



# Islamabad POST

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**Morocco values ties with Pakistan, says Amb Karmoune**

Detailed News On Page-08

**US President says tariffs on Korea coming**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Climate change to be tackled on priority**

Detailed News On Page-03



**May 9 cases**

## Shibli, Ayub sentenced to 10 years each

The verdicts come as the latest blow to PTI, which has seen its representation in Parliament nearly wiped out following a series of disqualifications and convictions. Earlier, key leaders including Ejaz Chaudhary and Jamshed Dasti—PTI's opposition leader in the Punjab Assembly—were also sentenced in the same case, resulting in the loss of their legislative seats



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In a major development that has intensified Pakistan's political turmoil, an anti-terrorism court has handed down severe sentences to several Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders in connection with the May 9 violence. A special anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Faisalabad on Thursday sentenced several Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders including Omar Ayub Khan, Shibli Faraz, Zartaj Gul and others to 10 years in prison in connection with a case registered in the aftermath of the May 9, 2023, violence at the Civil Lines Police Station.

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## Tarar welcomes court's verdict

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has welcomed the verdict of the Anti-Terrorism Court in cases pertaining to May 9 riots. Talking to the media in Islamabad on Thursday, he said the verdict represents a triumph for the rule of law and the enforcement of legal provisions. He emphasized that the sentences were

delivered in accordance with the law and through a fair trial. The Minister further said that irrefutable evidence was available regarding the attacks on May 9. On that day, attackers and rioters inflicted damage on military installations, memorials of martyrs, and government property. He added that officers of the law enforcement agencies were injured, property was vandalized, and acts of arson were committed. He further noted that the perpetrators showed complete disregard for the martyrs and deliberately attempted to undermine the national system through a planned conspiracy. Attaullah Tarar also said that the individuals involved in the May 9 events underwent extensive trials and that all evidence was presented before the court.

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## PTI's Gohar says court rulings destroying democracy

Party chairman says Imran Khan-founded PTI to challenge all verdicts in superior judiciary

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan expressed strong reservations on recent verdicts announced by the anti-terrorism courts (ATCs) against the opposition leaders in the May 9 cases, calling them a "threat to democracy". His reaction came after a special anti-terrorism court (ATC) in

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## 'Statements about Iranian envoy baseless'

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pakistan has strongly refuted misinformation circulating on personal social media platforms regarding visa issuance and border visit procedures. In an official press release, the Embassy clarified that the statements falsely attributed to the Honourable Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan are baseless and incorrect. The Embassy emphasized that no such comments have been issued by the Ambassador or any authorized Iranian official. "The content being spread on certain social media pages is denied and considered inaccurate," the Embassy stated,

Continued on Page 06

## Gen Sahir calls on Egyptian President

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, NI (M), Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC), while on an official visit to Egypt for the 3rd round of Defence and Security Talks, called on His Excellency Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, The President of Arab Republic of Egypt, General Abdel Maged Ahmed Abdel Mageed Sagr, Minister of Defence and Military Production and Commander-in-Chief of Egyptian Armed Forces, Admiral Osama Mounier Mohamed Rabie, Chairman and Managing Director

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Nawaf Saeed Al Maliki meets former Prime Minister and PML N President Nawaz Sharif. Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest. – DNA

## Relations solidified

## PM Shehbaz thanks Trump for role in finalizing trade deal

US President Trump announced on his Truth Social account, "We have just concluded a Deal with the Country of Pakistan, whereby Pakistan and the United States will work together on developing their massive Oil Reserves

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday expressed his gratitude to US President Donald Trump for his role in finalising a "historic" trade agreement between Pakistan and the United States. "I wish to convey my profound thanks to President Trump for his leadership role in finalization of the historic US-Pakistan trade agreement, successfully concluded by our two sides in Washington, last night," the prime minister wrote on his X timeline. He said that the "landmark" deal would enhance the bilateral growing cooperation to expand the frontiers of enduring partnership in days to come.

Continued on Page 06

## Pak-US trade deal redefines bilateral ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Finance Minister Khurram Shahzad on Thursday praised the exceptional cooperation of the US government in forging a comprehensive trade deal that emphasizes tariffs, investment and technology, underscoring that this forward-thinking agreement would significantly

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

### Utility Stores formally shut down

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Utility Stores Corporation (USC) on Thursday formally ceased operations, in compliance with the July 31 deadline established earlier this month to close the state-owned enterprise (SOE). Established in 1971, USC was an SOE tasked with supplying essential commodities at subsidised rates, primarily targeting low-income households. It operated over 4,000 retail outlets nationwide. According to a USC notification from the Ministry of Industries and Production, available with Dawn.com, the decision was taken in compliance with directives issued by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on June 28 and a meeting of the board of directors earlier this month.

### Indian PM under pressure after US tax

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: Indian opposition parties criticised the government on Thursday, describing US President Donald Trump's threat of a 25 per cent tariff as a diplomatic failure for New Delhi, while the rupee currency tumbled and equity indexes slid in response to the news. The 25pc rate would single out India more harshly than other major trading partners, and threatens to unravel months of talks, undermining one of Washington's strategic partners in the region, viewed as a counterbalance to China. Trump said the tariff on imports from India would start from Friday, in addition to an unspecified penalty for Russian dealings and involvement in the BRICS grouping of nations.

## Sino-Pak collaboration

## Pakistan launches remote sensing satellite

The launch marks a significant step in strengthening the country's capabilities in earth observation, disaster management, and sustainable development

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark achievement for its space program, Pakistan has successfully launched its Remote Sensing Satellite (PRSS) from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre (XSLC) in China. The launch marks a significant step in strengthening the country's capabilities in earth observation, disaster management, and sustainable development. Developed by Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) in collaboration with China's CETC and MICROSAT, the satellite will provide high-resolution, 24/7 imaging. This data will support critical sectors such as agriculture, urban planning, climate monitoring, and natural disaster response. The satellite's advanced technology will enhance food security, water resource management, and environmental conservation efforts. The successful launch reinforces Pakistan's position among space-faring nations and

Continued on Page 06

## PM Shehbaz hails launch of satellite

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday extended heartfelt congratulations to SUPARCO and the entire team involved in the successful launch of Pakistan's advanced remote sensing satellite, calling it a milestone in the country's space ambitions and a testament to the strength of Pakistan-China cooperation. "This achievement showcases the soaring heights of Pakistan-China cooperation, extending beyond borders and into outer space, driven by a shared vision to harness space technology for

Continued on Page 06

## India seeks Pakistan's return to FATF 'grey list'

New Delhi govt claims KP CM's statement proves institutional support for Taliban

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Indian government has submitted the recent remarks of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as evidence against Pakistan, officials of the global watchdog confirmed. According to FATF officials, New Delhi has presented the statement as formal proof in support of its stance that Islamabad provides support to terrorist elements. The Indian submission specifically references Gandapur's recent comment in which he said: "We arrest the Taliban, but our own institutions get them released, claiming they are their people." The remarks, which drew criticism at home, are now being used by India to request Pakistan's re-listing on the FATF's "increased monitoring" list, commonly known as the grey list. Indian authorities have argued that this public admission by a provincial chief minister shows that Pakistan's institutions continue to aid and protect terrorist elements. The FATF officials said India framed the statement as a formal "charge sheet"

Continued on Page 06

## Indian state refiners 'pause' Russian oil purchases

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: Indian state refiners have stopped buying Russian oil in the past week as discounts narrowed this month and US President Donald Trump warned countries not to purchase oil from Moscow, industry sources said. India, the world's third-largest oil importer, is the biggest buyer of seaborne Russian crude, a vital revenue earner for Russia as it wages war in Ukraine for a fourth year. The country's state refiners — Indian Oil Corp, Hindustan Petroleum Corp, Bharat Petroleum Corp and Mangalore Refinery Petrochemical Ltd — have not sought Russian crude in the past week or so, four sources

Continued on Page 06

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**PO of murder case arrested after 28 years**

SARGODHA: The Special Operations Cell successfully apprehended a proclaimed offender wanted to the police for about three decades in a murder case.

