patron of the Association Saleem Parekh briefed the Governor Sindh on the on-going PSDP project of S.I.T.E. Limited as well as Grant-in-Aid project of S.I.T.E. Association of Industry. Former President Jawed Bilwani appreciated the quick decision taken by the Prime Minister of Pakistan to open the PRAL office in Karachi and also appreciated the sitting of FBR officials in the Karachi office on a regular basis.—DNA

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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

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PIMS.....9261170-79

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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

Pakistani scholar receives China’s resident card

“China is very open, inclusive and encouraging to high talents for progress and making contributions to development for this whole world,” Dr. Rauf said

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a recent recognition of international academic talent, a Pakistani scholar and his family have been granted China's Foreign Permanent Resident ID Cards, widely known as the Five-Star Card, enabling them to pursue their research, teaching careers and personal growth with renewed stability and focus. The scholar, Dr. Abdul Rauf, serves as a High Talent Expert, Instructor and Module Leader at the NUIST-Reading Academy, a collaborative program between Nanjing University of Information Science and Technology (NUIST) and the University of Reading, UK. The card was recommended by a national

key development zone management authority in recognition of his contributions to both the Chinese and international academic communities, according to a Gwadar Pro's report on Thursday. “China is very open, inclusive and encouraging to high talents for progress and making contributions to development for this whole world,” Dr. Rauf said, expressing particular appreciation for the collaborative spirit of Chinese academia, where international scholars are welcomed as partners in advancing knowledge. Dr. Rauf's journey in China began in 2015 when he was enrolled by Southeast University in Nanjing to pursue a PhD in finance. His research focuses on

energy economics, environmental economics and financial markets, with the mission of understanding market dynamics and predicting behavioral flows in these critical sectors. Since joining NUIST, Dr. Rauf has distinguished himself as an outstanding educator, winning the First Prize in the Foreign Students' Teaching Observation Competition of Jiangsu Universities. Earlier this month, he was approved as a PhD and master's supervisor in finance and management science and engineering at NUIST, where he is already co-supervising postgraduate students. Dr. Rauf noted that the recognition has provided his family with a profound sense of security and be-

longing, allowing them to plan their future in China with confidence. His wife, also from Pakistan, recently completed her PhD in Sociology at Hohai University. Their three children have also received Five-Star Cards. The Five-Star Card functions as a legal identity document for eligible foreigners approved for permanent residency in China. Holders can use it independently for a variety of daily activities, including purchasing train and airline tickets, opening bank accounts, and handling telecommunications and tax matters. The card seamlessly integrates with major public service platforms such as WeChat, Alipay, Railway 12306 and the National Government Service Platform.

GT Road undergoes repairs

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) issued a traffic advisory, announcing diversions on the Murree GT Road from 12:00 midnight on July 15 until July 20 due to road repair work. An ITP official told APP on Thursday that traffic would be diverted from the 17-Mile Toll Plaza on Murree GT Road, and the route would remain closed to all types of traffic during the repair work. He advised commuters traveling from Islamabad to Murree and Nathia Gali to use the Murree Expressway and other alternate routes to avoid inconvenience. The official urged citizens to check the latest road conditions before starting their journey towards Murree and cooperate with the traffic police to ensure smooth traffic management.—APP

President approves conferment of Hilal-i-Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday approved the conferment of civil award, Hilal-e-Pakistan, upon Miguel Ángel Moratinos, the United Nations Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia. The president approved the summary for conferment of the award, on recommendation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, according to a President House press release.—APP

Pak showcases youth led, inclusive AI vision

He called for stronger international cooperation to bridge the global AI divide through investments in digital infrastructure, skills development, and responsible AI practices

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan called for inclusive, human-centered, and equitable artificial intelligence governance at a high-level discussion held at the United Nations Headquarters on Thursday, jointly organised by the Permanent Missions of Pakistan and Tajikistan and the Prime Minister's Youth Programme. The event brought together diplomats, UN officials, technology experts, academics, and youth representatives to explore how AI can advance sustainable development through innovation, inclusion, and resilience while ensuring that no country or community is left behind. Speakers warned that unequal access to digital infrastructure, financing, technology, and skilled human resources could widen existing global inequalities, particularly for developing countries. They stressed that AI must become a tool for shared progress by expanding access to technology, investing in capacity building, and placing young people at the centre of sustainable development efforts. Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan highlighted Pakistan's efforts to prepare its youth for an AI-powered future. He said the government has allocated Rs 40.58 billion to the Prime Minister's Youth Programme for 2026-27, reflecting its commitment to building a skilled and digitally empowered generation. He said more than 600,000 laptops have been distributed, while 73,000 young people have received training in artificial intelligence, blockchain, and data science. More than 217,000 technical skills scholarships have also been awarded across 8,000 courses. He added that the Digital Youth Hub has registered over 804,000 users, created access to 114,000 employment opportunities, and partnered with more than 3,180 organisations. Mashhood said Pakistan's National Artificial Intelligence Policy aims to train one million AI professionals and 10,000 AI trainers by 2030 while expanding AI education, research, and innovation across the country. He called for stronger international cooperation to bridge the global AI divide through investments in digital infrastructure, skills development, and responsible AI practices.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: A commemorative postage stamp marking the 25th Anniversary of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was unveiled by the Foreign Nurtan Ambassador Anna Baloch and SCO Secretary-General Nurlan Yermekbayev. The stamp symbolizes Pakistan's enduring commitment to the SCO and its vision of regional peace, mutual trust, cooperation, and shared prosperity. DNA

HEC trains editors, researchers on research journals policy

DNA

ISLAMABAD/PESHAWAR: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) organised an orientation session on the HEC Research Journals Policy for editors, researchers, and faculty members from higher education institutions across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at the HEC Regional Centre Peshawar. The session was commenced with an overview of the HEC Research Journals Policy, including journal

recognition criteria, evaluation mechanisms, quality benchmarks, and best practices in academic publishing. The orientation session emphasised the significance of editorial transparency, peer-review standards, publication ethics, plagiarism control, and indexing requirements for improving the quality and impact of research journals. The interactive session enabled participants to discuss challenges faced by academic journals and seek expert guidance on policy implementation and journal management.

Ignite, Ministry of IT to host Indus RAS Expo 2026

Leading universities, research institutions, technology companies, startups and public-sector organizations will showcase locally developed products, advanced prototypes, applied research and live technology demonstrations, highlighting Pakistan's growing capabilities in advanced engineering and intelligent systems

ISLAMABAD: The National Technology Fund (Ignite), operating under the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT), will host the Indus RAS (Robotics and Autonomous Systems) Expo 2026 on July 22-23 at the Pak-China Friendship Centre in Islamabad. The two-day national technology event will bring together policymakers, defence organizations, industry leaders, researchers, academia, startups, investors, students and technology professionals to strengthen Pakistan's robotics ecosystem and accelerate the adoption of autonomous technologies across strategic sectors. As robotics and autonomous systems continue to reshape economies worldwide, they are driving transformation across manufacturing, defence, agriculture, healthcare, logistics, transportation and public services. The Indus RAS Expo 2026 aims to position Pakistan at the forefront of this technological shift by providing a collabora-



MILITARY LANDS & CANTONMENT DEPT

RAWALPINDI CANTONMENT BOARD

The Mall, Rawalpindi Cantt

Helpline: 051-9274401- 4 | Fax: 051-9274407

NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING SINGLE STAGE

ONE ENVELOP THROUGH E-PADS

Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB), being the Procuring Agency, invites electronic bids from reputable and experienced firms/workshops registered with the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) possessing valid NTN and Sales Tax Registration (Active Taxpayer Status) for the following procurement for repair / maintenance of RCB Vehicles through EPADS Version 2.0 in accordance with the Public Procurement Rules, 2004.

Sr #	Description	Estimated Cost Rs. In Millions	02% Earnest Money in Rs.	EPADS v2.0
01	Repair and Maintenance of Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) Vehicles	4910000	98200	P62144

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

i. Availability of Documents:

Bidding documents shall be available only on PPRA and EPADS V2.0 portals. No hard copies shall be issued. Only firms registered on EPADS as vendors shall be eligible to participate.

ii. Submission & Opening of Bids:

E-bids, prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in the bidding documents, must be submitted electronically through EPADS V2.0 on or before: 03 August, 2026 at 1:00 PM The bids will be opened on the same day at: 03 August, 2026 at 1:30 PM

iii. Manual submission of bids shall not be entertained. Vendors not registered on EPADS V2.0 may register at: <https://vendors.epads.gov.pk/> Tutorial link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNW6T38v7tc>

iv. Grievance Redressal:

In accordance with Rule 48 of PPRA Rules, 2004, a Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC) has been constituted. The notification is available on the procuring agency's website and EPADS portal.

v. Procurement Method:

Procurement shall be carried out through Open Competitive Bidding under Single Stage – One Envelope Procedure PPRA rule 36(a) adopting the Least Cost Based Selection (LCBS) technique in line with PPRA Rules, 2004.

vi. Earnest Money:

Bidders shall submit 2% of the estimated cost in the shape of Call Deposit Receipt (CDR) issued by any scheduled bank in favour of the Cantonment Executive Officer, Rawalpindi Cantonment Board.

i. A scanned copy shall be uploaded with the e-bid.

ii. The original CDR must be submitted prior to opening of bids.

vii. Eligibility Criteria

The bidding firms/workshops shall:

i. Be registered with FBR and possess valid NTN and active Sales Tax Registration.

ii. Have relevant experience in repair and maintenance of vehicles.

iii. Not be blacklisted or debarred by any Government, Semi-Government or Autonomous Organization.

iv. Fulfil all requirements specified in the bidding documents.

viii. Award of Contract:

Issuance of work order shall be subject to the approval of the Competent Authority.

ix. Eligibility:

Firms/contractors blacklisted by any Government/Semi-Government organization shall not be eligible to participate.

x. Additional Terms:

Before submitting the bid, every intending bidder shall mandatorily visit the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) Workshop during office hours to inspect the vehicles and assess their mechanical condition, the extent of repairs required, and the overall scope of work. Submission of a bid shall be deemed to constitute confirmation that the bidder has thoroughly inspected the vehicles and is fully satisfied regarding the nature and quantity of the repair and maintenance works required. No claim for additional payment or revision of quoted rates on the ground of inadequate inspection or lack of knowledge of the condition of the vehicles shall be entertained after submission of the bid.

The successful bidder shall execute all repair and maintenance works, including the supply and installation of genuine spare parts, in accordance with the approved Work Order and the manufacturer's specifications. All repair works shall be carried out to the complete satisfaction of the Workshop Incharge, Rawalpindi Cantonment Board. Any repair work found to be defective, incomplete, or not conforming to the required standards during inspection shall be rectified or re-executed by the Contractor at his own cost without any additional financial liability on the Procuring Agency. The repaired vehicle shall not be considered complete or accepted until it has been inspected, tested and certified as satisfactory by the Workshop Incharge.

Detailed terms and conditions may be seen in the office of the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board during working hours on any working day.

xi. Right of Rejection:

The Procuring Agency reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids prior to acceptance in accordance with Rule 33(1) of PPRA Rules, 2004, without assigning any reason.

CANTONMENT EXECUTIVE OFFICER, RAWALPINDI

PID (I) NO.448/26

Briefs

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Thursday issued a power suspension programme for Friday in various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to an IESCO spokesperson, in Islamabad Circle, electricity supply will remain suspended from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m., Kurri, Rehara, CM Pak Zong, IT Park, feeders. In Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, power supply will remain suspended from 5 a.m. to 10 a.m., Ghazan Khan, feeder. Similarly, in Jhelum Circle, power will remain suspended from 6 am to 10 am, Matwa, feeder. In GSO Circle, power supply will remain suspended from 09:00 a.m. to 04:00 p.m., 132kv AWC HMC Taxila and 132KV Sangjani-Burhan, from 08:00 a.m. to 06:00 p.m., 132KV Kahuta City-Palandri, 132KV New Wah-Bahtermore along with related earth switch, and surrounding areas. IESCO apologized to consumers for the temporary inconvenience and said electricity supply would be restored before the scheduled time if the maintenance work was completed earlier than expected.—APP

IG orders faster justice delivery

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, chaired a meeting with Deputy Inspector General (Headquarters), Muhammad Ateeq Tahir and Senior Superintendent of Police (Investigation), Muhammad Usman Tariq Butt to review departmental affairs and further improve the investigation system. An official told APP on Thursday that the meeting discussed the progress of under-investigation cases, the overall performance of the Investigation Wing and various administrative matters aimed at enhancing the efficiency of policing in the federal capital. The IGP Rizvi reviewed the pace and quality of investigations and directed officers to ensure timely disposal of cases through professional, transparent and merit-based investigations. He emphasized that providing citizens with prompt justice remained a top priority and instructed investigators to further improve investigation standards by adopting modern policing practices and maintaining close supervision of pending cases. Rizvi also directed the officers to strengthen coordination, enhance accountability and ensure that every investigation was conducted impartially and in accordance with the law to reinforce public confidence in the criminal justice system.—APP

NUML students observe police training

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of students from the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) visited the Capital Police College, Islamabad, to gain insight into the training and professional development programmes being conducted for police personnel. An official told APP on Thursday that the visiting students were briefed on the promotional, capacity-building and specialized training courses offered at the Capital Police College to enhance the professional skills of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police officers. During the visit, Deputy Superintendent of Police Training, Mashooq Ali escorted the delegation to various branches of the college and provided a detailed briefing on different training modules, modern policing techniques and the facilities available for professional learning. The students also interacted with training staff and observed different aspects of police education aimed at strengthening operational efficiency and public service delivery.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani viewing the art of Roomi & Aiman during exhibition titled Sufism & Culture at Pakistan National Council of the Arts in the Federal Capital.

America's ideals, intervention continues to shape world

Delivering the keynote address, Ambassador (r) Aizaz Chaudhry argued that the US's remarkable rise over the past 250 years is rooted in the strength of its constitutional foundations, democratic institutions, protection of individual liberties, and commitment to innovation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As the US marks 250 years since its founding, the enduring tension between its founding ideals and interventionist foreign policy continues to shape both American statecraft and the evolving international order. While principles such as liberty, democracy, and constitutional governance remain central to the American identity, the country's external conduct has increasingly reflected the primacy of national interests, raising important questions about the relationship between moral ideals, pragmatism, and global leadership. These views were expressed during a seminar titled "America at 250: From Ideals to Interventions," organized by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad. The session featured Ambassador (r) Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, former foreign secretary and ambassador to the US, as keynote speaker; Dr. Nadeem Mirza, associate professor at Qauid-i-Azam University; Khalid Rahman, chairman, IPS; and Ambassador (r) Syed Abrar Hussain, vice chairman, IPS. The event brought together policy practitioners, members of the diplomatic community, academics, research-

ers, and students.

Opening the discussion, Ambassador (r) Abrar Hussain reflected on the historical evolution of the US from a republic founded upon the ideals of liberty, self-determination, and democracy to a global power associated with extensive political and military interventions. Tracing key milestones in American history, he observed that the country's growing international role has continually tested the balance between moral principles and geopolitical interests. He noted that, in today's increasingly multipolar world, an important question remains whether any great power can preserve its founding ideals while exercising global influence.

Delivering the keynote address, Ambassador (r) Aizaz Chaudhry argued that the US's remarkable rise over the past 250 years is rooted in the strength of its constitutional foundations, democratic institutions, protection of individual liberties, and commitment to innovation. He highlighted the enduring significance of the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution, observing that principles such as equality, constitutional governance, checks and balances, economic freedom, and civil liberties created an environment that

encouraged scientific advancement, entrepreneurship, and institutional resilience.

At the same time, he noted, the US's success has been accompanied by significant internal and external challenges. These include the historical legacy of slavery and racial discrimination, widening economic inequality, political polarization, growing public debt, and debates surrounding immigration. While acknowledging the US's considerable achievements, he emphasized that sustaining democratic ideals requires continuous efforts to address these structural and societal challenges. Dr. Nadeem Mirza argued that the US progressed gradually through successive phases of survival, sustainability, partnership, and global leadership, with interventionism emerging as a consequence of expanding economic and military capabilities rather than as an abrupt departure from its founding principles. Discussing the intellectual foundations of American foreign policy, he identified moralism, isolationism, and pragmatism as its three enduring pillars. He explained that while the US has consistently promoted universal values such as democracy, human rights, freedom, and self-determination, its foreign policy has generally prioritized national interests whenever these ideals

come into conflict with them.

Dr. Mirza further argued that the 19th-century concept of Manifest Destiny gradually evolved into a broader international mission to promote American political values and institutions worldwide. Reflecting on contemporary developments, he observed that recent American administrations, particularly under President Donald Trump, have represented a variation within this long-standing strategic tradition by questioning prolonged military interventions while maintaining a strong emphasis on national interests. In his concluding remarks, Khalid Rahman observed that the rapidly changing international environment makes it increasingly difficult to analyze global affairs in static terms. He emphasized that a proper understanding of America's past 250 years must also take into account China's evolving role and the broader transformation of the international system. He underscored that debates over intervention, power, and global leadership have long existed within American society. He cautioned that if national or commercial interests consistently override ethical considerations, pragmatism risks becoming a justification for abandoning the very values it claims to protect. The seminar concluded with an interactive question-and-answer session.