According to a press release issued by the DPO office, the accused, Qadir Yar, who had been on the run since 1999 after allegedly killing a man, Allah Yar, was arrested upon his return from abroad. The arrest was made at the airport through a coordinated efforts led by Regional Police Officer (RPO) Muhammad Shahzad Asif Khan. The accused had fled away from the country after committing the crime registered under FIR No 99/454 at Jhal Chakkian police station.—APP

**SDPI, IRP to collaborate on climate action, sustainable uplift**

ISLAMABAD: The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Islamic Relief Pakistan (IRP) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen collaboration on climate change, sustainable economic practices, and social development initiatives across Pakistan. The MoU, signed by SDPI Executive Director Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri and IRP Country Director Asif Ali Sherazi, sets out a three-year framework for joint action in areas such as climate adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk reduction, policy advocacy, humanitarian response, circular economy promotion, green jobs creation, and digitalization for sustainable development, said a press release issued on Thursday. Speaking at the signing ceremony, Dr Suleri emphasized the importance of partnerships in tackling Pakistan's most pressing development challenges. "Collaborative efforts between research institutes and humanitarian organizations can bridge knowledge gaps and translate evidence-based policy recommendations into real-world impact," he said.—APP

**Afridi directs focus on infrastructure uplift**

PESHAWAR: A departmental meeting was held under the chairmanship of Muhammad Sohail Afridi, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Communication and Works. The meeting was attended by Secretary Communication and Works, Muhammad Israr, Managing Director Engineer Sohail Idrees, Chief Engineers, and other relevant officials. A detailed presentation was given by the Central Design Office, which highlighted the department's current performance, weaknesses in infrastructure, and proposed reform measures. The recent flood damages in various districts, especially in Swat, including destroyed bridges, road repairs, and budget issues came under discussion. The Chief Engineers emphasized the urgent need for resources required for design and construction projects. They pointed out that the lack of timely funding for the repair of roads and bridges is causing delays in developmental work. The Special Assistant directed the concerned authorities to conduct a detailed survey of all damaged infrastructure.—APP

**Tessori along with diplomats inaugurates exclusive Mango festival**

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Governor of Sindh, Kamran Tessori, inaugurated the "Exclusive Mango Festival" on Thursday. The vibrant event was organized by the Foreign Affairs Liaison Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Karachi, in collaboration with the Marriott Hotel. A large number of dignitaries, including diplomats from various countries, consuls general, and members of the international community, Business and media attended the festival to celebrate Pakistan's world-renowned mangoes. Highlighting Pakistan's rich mango heritage, Director General MOFA Irfan Soomro led a ceremonial mango-cutting session alongside foreign diplomats and notable guests. The event aimed to promote the export and global recognition of Pakistani mangoes, which are known for their distinctive flavor, aroma, and quality. Speaking at the occasion, Governor Tessori appreciated the efforts of MOFA and Karachi Marriott Hotel in showcasing Pakistan's agricultural excellence.

He noted that the country boasts over 200 varieties of mangoes,



which are exported globally and are considered among the best due

to their superior taste and nutritional value. The festival not only

served as a diplomatic and cultural gathering but also reinforced Pa

kistan's potential in the global fruit export market.

**KP CM emphasizes unity against terrorism**

PESHAWAR: A meeting of the Provincial Apex Committee was held here at the Chief Minister's Secretariat, with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair. The session reviewed in detail the overall security situation in the province, with particular focus on the newly merged tribal districts. The meeting was attended by Adviser to the Chief Minister on Information Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Corps Commander Peshawar Lieutenant General Omer Ahmad Bukhari, Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, Inspector General of Police Zulfiqar Hameed, and other senior civil and military officials. In addition, Members of National and Provincial Assemblies from Bajaur, Khyber, and North Waziristan were invited as special participants. During the session, relevant authorities briefed the participants on the various aspects of the prevailing security challenges. The committee paid tribute to the civilians, police, and security personnel martyred in recent terrorist incidents and reaffirmed the collective resolve to continue the fight against terrorism. It was agreed that public trust must be secured to effectively counter terrorism, and participants underscored the need for enhanced coordination among civil administration, police, security forces, and intelligence agencies to carry out decisive operations. Participants unanimously acknowledged that terrorism has become a malign threat that can only be eliminated through concerted efforts by the government, the public, and state institutions. They noted that terrorists are a common enemy

and all stakeholders desire their elimination. Following the meeting, Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur issued a video statement to address the public and share key takeaways. He emphasized that the vision of his party and its leadership has always been to uplift underdeveloped areas, particularly the merged districts, and integrate them into the mainstream through development. However, he regretted that the lack of peace in these areas remains a major obstacle to progress, with terrorism being the root cause of the prevailing instability. The Chief Minister asserted that peace is essential not only for development but also for securing the future of the province and the country. He warned that Pakistan's adversaries are actively working to destabilize the nation and that terrorism is often linked to these hostile foreign interests. He stressed the need for unity, saying that a deliberate campaign is underway to sow distrust between the government, the public, and the security forces — a conspiracy that must be exposed and countered through collective efforts.

Ali Amin Gandapur cautioned that without the active support of the public, this war against terrorism cannot be won. He called on citizens to participate wholeheartedly in identifying and resisting those who support terrorists, whether out of fear, greed, or any other motive. He reiterated that aiding terrorism is neither sanctioned by religion, law, nor tradition, and that facilitators of terrorism must be eliminated alongside the perpetrators.—DNA

**Teacher honoured for decades of dedication in Federal colleges**

ISLAMABAD: A Farewell ceremony was organized here in honour of Professor Tahir Mahmood, a seasoned educationist, who retired on Thursday after completing over 42 years of public service, including more than 33 years in federal government colleges under the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE). He began his teaching career in 1992 following a nine-year tenure with the Pakistan Post Office Department. Professor Tahir served in various federal colleges, with a long and impactful association with Islamabad Model Postgraduate College H-8. He was also an active leader of the Federal Government College Teachers Association (FGCTA) from 2009 to 2013, where he advocated for teachers' rights. A large number of inservice and retired principals attended his farewell reference. Notable speakers included Prof. Javaid Iqbal Mughal (H-9), Prof. Athar ul Islam (H-8), Prof. Rashid Saleem (F-10/4), Khalida Makhdoom (F-7/2), Prof. Ali Yar (F-10/4) and Professor Muhammad Ashraf. They praised his dedication and said his services would be remembered with deep respect.—APP

**Flash flood warning issued as widespread rains forecast**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast widespread rain-wind/thundershowers for Friday in various parts of the country, accompanied by a flash flood warning in vulnerable districts due to expected heavy downpours. Rain is likely in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), northeastern Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Kashmir, while hot and humid weather will prevail in other parts of the country, particularly Sindh and southern Balochistan. The PMD has warned that heavy rainfall overnight and today may generate flash flooding in local nullahs and streams in parts of KP including Dir, Swat, Shangla, Mansehra, Kohistan, Abbottabad, Kohat, Karak, Hangu, and Tank, as well as DG Khan, South Punjab, Murree, Galliat, and Kashmir. Citizens are advised to take precautionary measures as windstorms, lightning and heavy downpours may damage vulnerable structures such as kacha houses, electric poles, billboards, solar panels, and parked vehicles. In Islamabad, partly cloudy

skies are expected with a 40 percent chance of rain and thunderstorms. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, rainfall is expected in Chitral, Swat, Buner, Shangla, Kohistan, Abbottabad, Peshawar, and southern districts including Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan, Waziristan, and Tank. Upper and central Punjab including Rawalpindi, Murree, Galliat, Lahore, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Faisalabad, Sargodha, and Jhang are expected to receive rain-wind/thundershowers. Southern Punjab districts such as Dera Ghazi Khan, Layyah, Bhakkar, Multan, Bahawalpur, Muzaffargarh, Kot Addu, Lodhran, Toba Tek Singh, Pakpattan, Vehari and Sahiwal may witness rain with isolated heavy falls. Sindh will remain hot and humid, though isolated rain is possible in Tharparkar, Umerkot, and some coastal areas during evening or night. In Balochistan, isolated rain-thundershowers are likely in Barkhan, Musakhel, Zhob, Khuzdar, Lasbela, and Awaran, while the rest of the province will remain hot and humid. Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan are likely to

experience cloudy weather with rain and thunderstorms, with heavy falls expected in some areas of Kashmir. Significant rain during the past 24 hours was recorded in Bannu 38mm, Malam Jabba 16mm, Kalam 12mm, D.I. Khan 10mm (City), Airport 8mm, Kakul 9mm, Parachinar 5mm, Dir 4mm, Layyah 35mm, Bahawalnagar 29mm, Bahawalpur (Airport 19mm, City 4mm), Toba Tek Singh 14mm, Bhakkar 9mm, Sahiwal 5mm, Barkhan 10mm, Khuzdar 1mm, Muzaffarabad (Airport 5mm, City 3mm), and Gupis 2mm in Gilgit-Baltistan. Despite widespread rainfall, high temperatures were recorded in several areas. Nokkundi topped at 45 C, followed by Dalbandin at 44 C, Panjgur at 43 C, and Sibi at 42 C. The authorities have urged citizens, particularly in flood-prone areas, to remain vigilant and avoid unnecessary travel during heavy rains. The emergency services and local administrations have been put on alert to deal with any untoward situation.—APP

**Trichmir trail lures new wave of tourism wanderers**

CHITRAL: As the sun rises over the snow-kissed Hindukush mountains, the golden mist swirls around the majestic Trichmir peak like a guardian spirit watching over the valley below. Local tea vendors in Chitral quietly prepare for another day, while excited trekkers although their backpacks heavy but spirits high geared up to chase the morning into the tallest mountain of Trichmir. Chitral, long hidden in the folds of time and terrain, is witnessing a tourism transformation. Once known mainly for its remoteness and Kalash culture, the valley has now become a symbol of adventure, resilience, and hope thanks to a growing wave of mountain tourism centered around Trichmir, the tallest peak in Pakistan outside Gilgit-Baltistan, towering at 7,708 meters. This week earlier, the second phase of the Trichmir trekking expedition concluded successfully with 20 trekkers a mix of local and national adventurers have returned from the base camp of Trichmir. The expedition was led by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KP-CTA) in collaboration with the Trichmir Backpackers Club, and marks another chapter in the revival of adventure tourism in this once-overlooked region. Their journey traced ancient pathways through Koghuzi, Reshun, Golghari, and Oweer, ending at the base of Trichmir where they spent a reflective night under a canopy of stars. Guided by seasoned local trekkers, the group completed the route safely and in doing so, lit a fire of inspiration for many more to follow. For many like Ali Noor Chitrali, a seasoned trekker, the trek was more than a physical journey. "It was full of thrill and excitement," he shared, his voice carrying the joy of discovery. "This isn't just about reaching the base camp. It's about reconnecting with nature, with our culture, and with one another." Chitrali emphasized that Trichmir is ideally suited for mountaineering between May and September, and noted that alongside Trichmir, Falask Sair (5,957m) in Swat and Malka Parbat (5,290m) in Kaghan make Khyber Pakhtunkhwa a haven for adventure sports. But it's not just the hearts of trekkers that are lifting but the local economy is too. From hotels and transport operators to porters, food and tea sellers, the impact is being felt far and wide. Habibullah Arif, Director General of KP-CTA, proudly called the Trichmir trekking a success story for tourism and community development. "Such initiatives are helping bring international attention to Chitral's unmatched beauty. We are seeing a resurgence in local businesses and an increase in job opportunities," he said.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister chairs a high level meeting attended by Field Marshal Asim Munir, DG ISI and others. DNA



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

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Aug 01/China  
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Switzerland  
National Day

Aug 01/Lebanon  
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01 /Syria  
Armed Forces Day

Aug 4/Bukino Faso  
National Day

Aug 09 /Singapore

Aug 15/DPR Korea  
Independence Day

Aug 15/India  
Independence Day

Aug 15/Poland  
Armed Forces Day

Aug 17 /Indonesia  
Independence Day

Aug 24/Ukraine  
Independence Day

Aug 25/Uruguay  
Independence Day

Aug 30 /Turkey  
Armed Forces Day

Aug 31/Kyrgyz Republic  
Independence Day

Aug 31/Malaysia  
National Day

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133

Marriott.....051- 2826121

Monal.....0334-5421812

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

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RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Pak joins Ethiopia in historic 700m plant in one day initiative

**Dr. Jemal Beker, Ambassador of Ethiopia highlighted the Green Legacy Initiative, launched in 2019, as a vital effort by Ethiopia to restore ecological balance, reduce carbon emissions and soil erosion, and promote food security and sustainable development in the country**

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: In a remarkable show of international cooperation, Pakistan has joined Ethiopia in planting 700 mil-

lion seedlings in one day under the “Renewal Through Planting” campaign which has been launched this year under the Green Legacy Initiative of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed. A joint plantation drive and media briefing to this end were held at the Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad to mark Pakistan’s participation which saw diverse attendance, including diplomatic corps, government officials, parliamentarians, business leaders, religious figures, youth, media, and civil society representatives. Dr. Musadik Malik, Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, graced the event as the chief guest, while Hamid Asghar Khan, Additional Secretary (Africa) from Pakistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, attending as the guest of honor. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Jemal Beker, Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan, highlighted the Green Legacy Initiative, launched in 2019, as a vital effort by Ethiopia to restore ecological balance,

He emphasized that Pakistan’s participation in the “Renewal Through Planting” campaign underscores its commitment to strengthening ties with Ethiopia and sends a powerful message that Pakistan is not alone in its fight against climate change. The Ambassador also announced that a high-level delegation of Ethiopian officials and climate experts would visit Pakistan soon to show solidarity and participate in “Green Dialogues” and plantation campaigns across the country. The Federal Minister commended the Ambassador for his exceptional efforts in promoting green behaviors and values throughout Pakistan. He lauded Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed’s visionary leadership and his exemplary role in advancing the international climate agenda. The Minister acknowledged Ethiopia’s initiatives, such as the Green Legacy and Yelemat Tirufat (Bounty of Basket), as inspiring examples of resilience and stressed the importance of learning from such successful endeavors.