Punjab signs tripartite pact with Chinese partners for vocational edu

ISLAMABAD: The Punjab Skills Development Authority (PSDA) has announced the signing of a tripartite agreement with TANG International Education Group and the China Global Professional and Technical Certification Center (CGPTC) to strengthen technical and vocational education across Punjab. The agreement aims to introduce internationally recognized Chinese standards into Punjab's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, enhancing the quality of skills development and expanding opportunities for students and training institutions. Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. Under the partnership, specialized programs in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and the Chinese language will be introduced, promoting professional skills, cultural understanding,

and stronger communication capabilities to better prepare graduates for emerging domestic and international employment opportunities. PSDA said the collaboration reflects its commitment to modernizing Punjab's skills ecosystem through international cooperation and innovation. As the province's apex regulatory body for the skills sector, the authority said the agreement demonstrates that effective regulation extends beyond compliance to fostering quality, innovation, and globally competitive training. The initiative is expected to strengthen institutional capacity, improve workforce readiness, and support Pakistan's broader efforts to align vocational education with international standards while deepening educational cooperation between Pakistan and China.—APP

Islamabad human placenta trade case

Court rejects bail of 4 accused

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The District and Sessions Court of Islamabad on Thursday rejected the post-arrest bail applications of four suspects accused of involvement in the illegal purchase and sale of human placenta. The decision came after detailed arguments from both the prosecution and defense. Prosecutors told the court that more than 1,000 human placenta samples were recovered during the operation and requested that the bail pleas be dismissed. After reserving its verdict earlier in the day, the court announced its decision and rejected all four applications. The case was heard by Additional District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka. During the hearing, defense lawyers argued that placenta is not classified as a human organ and therefore should not be treated in the same category as organs such

as kidneys and eyes. They maintained that placenta has recognized medical uses and is used in different treatment procedures. The defense further told the court that tissues obtained from placenta are sometimes used in medical procedures related to hair restoration. In response, Judge Majoka asked whether such tissues could also be used in hair transplant treatments. The defense counsel replied that there are different medical methods for hair restoration and said that if a particular procedure was used, placenta-based tissues could have been involved. The lawyers continued to argue that placenta should not be considered a human organ under the relevant legal framework. During the discussion, the defense also referred to the removal of other body parts during medical procedures, claiming that such material is often disposed of or buried by hospitals.

The exchange led to a brief discussion between the court and the defense regarding medical waste management practices. The prosecution opposed the bail requests and stated that more than 1,000 human placenta samples had been recovered during the raid. Prosecutors also informed the court that all accused were arrested from the location where the alleged activity was taking place. According to the prosecution, reports from medical experts have already been submitted to the court as part of the investigation record. The prosecution argued that the available evidence linked the suspects to the case and requested the court to reject their post-arrest bail applications. After hearing arguments from both sides and reviewing the record, Judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka reserved the verdict and later announced the decision, dismissing the bail applications of all four accused.

IRSA releases 260,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 260,900 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 296,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1504.31 feet, which was 102.31 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 188,100 cusecs and 160,300 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1173.20 feet, which was 123.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 24,700 cusecs and 17,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 206,600, 179,800, 131,300, and 66,300 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 33,300 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 21,100 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

ISPR summer camp brings together over 4,000 students

RAWALPINDI: The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) organized Summer Camp 2026, bringing together over 4,000 male and female students from over 18 stations across Pakistan. The camp aims to provide young participants with opportunities for learning, engagement, and personal development. Vice Chancellor of Riphah International University, Dr. Anis Ahmad, held a special interactive session with the participants. The discussion focused on Pakistan's past, present, and future, as well as the Two-Nation Theory. Addressing the students, Dr. Anis Ahmad said that the ideology of Pakistan served as the intellectual foundation that united the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent in their pursuit of a separate identity and an independent homeland. He said that Pakistan's Constitution provides religious, social, and legal protections for all minority communities. He said India's extremist policies and its discriminatory treatment of minorities have further exposed the true nature of its so-called secular image. Dr. Anis Ahmad described Pakistan's position on Kashmir dispute as principled, consistent and unequivocal.—APP

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NATO needs a defense market

FIONA E. MURRAY

WHEN the Second World War began in 1939, Canada had almost no meaningful military industry. Six years later, Canadian factories had produced thousands of aircraft, hundreds of naval vessels and more than 800,000 military vehicles. A country of just 11 million people had become a military-industrial powerhouse. Heavy government investment was vital to this transformation. But that spending would have meant little if Canada had not also built institutions, financing mechanisms and physical structures capable of rapidly transforming political commitments into large-scale industrial output. NATO's leaders, who met in Ankara for their annual summit recently, should be taking this lesson to heart. Across Europe and North America, governments are ramping up their defense spending. They are announcing new equipment plans, procurement programs and spending targets, including commitments to spend 5 percent of gross domestic product on defense by 2035. Establishing defense as a strategic priority, increasing spending and improving procurement systems are all steps in the right direction. But converting resources into military capabilities will require the development of industrial capacity. Ukraine has demonstrated that modern wars are financed before they are fought. Since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, Ukraine has mobilized billions of dollars to expand drone development and production. The returns have been extraordinary: drones costing just a few thousand dollars can destroy military equipment worth hundreds or even thousands of times more. Even when intercepted, they impose big losses on Russia, which might have to fire air-defense missiles costing tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars. None of this would have been possible without financing for the factories, engineers, software, supply chains and production capacity needed to produce drones at scale. Committing more resources is good but doing more with the resources that have already been committed is better. NATO countries do not lack resources, technological expertise or political will. What they lack are market structures capable of converting these strengths into military capabilities at the speed and scale today's security environment demands. Production capacity remains constrained, delivery schedules stretch years into the future and critical supply chains are fragile. As bottlenecks persist, defense inflation continues to climb, eroding purchasing power and delaying the fielding of urgently needed capabilities. If NATO allies are to build the industrial capacity required for deterrence, they will need to deliver wartime levels of industrial responsiveness, without adopting wartime levels of economic control.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

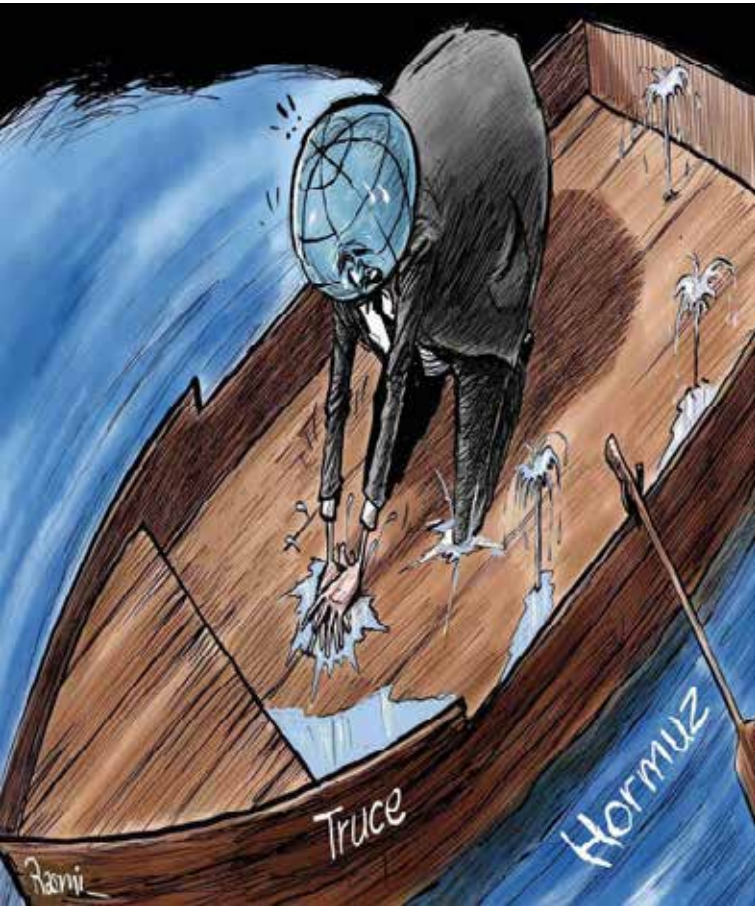
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This requires a new approach to market-making. The first challenge is creating reliable long-term demand – a prerequisite for private investment in building new factories or expanding production lines. This means that national governments must make credible, multiyear procurement commitments, both independently and with allies. The second challenge is financing this new demand. Even when future orders exist, industrial expansion requires access to affordable long-term capital. New factories, equipment and production lines require significant upfront investment. Manufacturers typically borrow from commercial banks to fund these investments, with the cost of this capital ultimately reflected in the price governments pay for military equipment and munitions. Where commercial finance is unavailable or too expensive, governments often have little choice but to step in. A market-making approach would be both more cost-effective and more productive than the current system. It begins with a purpose-built multilateral institution that serves as a dedicated financing platform for the development and expansion of defense industries and related supply chains. This is precisely the role that the Defence, Security and Resilience Bank, now under discussion, is designed to play. By creating a sovereign-backed market for defense finance, the bank would help to reduce the cost of financing industrial expansion. The more secure financing environment that this implies – together with long-term demand commitments that offer assurance of future revenues – would attract commercial lenders and crowd in private investment. This would go a long way toward easing pressure on defense budgets, which, in the current system, must cover not only direct investments in military capabilities but also the associated financing costs, industrial risk and inefficiency. The more the latter costs can be reduced, the more drones, missiles and ammunition governments can afford. Committing more resources is good but doing more with the resources that have already been committed is better. The Defence, Security and Resilience Bank represents more than another lending institution. Over time, it would create a dedicated AAA-rated defense, security and resilience yield curve. Firms, banks and governments could thus secure financing conditions specifically designed for the long investment horizons required to build factories, strengthen supply chains and expand defense production. Strengthening defense capabilities is not only about security policy. It is also industrial policy. The same investments that strengthen deterrence can also support manufacturing, innovation, exports and economic growth. With multiyear procurement delivering the demand signal and the Defence, Security and Resilience Bank providing the financing platform, allies can finally build a functioning defense market. Such a market would not replace national defense budgets; it would make them more effective. Defense spending would become investment. Investment would become production. And production would become deterrence. In 1939, Canada did not become a military-industrial powerhouse simply because it spent more money than everyone else. Rather, it built the institutions, financing mechanisms and industrial structures that turned spending into production.