## 12 drug dealers arrested

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police on Thursday apprehended 12 drug traffickers during targeted operations conducted by Kohsar, Margalla, Shalimar, Golra, Noon, Khanna, and Kirpa police stations, recovering a substantial quantity of narcotics. A public relations officer told APP that the police teams seized 12 kilograms of hashish, 4.37 kilograms of heroin, 2.361 kilograms of ice, and 32 bottles of liquor from the possession of the arrested individuals. The operations were carried out under the special directives of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi. FIRs have been registered, and comprehensive investigations are underway. Police are also pursuing facilitators linked to these networks. Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Islamabad Muhammad Jawad Tariq reaffirmed that the ICT Police would continue its crackdown against those involved in poisoning the youth through drug networks. “No malicious elements will be allowed to destroy the future of our younger generation,” he added.—APP

## DG NLPD distributes certificates among students

ISLAMABAD: Director General of the National Language Promotion Department (NLPD), Prof. Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, distributed certificates among students of Thal University Bhakkar upon the completion of their internship at the department. He also presented them with books from the department as a gift. Two students from the BS Urdu program at Thal University Bhakkar, Faisal Shehzad and Rimsha Malik, successfully completed a six-week internship at the NLPD, according to a press release issued here on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar said, “Practical training holds great significance in the lives of young students. The process of learning continues throughout life, and such training programs play a vital role in the academic and intellectual development of the youth.” He further emphasized that the NLPD remained fully committed to the promotion of the Urdu language and literature. Executive Director of the NLPD, Dr. Rashid Hameed, said that practical training was an effective means of nurturing a conscious, upright, and knowledge-loving young generation. He reiterated that the NLPD would continue its efforts to provide students with high-quality training in the national language. “Such beneficial training programs will continue to be organized in the future,” he assured.—APP

## US-Pak trade deal diplomatic milestone: Kiyani

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kiyani Thursday praised the strengthening of the bilateral partnership between Pakistan and the United States, describing it as a historic trade deal that will not only boost exports but also mark a diplomatic triumph for the Pakistani government. In an exclusive interview with a local news channel, the state minister acknowledged that the deal was a result of years of hard work and dedication from both Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and the Finance Ministry. He emphasized that this achievement was no easy task, crediting the leadership and collaboration of key officials for overcoming numerous challenges. Highlighting the extensive efforts, the Minister pointed out that US investment interests had been nurtured through months of discussions, particularly through the tireless efforts of Muhammad Urangzeb, who engaged US officials in crucial meetings. Bilal Azhar Kiyani further noted that the finalization of this agreement represented a monumental diplomatic victory, which will lead to long-term economic growth. He also commended Prime Minister’s diplomatic initiatives, which he believes will have a lasting impact on Pakistan’s economic stability and growth. The minister expressed optimism that the strengthened ties between the two nations would create positive, far-reaching results for Pakistan, benefiting the common people through enhanced economic opportunities and exports. Responding to a question about India, he stated that India’s goal of isolating Pakistan on the global stage has now been thwarted, leaving India disappointed and demoralized. He pointed out that instead of facing isolation, Pakistan has moved forward with a stronger diplomatic stance, gaining popularity not only with the United States but with several other countries as well, adding, this, he attributed to the current government’s successful policies and the positive outcomes of meetings, such as the one between General Asim Munir and U.S. President Donald Trump. In his concluding remarks, he emphasized that these achievements both diplomatic and trade-related mark a significant milestone for Pakistan and represent a triumph in its foreign policy efforts.—DNA

## SNGPL checks 60 metres

MULTAN: In a bid to curb gas theft and illegal activities, the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) UFG Control Task Force intensified its operation and disconnected three more gas meters in various areas of the city. According to details, two metres were disconnected over using compressor for getting gas illegally. One metre was removed over use for commercial purposes. The door-to-door of 60 consumers was carried out.

## Minister directs WASA to be on high alert

RAWALPINDI: As the fifth spell of monsoon rains begun in Rawalpindi in the wee hours of Wednesday, Punjab Minister for Housing and Urban Development Punjab Bilal Yasin directed the Water and Sanitation Agency (Punjab) to be on high alert. The water level in Nullah Leh at Katarian was recorded at 10 feet and Gawwalmandi bridge at 6 feet as a total of more than 80 mm of rain was recorded in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department, 90 mm rain was recorded at Saidpur, 30 mm at Golra, 32 mm at Bokra, 55 mm at PMD, 80 mm at Sham-sabad, 28 mm at Kachhari, 52 mm at Pirwadhai, 78 mm at Katarian and 45 mm at Gawwalmandi. Minister Bilal Yasin, in his directive to the Director General of WASA Punjab, said the WASA staff should keep the machinery active for drainage even during night hours. He further instructed that due to rain in Rawalpindi, the water level in Nullah Leh should be continuously monitored, and staff should be deployed for timely drainage from low-lying areas. He directed the WASA officials to ensure continuous coordination with all institutions to deal with any emergency situation. Meanwhile, WASA Rawalpindi Managing Director Muhammad Saleem Ashraf said that the Agency was on high alert with rain emergency imposed on the PMD’s prediction of heavy rains.. On the instructions of Housing Minister Bilal Yasin and Secretary Noorul Amin Mengal, the staff and heavy machinery had been deployed in low-lying areas for timely drainage of water, he added. The Nullah Leh and other drains across the city were being continuously monitored, he said, adding they were ready to deal with any kind of emergency situation.—DNA

## Bakhtawari calls for focus on health, education

RAWALPINDI: Zahid Bakhtawari, Chairman of the Punjab Chemist and Druggist Association has urged for prioritizing the health and education sectors to boost Pakistan’s development. Speaking at the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s (RCCI) Health Expo at the Pak-China Friendship Center, Bakhtawari congratulated RCCI’s team for organizing a successful event. “A strong nation needs strong health and educa-

tion systems,” he said. He lauded the expo for highlighting advancements in medical technology and healthcare services. “The Health Expo created opportunities for businesses to network with clients and partners, fostering innovation and raising awareness about the latest healthcare trends”, he said. Bakhtawari stressed that such initiatives are key to strengthening Pakistan’s health sector and driving national progress.—DNA

## Spillways closed after controlled water release

The move is part of standard procedures followed during monsoon rains to manage dam capacity and reduce the chance of overflow

ISLAMABAD: Authorities closed the spillways of Rawal Dam on Thursday after a brief water release operation triggered by a rise in water levels due to rainfall in Islamabad and nearby areas. According to the spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration, water levels

in Rawal Dam increased following rainfall in the federal capital and surrounding areas, prompting officials to open the spillways at 6 a.m. when the dam’s level reached 1,750 feet. The controlled release of water from the dam continued for six hours. Once the level dropped

to 1,749 feet, the spillways were shut down to prevent further outflow, he added. Before the spillways were opened, relevant departments, including Rescue 1122, were stationed at bridges, streams, and low-lying areas to ensure safety and monitor any potential risks from the

discharge. Assistant Commissioner Nilore supervised the entire operation, including water flow and public safety arrangements. The move is part of standard procedures followed during monsoon rains to manage dam capacity and reduce the chance of overflow.

## NCSW, NCERT to combat online abuse of women, kids

The agreement aligns with the broader vision of a “Digital Pakistan”—a secure, inclusive, and equitable digital ecosystem. For advocates of digital rights and gender justice, the partnership offers a long-awaited step forward in confronting one of the country’s most pressing yet under-addressed challenges.