The Missing Guarantor in US-Iran Diplomacy

Qamar Bashir

The imbalance becomes even more pronounced when one party is the world's most powerful nation. The United States possesses unmatched economic influence, military capability, financial reach, and diplomatic weight. No mediator can realistically compel Washington to implement an agreement against its own policy choices. Likewise, Iran cannot be expected to rely solely on assurances if it believes commitments may change unexpectedly. Consequently, the durability of any agreement depends less upon external enforcement than upon the willingness of the parties—especially the more powerful one...

PRESIDENT Donald Trump has consistently portrayed himself as a man of faith who draws guidance from Christian values and surrounds himself with pastors, priests, and religious leaders. Christianity teaches honesty, compassion, humility, forgiveness, keeping one's promises, protecting the innocent, respecting one's neighbors, and seeking peace before conflict. These ideals also reflect many of the civic virtues that Americans deeply value—integrity, fairness, accountability, respect for the law, and honoring one's commitments. America's global influence has never rested solely on its unmatched military or economic power. Equally important has been its reputation that its word carries weight. Allies have cooperated with Washington because they generally believed that American commitments would endure beyond immediate political circumstances. That credibility has often proven more valuable than military strength itself. It is against this backdrop that President Trump's foreign policy approach since returning to office in January 2025. His strategic unpredictability is designed to maximize leverage. His frequent policy reversals, shifting deadlines, changing public positions, and abrupt diplomatic turns have created uncertainty among allies, mediators, financial markets, and adversaries alike. The recent diplomatic efforts involving the United States and Iran illustrate this concern. Multiple rounds of diplomacy took place over many months with the assistance of regional mediators. Discussions began in Egypt, later continued through negotiations in Pakistan and Geneva, and culminated in a Memorandum of Understanding brokered with the assistance of countries including Pakistan, Qatar, Oman, Egypt, and Türkiye. There is a recurring pattern. Negotiations would begin with optimism. Temporary understandings would be announced. Deadlines would be established. New demands, military developments, sanctions, or conflicting public statements would follow. Each cycle reduced confidence that diplomatic commitments would survive until implementation. The perception itself matters enormously in diplomacy. Once confidence is weakened, every subsequent negotiation becomes significantly more difficult. This raises a deeper structural weakness in modern international mediation. Mediation succeeds only when agreements can realistically be implemented and monitored. Yet many of today's mediators possess diplomatic goodwill but very limited leverage over the parties they seek to reconcile.

Pakistan, Qatar, Oman, Egypt, and Türkiye have each invested considerable diplomatic capital in attempting to reduce tensions and facilitate dialogue. Their role deserves recognition. However, none possesses sufficient political, economic, or military leverage to compel either Washington or Tehran to comply with an agreement if either side ultimately decides otherwise. Their influence depends almost entirely upon persuasion and goodwill rather than enforceable authority. This reveals perhaps the greatest weakness of such agreements. When the guarantors are less powerful than the parties themselves, enforcement becomes largely voluntary. If one party concludes that strategic circumstances have changed, there is often no effective international mechanism capable of ensuring compliance or imposing meaningful consequences. The imbalance becomes even more pronounced when one party is the world's most powerful nation. The United States possesses unmatched economic influence, military capability, financial reach, and diplomatic weight. No mediator can realistically compel Washington to implement an agreement against its own policy choices. Likewise, Iran cannot be expected to rely solely on assurances if it believes commitments may change unexpectedly. Consequently, the durability of any agreement depends less upon external enforcement than upon the willingness of the parties—especially the more powerful one—to demonstrate consistency, restraint, and respect for the commitments they voluntarily undertake. History offers many examples in which successive U.S. administrations have withdrawn from, revised, or renegotiated international agreements negotiated by previous administrations. These frequent reversals have weakened confidence among allies and negotiating partners, who may begin questioning whether any agreement will remain durable beyond the next political transition. This is not merely a legal issue. It is fundamentally a question of credibility. Markets understand this reality immediately. Every presidential statement concerning sanctions, military deployments, shipping routes, tariffs, or energy policy affects oil prices, insurance costs, shipping rates, exchange markets, and stock exchanges worldwide. Investors dislike uncertainty more than almost anything else. When official messaging changes frequently, volatility naturally increases. The Strait of Hormuz demonstrates this dynamic vividly. Even conflicting public statements regarding freedom of navigation, proposed shipping arrangements, economic measures, or maritime security

can produce significant movements in global energy markets within hours. In today's interconnected economy, presidential rhetoric alone can affect the daily lives of billions of people through higher transportation costs, inflation, and energy prices. This tactical uncertainty may produce short-term bargaining advantages while gradually eroding the strategic trust that underpins alliances, diplomacy, and long-term American leadership. If partners become uncertain whether today's commitments will remain valid tomorrow, they may increasingly seek alternative security arrangements or reduce their reliance on Washington. For a superpower, leadership requires more than overwhelming strength. It also requires steadiness. The strongest nation should ideally demonstrate confidence rather than impulsiveness, consistency rather than contradiction, and principled leadership rather than purely transactional calculations. The United States remains uniquely positioned to shape the international order. That position carries extraordinary responsibility. Because American decisions influence virtually every region of the world, they inevitably affect not only governments but also ordinary families whose livelihoods depend upon stable energy markets, predictable trade, secure shipping, and peaceful diplomacy. Ultimately, America's greatest asset is neither its aircraft carriers nor its financial markets. It is the confidence others place in its word. Military power can compel compliance. Economic power can impose costs. But only credibility inspires lasting partnerships and voluntary cooperation. If the United States consistently demonstrates that it honors its commitments, respects international law, protects humanitarian principles, and approaches diplomacy with patience and predictability, its leadership will continue to command respect across the globe. If, however, unpredictability becomes its defining characteristic, countries may continue to cooperate out of necessity while gradually losing confidence in American leadership. History suggests that fear can produce obedience, but only trust produces enduring influence. For a nation that has long presented itself as the leader of the free world, preserving that trust may prove to be its greatest strategic challenge in the years ahead.

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

Friendship Beyond Interest

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

In an era when nearly every aspect of life continues to evolve at a remarkable pace, this cherished partnership now extends its benevolent influence into the vital domains of health and medicine. Beginning today in the capital city of Islamabad, the Pakistan-China Pharmaceutical & Healthcare B2B Investment Conference 2026 will convene as a significant milestone...

IN the quiet wisdom of ages past, friendship has always been understood as more than a mere exchange of pleasantries or fleeting alliances. It is not merely an arrangement of convenience but an attitude of the soul through which a profound and enduring relationship takes root and flourishes. Authentic friendship, at its finest, remains untouched by the calculations of personal gain or material advantage. It is selfless in its essence, free from the shadows of greed or fleeting self-interest. The celebrated Punjabi Sufi poet Mian Muhammad Bakhsh expressed this timeless truth with poetic clarity when he declared, "Dunya tay jo kum na aayaa okhay sokhay wail'ay, ais bedardi yaar day kolo behtar yaar akalay." In other words, if a so-called friend offers no support amid the trials and triumphs of life, then solitude itself is preferable to such hollow companionship. All else, he wisely noted, belongs to the superficial pageantry of prosperous days. Regrettably, the standards of friendship have undergone a troubling transformation in our modern age. The pure and generous spirit that once defined it has too often been obscured by veils of expediency and mutual interest. What was once a bond of unwavering loyalty has, in many quarters, been reduced to a transaction governed by advantage. Yet, even amidst this shift, certain friendships—both personal and national—have preserved the older virtues of sincerity and constancy. They stand as beacons of hope, reminding us that genuine fellowship can transcend the passing fashions of the time. A living and luminous example of this enduring ideal is the deep-rooted friendship between Pakistan and China. This relationship, marked by trust and mutual respect rather than narrow self-interest, has strengthened steadily since the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949. From the earliest days of

diplomatic engagement, including China's cherished support for Pakistan's position in the United Nations, the two nations have walked together through decades of global change. The legendary Karakoram Highway, carved through some of the world's most formidable terrain, stands as a monumental symbol of their shared determination. This friendship has since matured into far-reaching initiatives such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, extending its reach from the vibrant blue waters of Gwadar Port to the advanced technological horizons embodied by the JF Thunder aircraft. With each passing year, the ties have grown more comprehensive, touching upon trade, infrastructure, security, and cultural exchange, all while maintaining an unbreakable foundation of goodwill. In an era when nearly every aspect of life continues to evolve at a remarkable pace, this cherished partnership now extends its benevolent influence into the vital domains of health and medicine. Beginning today in the capital city of Islamabad, the Pakistan-China Pharmaceutical & Healthcare B2B Investment Conference 2026 will convene as a significant milestone in this longstanding bond. Jointly spearheaded by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHSR&C), and the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP), this two-day event promises to open new avenues of collaboration between the two countries. The conference is thoughtfully designed as a premier business-to-business platform, bringing together prominent Pakistani firms in the pharmaceutical, healthcare, and biotechnology sectors with leading Chinese investors, manufacturers, technology providers, and industry experts. Delegates will participate in structured B2B meetings, productive networking sessions, and focused in-

vestment discussions. These engagements aim to cultivate meaningful outcomes, including joint ventures, technology transfer agreements, contract manufacturing arrangements, collaborative research projects, and partnerships for local production. By leveraging China's impressive advancements and expertise in pharmaceutical innovation and healthcare systems, the gathering seeks to inject fresh momentum into Pakistan's own capabilities. Organizers have emphasized that the conference reflects the SIFC's steadfast dedication to attracting quality foreign direct investment and nurturing an environment conducive to sustainable industrial development. Beyond immediate commercial opportunities, the event is expected to play a pivotal role in modernizing Pakistan's healthcare ecosystem, enhancing the global competitiveness of its pharmaceutical industry, and fostering long-term industrial cooperation. In doing so, it will contribute not only to economic growth but also to the broader goal of shared prosperity and improved well-being for both nations. As participants assemble in Islamabad on this occasion, one cannot help but recognize the deeper significance of the gathering. It is more than a business forum; it represents the natural flowering of a friendship that has consistently placed mutual benefit and sincere cooperation above temporary advantage. In a world increasingly shaped by pragmatic calculations, the Pakistan-China relationship continues to demonstrate that true partnership, built on trust and enduring commitment, can weather the tests of time and open pathways to progress across every sphere of human endeavor. From the towering heights of the Karakoram to the frontiers of medical science, this friendship remains a testament to the enduring power of goodwill between nations.