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) and the National Cyber Emergency Response Team (NCERT-PKCERT) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at protecting women and children from rising cyber threats and technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV). The agreement marks a significant milestone in Pakistan’s efforts to create a safer digital environment for vulnerable groups, particularly women and girls, who are disproportionately targeted by online harassment, exploitation, and abuse. “Online safety is no longer a secondary concern—it is a fundamental human right,” said Ume Laila Azhar, Chairperson of NCSW, during the signing ceremony on Thursday. “As digital spaces become an extension of our homes, workplaces, and schools, we must ensure they are free of vio-

lence and discrimination. We owe it to the women and girls of Pakistan to stand firm against all forms of digital abuse.” Under the new partnership, NCSW and NCERT will collaborate on multiple fronts: launching awareness campaigns tailored for women, children, parents, and educators; developing user-friendly cybersecurity tools; conducting research; pushing for policy reforms; and organizing capacity-building programs for key stakeholders. The initiative also includes youth engagement through internship and learning opportunities. NCERT Director General Haider Abbas emphasized the need for comprehensive digital protection. “Women and children must be equipped, informed, and protected against digital threats,” he said. “Our teams will work jointly to build a more resilient and secure digital landscape.” The collaboration comes at a time when digital usage

in Pakistan is surging, especially among young people, making cyber hygiene and online safety a growing concern. The rise of TFGBV—harassment, stalking, doxing, and threats facilitated through technology—has prompted rights groups to call for urgent institutional action. Experts say this MoU has the potential to set a precedent for public-sector cooperation on digital safety, particularly through its survivor-centered and rights-based approach. By addressing online abuse at both preventive and policy levels, the initiative aims to ensure that the internet remains a safe space for learning, expression, and empowerment. The agreement aligns with the broader vision of a “Digital Pakistan”—a secure, inclusive, and equitable digital ecosystem. For advocates of digital rights and gender justice, the partnership offers a long-awaited step forward in confronting one of the country’s most pressing yet under-addressed challenges.

## Ban on heavy vehicles, loader rickshaws entry in capital

No violator—regardless of status—will be spared,” he said, urging citizens to fully cooperate with traffic authorities for a safer Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Captain (R) Syed Zeeshan Haider has imposed a complete ban on the entry of heavy vehicles, overloaded trucks and loader rickshaws into Islamabad. The sweeping measure, enforced across the federal capital, aims to eliminate the persistent problems of traffic congestion and fatal accidents caused by such vehicles. A police spokesman told on Thursday that the order was implemented as part of a broader initiative to upgrade the city’s traffic management system and ensure the safety of citizens. He said that additional traffic personnel have been deployed on all major roads and intersections to regulate traffic and enforce the ban strictly. Vehicles found violating the new order will be impounded and legal action will be taken against the drivers. CTO Zeeshan added that the ITP has launched a zero-tolerance policy against all forms of traffic violations, including signal breaking, overspeeding, lane violations, and illegal parking. Offenders will face immediate fines, and in serious cases, their vehicles will be shifted to police stations. He said drone surveillance is being expanded to monitor real-time violations and ensure timely intervention. This tech-based monitoring system will strengthen road discipline and deter habitual violators. He said the Islamabad Traffic Education Unit has also been mobilized on main thoroughfares to educate commuters about traffic rules and safe road behavior. Senior officers will remain present in the field to personally supervise operations and assist the public. CTO Zeeshan Haider assured that all measures will be enforced without discrimination. “Equal implementation of the law is our top priority. No violator—regardless of status—will be spared,” he said, urging citizens to fully cooperate with traffic authorities for a safer Islamabad.—DNA



## Briefs

Gilani  
mourns  
death of  
Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani Thursday expressed heartfelt condolences and profound grief over the passing of former Federal Minister Syed Tanveer ul Hassan Gilani. The late Syed Tanveer ul Hassan Gilani was a close relative of Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani. In his condolence message, he said that Syed Tanveer ul Hassan Gilani was a man of integrity, principles, and a warm-hearted nature. He dedicated his entire life to public service with honesty, uprightness, and a strong sense of responsibility. His political and social contributions will always be remembered. He said that the demise of Syed Tanveer ul Hassan Gilani is a deeply personal loss for him. "He was not only a close family member but also a like-minded, sincere, and loyal companion. His absence will be profoundly felt," he added. —APP

IRSA releases  
473,100  
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 473,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 534,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1538.00 feet which was 136.00 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 294,800 cusecs and 266,700 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1200.65 feet, which was 150.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 40,500 cusecs and 7,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 292,100, 282,000, 385,400 and 319,600 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 32,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 140,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

KKH fully  
restored as  
Pak reopens  
northern road  
network

ISLAMABAD: In a major relief for tourists and transporters, Pakistan has successfully restored its northern road network, including the strategic Karakoram Highway (KKH), a vital lifeline under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), following widespread damage caused by recent torrential rains. The National Highway Authority (NHA) mobilized on an emergency footing, deploying heavy machinery and personnel around the clock to rehabilitate vital routes in Gilgit-Baltistan, Kaghan, Naran, and Skardu. The rapid recovery effort has ensured the full resumption of traffic across all major arteries, particularly the KKH which links Pakistan with China's Xinjiang province.—APP

Saudi ambassador lauds  
performance of CDA

Nawaf bin Said Ahmed Al-Malki, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia reiterated his country's continued interest in supporting economic, cultural and religious ties with Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, met with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Nawaf bin Said Ahmed Al-Malki, at CDA Headquarters today. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa warmly welcomed H.E. Mr. Nawaf bin Said Ahmed Al-Malki, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia. The meeting held in a very cordial atmosphere in which matters of mutual interest including signing of MOU between CDA regarding Faisal Mosque came under discussion. Chairman CDA highlighted the deep-rooted brotherly relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, built on shared faith, friendship and mutual respect. He emphasized the special bond that exists between the people of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and reiterated CDA's commitment to further strengthen cooperation and bond with brotherly country Saudi Arabia. H.E. Mr. Nawaf bin Said Ahmed Al-Malki, Saudi Ambassador appreciated the excellent performance of CDA under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Randhawa Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad for making Islamabad most beautiful, thus evolving urban landscape and horticulture of Islamabad. He further appreciated the efforts of CDA in executing various development projects, as well as improved civic amenities and highlighted that the difference in quality



of life and beauty of Islamabad, is being felt day by day. He also appreciated CDA for making state of the art nursery thus making it Gardenia Hub.

The two sides also discussed the upcoming celebration of National Day of Saudi Arabia on September 23. Chairman CDA assured his full support for the smooth

facilitation, including necessary arrangements in collaboration with relevant authorities. H.E. Mr. Nawaf bin Said Ahmed Al-Malki, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia reiterated his country's continued interest in supporting economic, cultural and religious ties with Pakistan. Both sides also explored opportunities for collaboration in hotel industry in Islamabad. The Ambassador shared that focused meetings with potential Saudi investors of leading hotel industry are already coming to Pakistan. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa reaffirmed that Pakistan gives great respect, honour and value to its brotherly and friendly relationship with Saudi Arabia. He said Islamabad will always remain welcoming to Saudi investments and cultural exchange. He stated that it is a privilege for Islamabad city to host such partnerships. The meeting concluded with a mutual commitment to strengthen Pak-Saudi relations through joint efforts aimed at urban development, economic development and strengthening cultural and religious ties.

Pak company,  
PowerChina  
to set up joint  
R&D centre

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Power Planning and Monitoring Company (PPMC) and PowerChina has signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Joint Research and Development Centre, Gwadar Pro reported quoting PPMC. PPMC, operating under Ministry of Energy (Power Division), serves as the policy, planning, and technical arm for national electricity planning, sector analysis, and R&D coordination, it added. PowerChina, a Chinese state-owned global leader in civil infrastructure engineering, brings decades of expertise in power generation, hydropower, transmission, and global infrastructure projects, it said. The R&D Centre will focus on renewable energy technology, smart grid and infrastructure innovations, energy monitoring systems and data solutions, sustainable development and localization of energy technologies, PPMC said. This partnership combines PowerChina's international engineering expertise with the PPMC's local knowledge and vision. Together, we will foster innovation that promotes Pakistan's energy transition and strengthens infrastructure resilience. 'We look forward to sharing future developments and progress as this joint R&D centre begins its journey of research, innovation, and impact', PPMC added.—APP

IRS-BNU hold dialogue on  
building peace in South Asia

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies, (IRS) and Beaconhouse National University, (BNU) convened intellectuals and experts for a roundtable discussion on the challenges and opportunities for peace in South Asia following the military clash between Pakistan and India. Mr. Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, was the Chief Guest, and Gen. Zubair Mahmood Hayat, NI (M), Former CJCS, was the Guest of Honor. The policy dialogue was timely as Pakistan seeks a regional and global strategy to restore peace and stability disrupted by India's risky military doctrine, which escalated regional tensions to the brink of nuclear conflict. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Attaullah Tarar said that peace must be rooted in reciprocity. Pakistan has always played an active role in strengthening peace in South Asia and will continue to play a similar role in the future. However, he cautioned that Pakistan will respond to any aggression against India as it did during Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos. He added that Pakistan was fully capable to render a befitting response against any act of aggression. On Kashmir issue, he was of the opinion that the right of Kashmiris to self-determination is now a global agenda and Pakistan will continue to support this struggle steadfastly. Its resolution demands urgency, now more than ever, especially in the wake of recent war between India and Pakistan which triggered the nuclear flashpoint in this region, mainly due

to India's irresponsible behavior. Amb Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, Dr. Moeed Yusuf, VC BNU and former NSA and Director of Beaconhouse Center for Policy Research Amb. Mansoor Ahmed Khan initiated the discussion with an analysis of South Asia's security landscape following the Pahalgam incident. The participants of the dialogue included Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Mr. Khurram Dastgir Khan, Former Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs, Lt. Gen.(r) Nasser Khan Janjua, Former National Security Advisor, Lt. Gen. (r) Aamer Riaz, HI (M), Former President NDU, Admiral (r) Asif Sandila NI (M), former Naval Chief, Air Marshal (r) Saeed Muhammad Khan, former VCAS, Amb. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, Former Amb. to US, India and China, Amb. Ali Sarwar Naqvi, Executive Director, Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS), Amb. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Former Foreign Secretary, Lt. Gen. (r) Naeem Khalid Lodhi, Defence Analyst, Mr. Azfar Ahsan, Former Minister for Investment and Chairman of the Board of Investment, Amb. Shafiqat Kakakhel, Chairperson, BoG SDPI, and former UN Assistant Secretary General, Mr. Zahid Hussain, Senior Journalist, Author, Dr. Maria Sultan, Chairperson & President of the South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI), University, Dr. Huma Baqai, Rector Millennium Institute of Technology and Entrepreneurship, Former Professor at IBA, Maj. Gen. (r) Kamran Khurshid, Strategic and Security Affairs expert, Mr. Ahmer Bilal Soofi, President Research Society of International Law, & Former Federal Law Minister, and Mr. Fahd Husain, Senior Broadcast Journalist.

19th IATF meeting  
held at ANF HQs

ISLAMABAD, Jul 31 (APP):The 19th meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) was held at the IATF Secretariat, ANF Headquarters, Rawalpindi. IATF is a conglomerate of 32 federal and provincial Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) and Departments, established not only as a coordination mechanism but the embodiment of national resolve against the menace of drugs; where strategies converge, intelligence is pooled, and the operations are aligned for the maximum impact. The meeting was presided over by the Chairman IATF (DG ANF), Major General, Abdul Moeed Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military) and attended by the DG Pakistan Coast Guards Major General Jawad Riaz, DG Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) Rear Admiral Shahzad Iqbal SI(M), Additional Inspector General of Police KP, Muhammad Ali Babakhel and senior representatives from other federal and provincial departments. Major General Abdul Moeed, in his opening remarks, underscored the value of synergistic and synchronous employment of IATF members in their fight against drugs. Secretary IATF Brigadier, Syed Imran Ali, apprised the forum with the narco-threat dynamics, response paradigm,

and the challenges being confronted in combating drug crimes. The presentation by Director Enforcement ANF was followed by meaningful discussions on this year's agenda points for the meeting including deliberation on evolving narcotics and precursors trends with focus on increasing use of synthetic drugs particularly Methamphetamine (Ice), Counter narcotics campaign centered around education institutes (EIs) for 2025-26, Coordination and synchronization for poppy eradication campaign (PEC)-2025-26, Inter-agency information sharing, strategic coordination, joint operations and training among relevant LEAs/departments, Refinement of joint operational framework and signing of MoUs to bolster institutional coordination among the members. In his closing remarks, the Chairman IATF (DG ANF), Major General Abdul Moeed, thanked all the participants for their participation and valuable contributions. The Chairman IATF emphasized that the success of the IATF forum lies not only in the quality of the dialogue among the members but in the effective implementation of mutually agreed actions. He urged all the stakeholders to stay engaged beyond this meeting and to continue fostering a culture of real-time collaboration.—DNA

Vietnam, Pak soon to  
finalize bilateral PTA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan, Pham Anh Tuan, on Thursday said that Vietnam and Pakistan have agreed to consider the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) as a strategic step for creating a stable legal basis to expand market access, reduce tariffs. After finalization of bilateral PTA, both sides are to facilitate bilateral trade and investment to move towards a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in the future, Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan, Pham Anh Tuan, told APP in an exclusive interview here. The Vietnamese envoy said that the 5th Meeting of the Pakistan-Vietnam Joint Trade Committee (JTC) held in Hanoi on July 11, 2025, marked a pivotal achievement in our bilateral relations. Vietnam officially submitted the draft of PTA on July 8, 2025, with a list of more than 80 key export items requesting Pakistan to consider reducing the tariff rate to 0-5 percent and Pakistan welcomed Vietnam's initiative and pledged to soon study and respond to conduct negotiations in 2025, he said. The Ambassador said the reactivation of the Joint Trade Committee after eight years represents a strategic reset in our bilateral economic relationship, and this institutional forum serves as the cornerstone for systematic cooperation and provides a structured mechanism for regular dialogue. The results of the sessions include, 5th meeting of the Pakistan-Vietnam JTC the two sides acknowledged the results achieved in exchanging business delegations, organizing fairs and exhibitions, he said. The envoy said that in the meeting, Vietnam required Pakistan to create more favorable conditions for Vietnamese enterprises to participate in trade promotion activities in Pakistan, and invited Pakistan to attend major events in Vietnam such as Saigontex, Hanoitex, SaigonFabric, and HanoiFabric. In return, Pakistan also invited Vietnam to participate in TEXPO, HEMS and FoodAg. He said that Vietnam highly appreciates Pakistan as the 14th largest fiber supplier to Vietnam, and wishes to expand the import of cotton, fabric and raw materials from Pakistan to serve the export textile and garment industry. To promote Aquaculture cooperation, he said that although pangasius (Fish) fillets account for 98% of Vietnam's seafood exports to Pakistan, the two sides agreed to consider removing barriers, limited logistics and competition from other countries. Vietnam asked Pakistan to consider removing technical barriers, simplifying administrative procedures, and reducing import taxes on Vietnam's key products such as pangasius, pepper and tea, he said. On the halal trade development, he said the two sides will strengthen technical cooperation in the Halal field, especially in product inspection and certification and towards mutual recognition of Halal certification. In addition, he said the two sides also discussed the potential for cooperation in other areas such as aviation, finance-banking, healthcare, human resource development and visa facilitation. On the opportunities for bilateral trade and investment, he said the opportunities for enhanced bilateral trade and investment are multifaceted and substantial.—DNA