Briefs

Pak urging
US, Iran to
hold talks

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the situation in the Strait of Hormuz and underscore the importance of ensuring the continued safety, security and freedom of maritime navigation," he added. The US and Iran signed the "Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding" on June 17, largely mediated by Pakistan. The US has this week been striking Iran, drawing retaliatory Iranian attacks on US interest in the Gulf as they battle over the strategic Hormuz shipping route. That sent global oil prices soaring and led to concerns of spikes in inflation even in nations far from the conflict. "While the implementation of the MoU is facing challenges, Pakistan will continue to encourage all sides to end violence and resume technical-level talks in accordance with the MoU," Tahir Andrabi, Pakistan's foreign office spokesman, told reporters in Islamabad. The key oil and gas artery, which Iran insists it controls, is central to the rekindled fighting that has entered its sixth day despite a preliminary deal in June aiming to end the war. "Pakistan recognises the urgent need to address the impact of the current situation on global energy supplies and other economic commodities including trade and food security," Andrabi said. Andrabi said that the conflicts serve no one's interests and hoped that all sides would remain committed to the peaceful resolution of differences.

UK hints
at visa
restrictions
for Pakistan

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but confirmed that "all possible levers should be looked at" to ensure that Britain's immigration rules could be enforced. Cooper told MPs that Ahmed was not the only case under discussion and that the government was seeking the return of a small number of other offenders whom it believes should be removed to Pakistan. British ministers have pointed to the cases of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia and Angola, which agreed to cooperate with returns after the UK threatened visa penalties. The foreign secretary's comments have now been followed by Pakistan's first formal public response to the controversy. Pakistan's Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Andrabi strongly condemned child sexual abuse but rejected any attempt to associate the Pakistani government with Ahmed or the decisions surrounding his imprisonment and release. Andrabi said perpetrators of child sexual abuse must be investigated, prosecuted and punished to the fullest extent of the law, irrespective of their race, ethnicity or religion.

Iran-US
row sparks
Red Sea...

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potential disruption of energy supplies and maritime trade. Russia's involvement highlights the international dimension of the crisis, with major powers watching closely as the situation unfolds. The Red Sea, a critical maritime corridor linking Europe and Asia, has already been vulnerable to attacks on shipping in recent months. Analysts caution that any closure of the gateway by the Houthis would have far-reaching consequences, potentially driving up global shipping costs and energy prices. Diplomatic observers note that the confrontation reflects a dangerous cycle of retaliation. Iran's alignment with regional militias, including the Houthis, has long been a flashpoint in U.S. policy. The latest developments suggest Tehran is willing to leverage its influence over these groups to pressure Washington. Meanwhile, humanitarian concerns are mounting. The hospital evacuation following U.S. strikes has drawn condemnation from Iranian officials, who accuse Washington of disregarding civilian safety.

Messi inspires Argentina into
second straight World Cup final

Argentina will have a chance to become the first team since Brazil in 1962 to win back-to-back World Cups

DNA

ATLANTA: Lionel Messi inspired a stunning late comeback as Argentina overturned a one-goal deficit to beat England 2-1 on Wednesday, booking a place in the World Cup final with two goals in the final seven minutes. Just when England appeared set for victory after Anthony Gordon's second-half goal, Argentina mounted a relentless late siege and got their reward as Fernandez levelled before Martinez completed the turnaround in the 92nd minute with Messi providing the pass for the equaliser and the cross for the winner. The result added another unforgettable chapter to one of football's fiercest rivalries, a contest rich in history, emotion and tension from the opening whistle. For England, dreams of a first World Cup final since 1966, when they enjoyed their only triumph at the global tournament, were dashed in the closing stages, while Argentina celebrated a comeback that kept alive their quest for another world title. With England inexplicably parked in their own end, an Argentina equaliser felt inevitable and, after waves of late pressure, Fernan-



dez finally broke through in the 85th minute when Messi found him in space on the edge of the box to fire home from 20 metres past Jordan Pickford into the corner.

Martinez, an 81st-minute substitute, struck the winner early in added time when Alexis Mac Allister drove a shot off the post that Messi recovered. The 39-year-old talisman drove down the right to send in a brilliant ball for Martinez to head home.

The victory carried particular significance for 39-year-old Messi, who was making what is widely expected to be the final World Cup appearance of his glittering career.

For England, the defeat was a devastating blow after matching Argentina for much of the contest. The Three Lions had appeared poised for victory after Anthony Gordon broke the deadlock in the 55th minute when Nicolas Tagliafico's attempted clearance landed at the feet of Declan Rice, who sent a through ball to Morgan Rogers. Gordon popped up at the back post to guide Rogers' cross with his instep past goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, sparking bedlam among the England players and fans. But Thomas Tuchel's side failed to withstand a relentless late assault as Argentina turned the game on its head.

UK urges FIFA to investigate Argentina
over Falklands banner at World Cup

LONDON: The British government on Thursday urged FIFA to investigate Argentina's team after players posed with a banner claiming sovereignty over the contested Falkland Islands. Argentina beat England 2-1 in a World Cup semifinal on Wednesday in Atlanta. During post-match celebrations, Argentine players held a banner handed over by fans in the stands, reading "Las Malvinas son Argentinas" — "The Malvinas are Argentine." Argentina refers to the Falkland Islands as Islas Malvinas. They were invaded in 1982 under orders from Argentina's then-military dictatorship, triggering a 10-week war won by Britain. UK Business Secretary Peter Kyle said the players' behavior was "entirely inappropriate. I expect FIFA to do its investigation thoroughly." FIFA can prosecute Argentina's players and football

federation because its disciplinary code prohibits at stadiums any "message that is not appropriate for a sports event" including those of "a political, ideological, religious or offensive nature." The FIFA fines for political messaging are \$5,000 to \$20,000. FIFA was approached for comment Thursday. A FIFA disciplinary case under previous leadership banned a South Korea player for two 2014 World Cup qualifying games because he held up a similar banner about a territorial claim against Japan at the 2012 London Olympics. Park Jong-woo took a fan banner with the slogan "Dokdo is our territory" after South Korea beat Japan in the men's bronze medal game. On Wednesday, Argentina player Lisandro Martinez said displaying the banner "really stirred up deep emotions." "I can picture a Mal-

vinas veteran seeing that and weeping," said Martinez, who has played in England for the past four years with Manchester United. "I don't know if there might be sanctions or not, but what they did was display that banner and assert that the islands belong to us." Argentina-England football rivalry The sporting rivalry between the two countries is heightened by political tensions over the South Atlantic archipelago. It is a British overseas territory with a population of around 3,500 people located about 8,000 miles (13,000 kilometers) from the UK and 300 miles (480 kilometers) from Argentina. Argentina argues that the islands were illegally taken from it in 1833. Britain, which says its territorial claim dates to 1765, sent a warship to the islands in 1833 to expel Argentine forces who sought to establish sovereignty over the territory.

Argentina smelt
'blood in water' in
England win: Scaloni

ATLANTA: Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni saluted his team's never-say-die mentality after another come-from-behind victory on Wednesday powered them past England into the World Cup final. Scaloni said his team had scented victory as England sat back after taking a 1-0 lead in their semifinal in Atlanta and went for broke to secure a deserved 2-1 win. "I think that this team plays the best when we are facing adversity," Scaloni said. "We had a challenging game, a challenging situation. There was blood in the water, and we went for it. That's the feeling that I was getting."

"You just have to keep going. We hit the crossbar. We hit the post, and it just couldn't go in. There's six or seven chances, but I'm very pleased about that because the team fought to the very end, and I think this is critical."

It was the second time in the knockout rounds that Argentina have won after trailing late in the game following their remarkable last-16 escape act against Egypt — a win Scaloni described at the time as "epic." Asked how he would describe Wednesday's victory, Scaloni offered: "Epic, squared?" Scaloni said the win, which sends Argentina into a final showdown against European champions Spain in New Jersey on Sunday, was a team effort. "This group is difficult to explain. It is a show of the collectiveness, the brotherhood that we are in, the fight to the very end that we have," Scaloni said. The Argentina coach, who now has the chance to lead the South Americans to four straight major titles after Copa America victories either side of the 2022 World Cup win, said his team had been unfazed as they sought to drag themselves back into the game. — APP

PHF finalises
proposed merit-based
selection criteria for
Hockey WC camp

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has finalised a proposed merit-based selection criteria for the Pakistan Senior Men's National Team World Cup Camp, aimed at ensuring a transparent, objective and performance-driven selection process. According to a PHF press release, players will be evaluated in five key areas: tactical understanding, technical ability, physical performance, mental strength and attitude. Each player will be assessed on a scale of one to five in every category by the coaching staff during trials and training sessions.

Under the proposed criteria, a player must secure a score of three or above in at least three of the five evaluation areas to qualify for selection in the National Team World Cup Camp. The evaluation framework has been developed by the international coaches working with the PHF, based on global best practices, player monitoring and technical observation. To ensure greater transparency and accountability, the assessment process will be supported by digital evidence, including GPS tracking data and video analytics. The proposed selection criteria and recommendations will now be submitted to the PHF Selection Committee and the President of the federation for final approval. — APP

Harry Kane 'gutted' after
England crash out of World Cup

ATLANTA: Harry Kane said he was "gutted" for England and their fans after his team were beaten 2-1 by defending champions Argentina in the World Cup semifinals on Wednesday. Anthony Gordon's strike had put the Three Lions on the cusp of a first men's World Cup final since they lifted the 1966 trophy but Lionel Messi inspired a dramatic turnaround in Atlanta. He set up Enzo Fernandez, who blasted home from outside the area, and provided an inch-perfect cross for Lautaro Martinez's winner in stoppage time. "Gutted for the boys, gutted for everyone — the team, the staff, the fans," England captain Kane told the BBC.

"We played a good game, the large majority of it. When we went 1-0 up we seemed to try and hold on, which at this level is not enough. "So, just gutted because we've worked so hard to be here and the lads have given every last bit of running, blood, sweat, tears." Bayern Munich forward Kane, who scored six goals during the tournament, said Thomas Tuchel's men had struggled to repel constant attacks from the defending champions. "After the goal, whether it was them putting more men forward or us not being able to match them man for man, it was just wave after wave," he said. "Lads were putting blocks in but, in the end, it just wasn't enough."

He said England had not planned to rely on defending after



Gordon's goal. "When we went ahead the messaging was to go again and get another goal," he added. "Then once they scored their two goals it was to try and find something but we couldn't quite get the momentum back in the game." England have now reached at least the semifinal stage in four of the past five major tournaments, but have still not won a

major tournament since the 1966 World Cup. Kane turns 33 later this month and refused to be drawn on whether he imagines still being part of the team by the time the next World Cup comes around. He may be inspired by the performances of Lionel Messi, 39, who has scored eight goals at the 2026 tournament. "As a person, it's always just about taking it year by year and how I feel," Kane told reporters. "The England national team is my pride and joy. It's what I love to do more than anything." — APP

Zaman, Fariha Crowned National Chess Champions



OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Higher Education Commission's (HEC) Zaman Sohail and Punjab's Fariha Siddique emerged as champions in the men's and women's categories of the National Chess Championship held at the Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad on Thursday organised by the Chess Federation of Pakistan (CFP).

The six day long championship attracted more than 250 players from across the country, who competed in various categories and displayed a high standard of chess.

Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry was the chief guest at the closing ceremony, distributed prizes among the winners. The ceremony was also attended by Parliamentary Secretary for Culture Heritage Farah Naz, Parliamentary Secretary for Education Wajeha Qamar, Prime Minister's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal, CFP President Syed Zeeshan Naqvi, Vice President Rehan Azam, Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists President Afzal Butt, and other dignitaries.

Addressing the ceremony, the minister said Pakistan's stature and respect had grown significantly on the diplomatic



front, adding that the role of the Prime Minister and the Field Marshal in promoting regional peace had been widely appreciated internationally. He said it was the collective responsibility of every Pakistani to further enhance the country's honour, dignity and prestige.

Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said the government was taking concrete measures to promote sports, identify talent and provide equal opportunities for young athletes to excel. He assured that every possible facility would be extended to talented players, including those competing in chess, to help them achieve success at

the national and international levels.

In the 34th National Men's Chess Championship Final Round, HEC's Zaman Sohail clinched the national title with 5 points. Punjab's M. Zorez Shabkhaiz finished second with 4.5 points, while HEC's A.R. Akhtar also scored 4.5 points but secured third place on the tiebreak.

In the 10th National Women's Chess Championship, Fariha Siddique of Punjab remained unbeaten throughout the tournament to win the national title with 10.5 points. Zainubia Wasif finished runner-up with 9 points, while Javeria claimed third place with 8 points.

Pakistan
needs to do
more for...

FROM PAGE 01

by concerns over the country's human rights record, although it at the same time recognised a number of positive legislative measures adopted during the reporting period. It cited the legislation establishing a National Commission for Minorities, the narrowing of the scope of the death penalty, the continuation of the de facto moratorium on executions, the adoption of implementing rules under the Anti-Torture Act, the passage of a Domestic Violence Bill for Islamabad Capital Territory and the country's first conviction for marital rape as notable developments. It also praised the National Commission for Human Rights for emerging as an important institution in advancing Pakistan's human rights obligations. However, the report observed that "most progress is of legislative and administrative nature and needs to be translated into real improvements on the ground". It said "significant concerns remained, generally impacting the rule of law and civil society space", adding that "enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings increased, without accountability for perpetrators". The Commission also expressed concern over the deterioration in freedom of expression, saying amendments to cybercrime, anti-terrorism and blasphemy laws had introduced vague provisions that could be used against "dissidents, human rights defenders, journalists, minorities and ordinary citizens", exposing them to imprisonment, confiscation of assets or restrictions on foreign travel.

Forces
frustrate...

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destroy the post after their persistent failure in achieving their objectives. A search and clearance operation was launched in the area after their unsuccessful attempt to attack the post, they added. Last month, the district administrations of Upper South Waziristan and Lower South Waziristan had imposed Section 144 in several areas due to security concerns and the movement of security forces. Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code is a legal provision that empowers district administrations to prohibit an assembly of four or more people in an area for a limited period. South Waziristan, as well as the rest of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has been facing terrorism for a long time, with a monthly security assessment released by PICSS stating that after two consecutive months of improvement, Pakistan's security situation deteriorated sharply in May, driven primarily by escalating terrorist violence in KP and Balochistan.

US approves
nearly \$2...

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with Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis after they fired missiles at an airport in the southern Saudi city of Abha on Monday. The Houthi attack came after the Yemeni government hit Sanaa airport to divert a flight returning from the Iranian supreme leader's funeral with a Houthi delegation on board. The Houthis blamed Riyadh for the attack. The move also comes amid the United States ramping up waves of attacks on Iran, after reimposing a naval blockade as the foes return to war. "There will be no adverse impact on US Defence readiness as a result of this proposed sale," the release said.

Franco-German...

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challenges scaling up its defense ambitions. Two joint declarations are expected following the Franco-German Defense and Security Council (CFADS) and a broader joint ministerial meeting near Cologne on Thursday and Friday. A French official acknowledged that the discussions were "not a path where everything is necessarily aligned," but said Franco-German defense industry cooperation was bigger than the failed FCAS project.

Briefs

Rupee gains
03 paisa
against
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Thursday appreciated by 03 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.97, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 278.00. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 279.05 and Rs 279.20, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee increased by Rs 1.08 and closed at Rs 318.68 from the previous day's closing of Rs 317.60, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.71, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs 4.24 and closed at Rs 3751.91 compared to the previous day's Rs 371.67. The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 01 and 03 paisa, closing at Rs 75.68 and Rs 74.01, respectively.—APP

PSX stays
bullish, gains
over 2,837
points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued its bullish momentum on Thursday, gaining 2,837.78 points, a positive change of 1.62 percent, to close at 178,123.57 points against 175,285.78 points recorded on the previous trading day. During the session, the ready market recorded a trading volume of 736.956 million shares with a traded value of Rs34.609 billion, compared to 583.805 million shares valuing Rs26.045 billion in the previous session. The market capitalization increased to Rs20,040 trillion from Rs19.783 trillion a day earlier. Out of 496 active companies in the ready market, 342 advanced, 129 declined, and 25 remained unchanged. Lotte Chemical led the volume chart with 70.092 million shares, followed by TPL Properties with 52.568 million shares and Ittefaq Iron Industries with 35.220 million shares. The top gainers included Khyber Textile Mills Limited, which surged by Rs129.82 to close at Rs2,061.33, and Nestle Pakistan Limited, which gained Rs40.08 to settle at Rs7,657.58.—APP

Gold price
rises by Rs
400 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold witnessed an increase in the local market on Thursday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola rising by Rs400 to Rs425,436, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold increased by Rs343 to Rs364,742, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold went up by Rs314 to Rs334,358. In the international market, the price of gold increased by US\$4 to US\$4,030 per ounce. Meanwhile, the price of 24-karat silver per tola declined by Rs134 to Rs6,155, while the price of 10 grams of silver decreased by Rs115 to Rs5,276.—APP