Yunnan, Southwest China-coffee  
adds new note to global coffee map

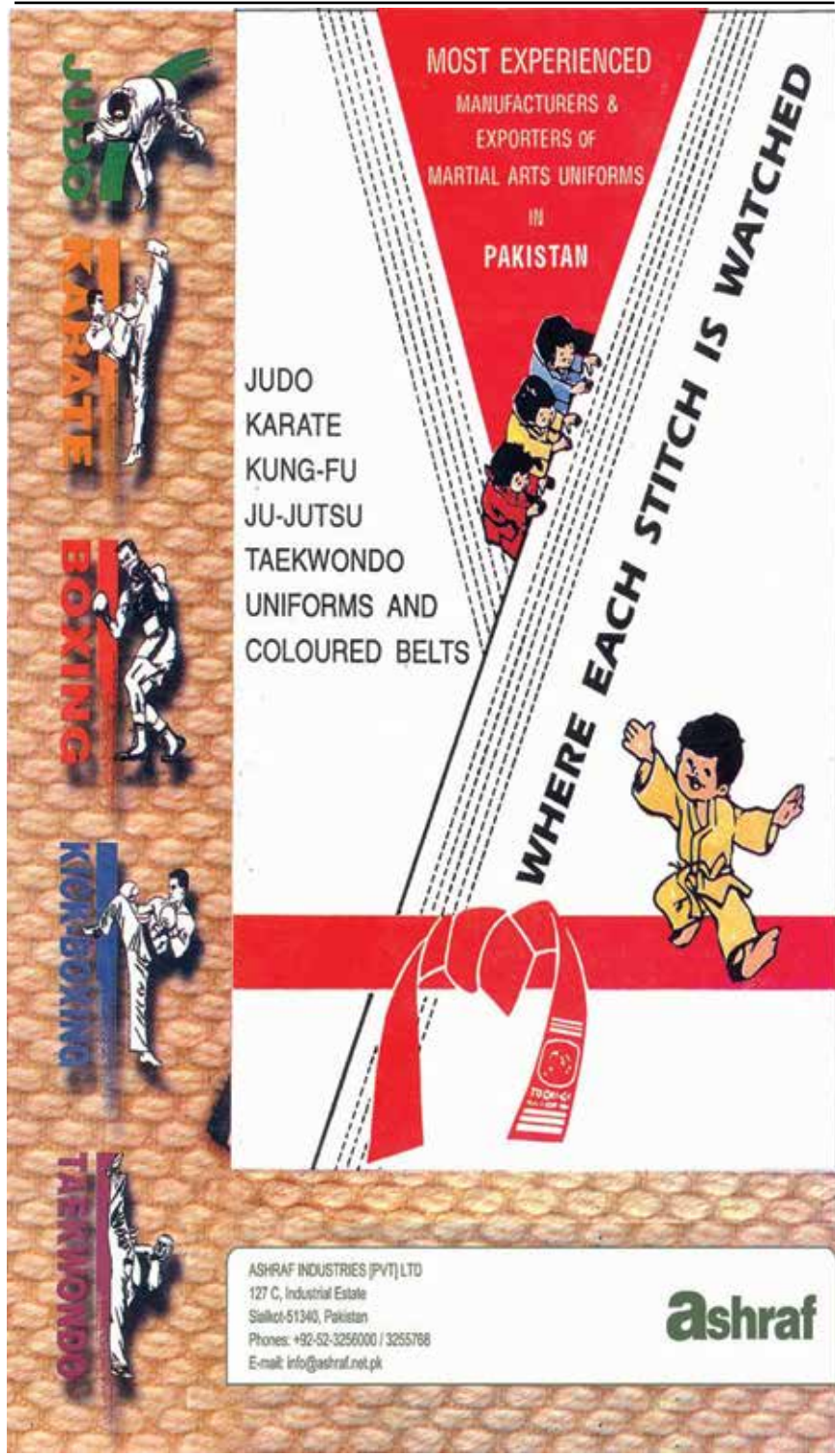
DNA

ISLAMABAD: Each cup of coffee carries the essence of its birthplace - Brazil's bold richness, Jamaica's vibrant brightness, and Ethiopia's delicate freshness. Now, Yunnan, in southwest China, is adding a new chapter to this global narrative, offering a distinctly Chinese flavor that is gaining recognition on the world stage. Held in Yunnan's Baoshan, the competition marked a milestone: for the first time, a CoB-related competition was hosted in Yunnan. Out of 144 entries, 19 coffee samples received scores above 87 points - qualifying them as world-class - following rigorous blind tasting by international judges. The top-scoring beans, grown in Yunnan's Lincang, fetched a record 13,000 yuan (\$1,813.65) per kilogram at auction, setting a new benchmark for Chinese coffee sales. More importantly, the competition placed the province into the purview of one of the world's most authoritative coffee

evaluation systems, signaling its transformation from a raw material supplier into a standard-setter in the global coffee sector. Founded in Brazil in 1999, the CoE has reshaped the coffee industry by combining competition with transparent auction mechanisms. Information about bean variety, processing methods, pricing, and producers is made publicly available, setting new benchmarks for traceability and quality. During the competition, each carefully selected coffee underwent an rigorous evaluation: roasting, grinding, weighing, and on-site brewing, followed by multiple cupping sessions. A panel of over a dozen professional judges evaluated each sample on cleanliness, sweetness, acidity, mouthfeel, and flavor complexity. A Brazilian farmer named Oliveira, whose beans scored an impressive 90 points, could barely contain his excitement. Over the past two decades, CoE competitions have been hosted in more than ten countries, spotlighting emerging producers in Honduras and Costa Rica. This

has expanded the global map of valued coffee-producing regions, raising both quality standards and farmer incomes. Producing high-quality coffee requires a combination of ideal natural conditions and painstaking cultivation. The best coffee regions are typically mountainous at elevations above 1,000 meters, with marked differences between day and night temperatures and clearly defined wet and dry seasons - conditions that also pose greater challenges and management costs. Yunnan, located in the global golden belt for coffee cultivation, boasts a coffee-growing history of over a century and now produces 98 percent of China's total coffee output. Recent advancements in variety improvement, standardized farming practices, and processing technologies have propelled Yunnan forward: the proportion of specialty-grade beans rose from 40 percent in 2022 to 70 percent in 2024, while deep processing rates jumped from 60 percent to 85 percent. These traits have helped turn Yunnan coffee into a byword for premi-

um quality. Coffee, as a global commodity, embodies the convergence of civilizations across continents. In China, its popularity has surged in recent years. Shanghai has overtaken New York and London to become a city with the highest number of coffee shops in the world. Among younger generations, coffee drinking has become both a social ritual and a lifestyle symbol. This cultural adaptation reflects a broader ethos in Chinese civilization: the principle of harmony without uniformity, an openness to global influences, seamlessly woven into a distinctively Chinese context. Yunnan's emergence on the global coffee stage offers the world a new flavor - literally and figuratively - through which to experience China's diversity and openness. Looking ahead, Yunnan is poised to further strengthen its role in the global coffee industry by enhancing cultivation techniques, expanding markets, building brands, and fostering innovation across the supply chain, establishing a virtuous cycle where quality begets value.