ICCI, Alibaba Pak team up to enhance e-commerce exports

Tahir Ayub said that the overwhelming response to the session reflected the growing awareness among the business community that the future of international trade lies in digital connectivity and online marketplaces

DNA

Islamabad: Acting President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Tahir Ayub, has emphasized that digital commerce has emerged as one of the most powerful drivers of business growth, export diversification and global competitiveness, urging Pakistani entrepreneurs and SMEs to embrace e-commerce platforms to access international markets and accelerate the country's export-led economic growth. He expressed these views while addressing a "Sellers Onboarding Session in Collaboration with Ali-

baba.com Pakistan" organized by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Tahir Ayub said that the overwhelming response to the session reflected the growing awareness among the business community that the future of international trade lies in digital connectivity and online marketplaces. He noted that businesses that successfully adopt digital technologies would be better positioned to compete in the rapidly evolving global economy. He added that adopting e-commerce, investing in digital capabilities and embracing innovation would not only diversify export destinations but also

enhance productivity, encourage entrepreneurship, generate employment and contribute to sustainable economic development. He said the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has been consistently working to equip its members with the knowledge, skills and market linkages required to succeed in the digital age. Through strategic collaborations, awareness programmes and capacity-building initiatives, ICCI is helping businesses adapt to emerging global trade trends and capitalize on new opportunities created by digital commerce. Representatives of Alibaba.com Pakistan Muhammad Sadiq, Kha-

waja Arsalan, and Mr. Muhammad Maaz digitally highlighted the growing significance of digital B2B e-commerce platforms in today's global trading environment. They provided participants with a comprehensive overview of Alibaba.com's ecosystem, explained the seller onboarding process, and shared practical insights on creating a strong digital presence, reaching international buyers, generating export leads, and building sustainable global business through the platform. Reaffirming ICCI's commitment to promoting exports and digital transformation, ICCI Vice President Irfan Chaudhry said that

the Chamber would continue collaborating with leading national and international organizations to facilitate businesses, strengthen Pakistan's export ecosystem and create new avenues for economic growth. The session was moderated by ICCI senior member Aizaz Mohammad and attended by a large number of entrepreneurs alongside ICCI Executive Members Ishaq Sial, Waseem Chaudhry, Ms. Shumaila Siddiqui, former Senior Vice President Khalid Chaudhry, ICCI members Ch. Muhammad Javed Iqbal, Abrar ul Haq, Chaudhry Mohammad Arshad, Ms. Uzma Sheeraz and many others.

Tajikistan
restores,
expands
over 3,000
hectares of
forests

ASTANA: In the first half of 2026, Tajikistan carried out forest restoration, afforestation and plantation development works across more than 3,000 hectares. According to Deputy Director of the Forestry Agency Davlatlali Sharifzoda, new forests were planted on 1,230.4 hectares. Restoration activities were conducted on 1,874.4 hectares. Furthermore, 193.5 hectares were planted with rosehip, pistachio, walnut, and other tree species.

The agency said that forest expansion and restoration remain among its key priorities, alongside improving forest density, protecting existing woodland areas and supporting natural regeneration.

In the reporting period, forest care and maintenance activities were carried out on more than 10,600 hectares, while measures to support natural forest recovery covered over 7,200 hectares.

The Forestry Agency operates five state nursery farms, one experimental production facility, and 42 smaller nurseries to support the cultivation of planting materials.

In 2026, new nurseries are set to be established on 40 hectares in 34 forestry institutions, further expanding the country's capacity for forest restoration and sustainable management. As written earlier, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan marked the state border with the first pillars. 3,298 hectares, Khovar cites the country's Forestry Agency.

Kazakhstan
sees spike
in wildfires
amid heat-
wave

ASTANA: Kazakhstan recorded eight forest fires on July 15 as an ongoing heatwave increased the risk of wildfires across the country. Qazinform News Agency reports, citing the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources.

The fires were reported in the Akmol and Kostanay regions, as well as in Buyratau and Burabay national parks and the Sandyktau forestry enterprise. The fires were promptly detected through aerial patrols conducted by the RSPE "Kazavialesookhrana" using early fire detection systems, as well as through continuous monitoring by the state forest protection service. State forest protection personnel and an airborne firefighting crew from RSPE "Kazavialesookhrana" were deployed immediately after the fires were spotted to contain and extinguish the blazes. In recent days, abnormally hot weather has led to an increase in steppe and dry-vegetation fires. As a result, the state forest protection service and RSPE "Kazavialesookhrana" are operating on heightened alert to prevent and respond rapidly to wildfires. Aerial patrols and continuous monitoring of forest areas continue around the clock. Earlier, Qazinform News Agency reported that a major wildfire in the French Pyrenees in southern France remained only partially contained after burning about 4,900 hectares in the Aspres massif.—APP

Ahsan for strategic collaboration with leading US varsities

DNA

BOSTON: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal has sought strategic partnerships with leading American universities, research centres and innovation institutions to strengthen Pakistan's higher education, research, climate resilience and innovation ecosystem, saying the country was committed to building a knowledge-based economy through global collaboration. During a series of high-level engagements in Boston, the minister met academic leaders, researchers and innovation experts at Boston University, the Harvard Kennedy School's Growth Lab, JPAL and the Cambridge Innovation Center (CIC) to explore cooperation in higher education, public policy, economic transformation, climate resilience and technology commercialization. At Boston University, Ahsan met Prof. Adil Najam and Vice President for Research Dr. Ken Lutchien to discuss expanding academic cooperation and strengthening Pakistan's human capital through advanced research partnerships. He briefed the participants on the government's flagship US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor initiative, launched to enable 10,000 Pakistani scholars to pursue PhD studies at the world's leading universities. He proposed a collaborative framework under which Pakistani doctoral researchers could undertake research at top American universities on Pakistan's priority development challenges, with the institutions facilitating tuition support while Pakistan bears logistical expenses. The proposal was welcomed, with both sides expressing interest in exploring the partnership further. "The strength of the United States lies in the strength of its universities. Pakistan is committed to building a knowl-



edge-based economy by investing in quality education, research and innovation through partnerships with world-class institutions," the minister said. He also highlighted Pakistan's efforts to expand higher education enrolment and noted that the country was among the few nations that co-financed the Fulbright scholarship programme, resulting in one of the largest cohorts of Pakistani students studying in the United States. He stressed Pakistan's interest in learning from American universities about integrating artificial intelligence into higher education, particularly in curriculum

development, teaching methodologies and student assessment. At Boston University's Institute for Global Sustainability and the Global Development Policy Center, Ahsan met Dr. Benjamin Sovacool and Dr. William Kring to discuss climate resilience, sustainable development and research collaboration. Highlighting Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change despite contributing less than one percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, he recalled the devastating 2022 floods and underlined the need for research-driven adaptation and resilience strategies. He invited Boston University to collaborate with

Pakistan in identifying climate vulnerabilities, strengthening biodiversity conservation, promoting clean energy transition and exploring innovative financing mechanisms for climate adaptation. Later, at the Harvard Kennedy School's Growth Lab, the minister invited the institution to partner with the government under the URAAN Pakistan initiative in developing a comprehensive growth strategy to help achieve the vision of transforming Pakistan into a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2035. The discussions focused on Pakistan's macroeconomic challenges, export competitiveness, fiscal reforms.

Pak-China strengthen
strategic coop in
Marine Science

BEIJING: Dalian Ocean University (DLOU) of China and Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences (LUAWMS) of Pakistan recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), marking a pivotal milestone for bilateral cooperation in marine science and education. Building upon this institutional foundation, the two countries should roll out pragmatic and targeted initiatives to advance substantive collaboration across marine academic and research domains. This was stated by Prof Cheng Xizhong, Senior Research Fellow at the Charhar Institute, a non-governmental Chinese think-tank on diplomacy and international studies based in Beijing. First, consolidate long-term academic partnership and talent cultivation mechanisms. The two universities could establish sustained faculty and student exchange schemes and launch joint training programs for undergraduate and postgraduate marine majors. DLOU was well-positioned to provide systematic curriculum guidance, professional academic instruction and high-quality internship platforms for Pakistani researchers and students. Complementarily, LUAWMS can offer exclusive local research resources and field investigation access to the Arabian Sea, jointly cultivating high-caliber interdisciplinary marine talents to support the development of both nations, he said.—APP

PBF demands
competitive environment
to achieve exports target

FAISALABAD: With Pakistan's textile sector under increasing strain from soaring energy costs, high financing rates, escalating production expenses, and intense regional competition, business leaders have urged the government to introduce immediate policy measures to protect the country's largest export-oriented industry. Faisalabad, Pakistan's industrial and textile hub, contributes an estimated US\$5.5 billion in textile exports annually, nearly 45 percent of the country's total textile exports—making its economic stability crucial to national export growth and employment. Against this backdrop, the Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has announced its new office bearers for the Faisalabad Chapter for a two-year term, effective immediately, according to a notification issued by Chief Organiser Ahmad Jawad. The newly elected team comprises Director FIEDMC Mian Kashif Zia as President, Senior Vice Chairman of PHMA (North Zone) Ahmed Afzal Awan as Senior Vice President of the forum, Mian Tanvir Ahmed and Muhammad Abdullah Qadri as Vice President's, and senior trade leader of the city Mian Tanveer Riaz as General Secretary of the forum. Addressing members of the business community, PBF Faisalabad President Mian Kashif Zia thanked the forum's leadership for its confidence in the new team and pledged to work closely with industrialists, exporters, policymakers, and government institutions to strengthen Pakistan's industrial and export sectors. Describing Faisalabad as the country's industrial backbone, Kashif Zia said the city's manufacturing base plays a pivotal role in Pakistan's economy. However, he noted that rising electricity and gas tariffs, inconsistent energy supplies, high borrowing costs, liquidity constraints, and increasing production expenses have weakened the competitiveness of exporters, while many small and medium-sized enterprises are struggling to sustain operations. "The government must urgently introduce industry-friendly policies that reduce the cost of doing business and restore investor confidence," Zia said. "Affordable energy, easier access to finance, stable taxation policies, timely payment of sales tax refunds, and effective export facilitation are essential to revive industrial growth and strengthen Pakistan's position in international markets." Speaking on the occasion, Ahmed Afzal Awan said Faisalabad's industrial landscape extends far beyond textiles, encompassing garments, knitwear, hosiery, spinning, weaving, textile processing, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, food processing, plastics, packaging.—DNA



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Briefs

Iran oil
tankers
Karachi
next stop

NEWS DESK

KARACHI: Two tankers carrying Iranian crude have changed their destination signals to Karachi, a move analysts say could indicate they are seeking a temporary holding area as the United States intensifies enforcement of its naval blockade. The News reported, citing a Bloomberg report. The Rani and the Amil, which are carrying a combined 1 million barrels of crude, switched their destination signals to Karachi on Tuesday, ship-tracking data compiled by Bloomberg show. The two vessels were already outside the Persian Gulf when Washington re-imposed its naval blockade of Iranian shipping. It's unlikely the tankers will discharge their cargoes in Pakistan, as that would expose the country to the risk of running afoul of US sanctions. The nation hasn't imported any Iranian crude in at least a decade, according to data intelligence firm Kpler. Instead, the vessels, a suzmax and a medium-range tanker, may be heading to Pakistani waters to either wait or transfer their cargoes to other ships. This isn't the first time tankers carrying Iran oil have stopped in waters off Karachi. Previously, when the US blockade was in place, several empty Iran-linked tankers idled in the area in order to stay close to the Persian Gulf as they waited for the right time to sail back in for more cargoes, according to non-profit organisation United Against Nuclear Iran.

US to
tighten visa
regulations
for foreign
students,
journalists

DNA

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration moved on Thursday to tighten the duration of visas for foreign students, cultural exchange visitors and journalists. The new final rule from the Department of Homeland Security creates a fixed time period for F visas for international students, J visas that allow visitors on cultural exchange programs to work in the US, and I visas for members of the media. Those visas are currently available for the duration of the program or employment in the US. The effective date is 60 days from publication in the federal register, subject to congressional review. President Donald Trump, a Republican, kicked off a wide-ranging immigration crackdown after taking office in January 2025.

Pakistan–Portugal hold
4th round of bilateral
political consultations

Ambassador Ayesha Ali, Additional Secretary (Europe), led the Pakistan side, while Ambassador Helena Malcata, Director-General for Foreign Policy, headed the Portuguese delegation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 4th round of Pakistan–Portugal Bilateral Political Consultations took place in Islamabad, marking another step toward strengthening ties between the two nations. Ambassador Ayesha Ali, Additional Secretary (Europe), led the Pakistan side, while Ambassador Helena Malcata, Director-General for Foreign Policy, headed the Portuguese delegation. During the consultations, both sides reviewed the full spectrum of bilateral relations and explored avenues for enhanced cooperation in trade, investment, labour mobility, agriculture, renewable energy, information technology, education, and culture. The two delegations also exchanged views on regional developments, international issues, and coordination in multilateral forums. The Portuguese delegation further called on the Foreign Secretary, underscoring the importance of sustained dialogue. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to closer bilateral cooperation and agreed to maintain momentum in their engagement.

Govt pledges more
security for China-run
mine after terror attacks

Mine operator denies report about project closure due to security concerns, calling it "factually incorrect"



NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The federal government said on Wednesday it was stepping up security around a Chinese-run copper and gold mine in Balochistan after terror attacks disrupted supply routes, and the mine's operator denied a report that the project could be forced to shut down. The mine has run without interruption for 25 years and "there is no possibility of its shutdown", he said in a statement. He said the company had asked Pakistan's authorities for help moving furnace oil to the site after some transporters balked at using certain routes through Balochistan. He added that the relevant security agencies have assured the company of

the necessary support to help ensure the uninterrupted supply of furnace oil to the project. State Minister for Interior Talal Chaudhry said Islamabad had received the mine operator's security concerns in early July and ordered agencies to increase deployment around its installations, personnel and cargo. "We have directed the provincial authorities and all concerned security agencies to beef up deployment for all of their installations, personnel, logistics and transportation," Chaudhry told. "It is our priority to safeguard all projects run by international companies in Pakistan," he said, adding that logistics and cargo shipments to the site would receive additional security protection. Balochistan, which borders Iran and Afghanistan, hosts several major Chinese-backed projects, including the deep-water port of Gwadar. The Financial Times reported earlier on Wednesday that Saindak's managing director had warned Pakistan's energy ministry that operations could become unsustainable within a month because deteriorating security conditions were disrupting supply routes. The Saindak mine is operated by the state-owned Metallurgical Corporation of China under a lease extended in 2022, and exports most of its output to China. China's foreign ministry said it was unaware of the situation but that Beijing would work with its close partner Pakistan to protect Chinese citizens, projects and institutions in the country.

More than 500 feared dead after boats
carrying refugees sink off Myanmar

Boats carrying ethnic minority Rohingya passengers left Myanmar in late June: IMO

DNA

LONDON: Two boats carrying more than 500 people may have capsized off Myanmar's coast in recent days, UN agencies said on Thursday, as refugees from the war-torn country make perilous maritime journeys in search of safety and better lives. The two vessels left Myanmar's Rakhine State in late June carrying mostly ethnic minority Rohingya passengers, reportedly including some from refugee camps in Bangladesh, the International Organisation for Migration (IMO) and the UN's refugee agency

said in a joint statement, citing preliminary information. More than 500 were feared dead, it said. "While the incidents and casualty figures have yet to be officially confirmed, UN-HCR and IOM are gravely concerned by the potentially devastating loss of life." Driven away by violence at home and desperate conditions in crowded refugee camps in Bangladesh, Myanmar's long-persecuted Rohingya Muslim minority have for years risked their lives on flimsy wooden vessels, hoping to reach safety and the opportunity of livelihoods in countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. Nearly 900 Rohingya refugees died

or went missing in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal last year, making it the world's deadliest maritime route for refugees and migrants, according to the UN. In the latest incidents, the first boat, with about 250 people on board, lost contact shortly after departure and a second vessel carrying about 280 people was believed to have sunk off Myanmar's Irrawaddy coast on July 8, the UN agencies said. "These journeys took place outside the regular sailing season, when maritime conditions are typically more hazardous," the statement said. The Rohingya exodus from Rakhine started in 2017 after the Myanmar military launched an offensive in the border province, leading to at least 730,000 seeking shelter in neighbouring Bangladesh.

Vance says some in Israeli govt
sought to sway US on Iran deal

DNA

JERUSALEM: US Vice President JD Vance said some members of the Israeli government had tried to influence US public opinion to oppose a deal by the US to end the war with Iran, in a podcast episode with host Joe Rogan posted on Wednesday. The comments echoed earlier criticism of Israeli government policy by Vance, whom many view as a potential future presidential candidate, in a widening public rift between the two countries. Vance defended a deal reached last month to end the war with Iran, which critics in the US and Israel have slammed for failing to curb Iran's missile program and providing no clear path to dismantling its nuclear facilities, while constraining Israel in its war with Hezbollah militants in Lebanon. "I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that there have

been people within the Israeli government who are trying to, like, actually shift us away from that policy because they want to continue the military campaign," Vance said. The vice president said that, while he has "good relationships" with some members of the Israeli government, "there are some people within their system that we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that are manipulating and trying to change American public opinion to keep the war going on indefinitely." Vance said that many countries, allies and adversaries try to influence American policy and that "it doesn't bother me that Israel tries to do this, it frankly doesn't even bother me that Russia or some of these other countries do it." He said it was "just the nature of being a political leader in 2026." "What does bother me is when those operations, those influence campaigns, actually affect American political judgment," said the vice president. Vance lashed out at Israeli critics of the Iran deal in June, saying President Donald Trump is Israel's only ally, in a sharp rebuke that referenced the billions in US defense aid the country receives. US Vice President JD Vance has said that late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein "seemed to be connected" to elements of the "Israeli deep state" as well as the "highest levels of American intelligence", while also acknowledging the Trump administration mishandled its response to the case. He made these remarks in a podcast episode with host Joe Rogan that was published on Wednesday. During the episode, Rogan brought up that most people thought Epstein was linked to Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, to which Vance replied, "Yeah, Mossad or CIA or some other deep state, whether in America, Israel, or another country. He clearly had connections to the upper, the highest levels of American intelligence. He clearly had connections to the highest levels of Israeli intelligence," he said.



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