## The future of US-India relations

THE recent decision by the United States to impose a 25% tariff on select Indian imports, including steel, aluminum, and other key products, has sparked concerns over the future of bilateral relations between the two nations. While the U.S. justifies these tariffs as necessary to protect its domestic industries, India views them as an unfair trade barrier that could strain economic and strategic ties. As both countries navigate this contentious phase, the long-term trajectory of their partnership—spanning trade, defense, and geopolitical cooperation—hangs in the balance. The immediate impact of these tariffs will be felt by Indian exporters, particularly in the metals sector, which has been a significant contributor to India's trade with the U.S. India may respond with retaliatory tariffs, as it has done in the past, targeting American agricultural and manufacturing goods. Such tit-for-tat measures could escalate into a full-blown trade dispute, disrupting the \$190 billion bilateral trade relationship. However, both nations have too much at stake to let trade tensions derail their broader partnership. The U.S. sees India as a critical counterweight to China in the Indo-Pacific, while India relies on American technology, investment, and defense cooperation. Over time, the two sides may seek negotiations to de-escalate tensions, possibly through a limited trade deal that addresses American concerns while offering India concessions in other sectors. Despite economic friction, the U.S. and India share deep strategic interests, particularly in defense and technology. The two countries have strengthened military ties through agreements like the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) and the Indo-Pacific Quad alliance with Japan and Australia. The U.S. remains a top arms supplier to India, and collaboration in emerging technologies—such as semiconductors, AI, and clean energy—continues to grow. Given these strategic imperatives, both Washington and New Delhi are likely to compartmentalize trade disputes while reinforcing defense and tech partnerships. However, if tariffs persist without resolution, they could gradually erode goodwill, making India more inclined to diversify its alliances—potentially deepening ties with Europe, Russia, or even China in certain sectors. In the U.S., trade protectionism enjoys bipartisan support, meaning any administration—whether Democratic or Republican—may uphold tough tariffs to appease domestic industries. Meanwhile, India, facing its own economic pressures, cannot afford to appear weak in trade negotiations. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, especially after securing a third term, will likely push back against what it perceives as unfair U.S. trade practices. Moreover, both nations should focus on areas of mutual benefit, such as supply chain resilience, defense manufacturing, and green technology collaboration. If managed wisely, trade tensions could even push the two countries toward deeper economic integration in high-tech and strategic sectors, reducing dependency on adversarial nations like China.

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## A fragile hope for peace in Ukraine

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin's recent announcement expressing willingness to engage in dialogue with Ukraine marks a significant moment in the ongoing war. After more than two years of brutal conflict, the Kremlin's indication that it may be open to negotiation offers a glimmer of hope for a war-weary region and a concerned international community. Yet, this potential shift towards diplomacy comes with a caveat — there is still no confirmed date or framework for a ceasefire, casting doubt over the sincerity and immediacy of this overture. Equally important is the response from Kyiv. Ukrainian leadership has shown readiness to participate in talks and has voiced support for a cessation of hostilities. President Volodymyr Zelensky and his administration have consistently maintained that peace must be achieved through meaningful dialogue, though not at the cost of Ukraine's sovereignty or territorial integrity. The current posture from both sides suggests that diplomacy, long overshadowed by guns and missiles, may once again be on the table. However, optimism must be tempered by caution. Russia's previous signals toward diplomacy have often been contradicted by actions on the ground. The lack of a declared ceasefire or even a date for beginning talks makes it difficult to assess how serious Moscow truly is about ending the conflict. Without a concrete timeline or conditions, the announcement risks being little more than a political maneuver to relieve international pressure or manipulate the narrative ahead of global summits. For Ukraine, the stakes are equally high. Any negotiations must ensure that the sacrifices of its people are not in vain and that peace does not come at the cost of unjust concessions. Ukraine's insistence on a full withdrawal of Russian forces and the restoration of its territorial boundaries remains central to any future settlement. The international community must play a constructive role in this critical moment. Western powers, including the EU and the U.S., should encourage dialogue while also ensuring that any peace process is grounded in international law and justice. Neutral countries and international organizations such as the UN could help broker and monitor discussions to ensure transparency and fairness. In conclusion, while Putin's announcement and Ukraine's willingness to engage in dialogue represent a step away from confrontation, peace remains elusive until both sides commit to an immediate and verifiable ceasefire. Words alone cannot end wars — only actions can. The world watches and waits, hoping that this moment marks the beginning of the end of a devastating chapter in European history.

# Trump's Trade Triumph, Europe's Strategic Liberation

Qamar Bashir



This shift is not symbolic—it is structural. By agreeing to one-sided economic terms, Europe has secured the room to walk its own path in diplomacy, human rights, and foreign policy. That freedom has already begun to manifest. Several EU states have either recognized or pledged to recognize the State of Palestine. France's President Emmanuel Macron announced that his government will formally support Palestinian statehood at the United Nations General Assembly, directly contradicting Washington's position

DONALD Trump may have returned from Scotland declaring a sweeping economic triumph, but it is Europe that came away with something far more valuable: the right to think and act freely. Beneath the glittering headlines of tariff eliminations and multi-billion-dollar commitments, the summit at Turnberry marked the quiet collapse of U.S. geopolitical dominance over its allies. While Trump boasted of \$750 billion in energy exports, \$600 billion in European investment, and unspecified billions in future military hardware sales, the European Union and the United Kingdom handed him economic satisfaction in exchange for something they had long been denied—independence from American-Israeli coercion. This shift is not symbolic—it is structural. By agreeing to one-sided economic terms, Europe has secured the room to walk its own path in diplomacy, human rights, and foreign policy. That freedom has already begun to manifest. Several EU states have either recognized or pledged to recognize the State of Palestine. France's President Emmanuel Macron announced that his government will formally support Palestinian statehood at the United Nations General Assembly, directly contradicting Washington's position. Europe's newfound voice is no longer an accident. It is the result of a deliberate decision to exchange financial concessions for moral autonomy. But to understand this pivot, one must also confront a darker, deeper truth about the state of U.S. leadership. The unwavering support that American presidents, congressmen, and cabinet officials give to Israel—despite its brutal military operations in Gaza and the West Bank—is not merely ideological. It is, increasingly, understood by European circles as coerced compliance. According to well-placed intelligence disclosures and political whispers, Israeli intelligence agencies, including Mossad, have accumulated irrefutable evidence—videos, photographs, and documentation—of sexual misconduct involving underage girls by senior U.S. officials, including Donald Trump himself. These materials, long held in classified archives, serve as a tool of total control. In this light, the blind repetition of Israeli talking points by American leaders is no longer confusing—it is revealing. When Netanyahu claims that Hamas is responsible for civilian deaths, or that Israel is feeding Palestinians while Hamas steals and starves them, U.S. officials recite the narrative without

question, despite overwhelming global evidence to the contrary. Trump's own declaration that "we're going to finish the job in Gaza and the West Bank" was not a defense of policy—it was a scripted line passed down from Tel Aviv. The absurdity of the narrative—where a heavily bombed, blockaded civilian population continues to "fool the world" while under total Israeli surveillance—is so farcical it can only persist through fear and blackmail. European leaders now understand this. And they have drawn a line. Their populations, increasingly educated, conscious, and defiant, no longer tolerate their governments being accomplices to genocide. Informed by alternative media, global witness reports, and humanitarian voices, European societies are demanding truth and accountability. The recognition of Palestine is not just a political gesture—it is a moral revolt against the rotting credibility of American leadership, compromised at its core. This is why Europe no longer aligns blindly with U.S. foreign policy. The old days—when Washington led and Brussels followed—are over. From Iraq to Libya to Lebanon, Europe has seen what blind obedience to U.S. militarism leads to: collapsed states, radicalized populations, and endless suffering. Now, even as they feed American economic interests through trade and investment, European governments are decoupling from Washington's destructive geopolitical agenda. Trump's trade agreement has made this detachment possible. By eliminating tariffs on key U.S. products and offering a guaranteed market for American energy and weapons, Europe has bought the right to dissent. They gave Trump what he wanted—money, markets, and a photo op—in order to free themselves from decades of ideological and military subjugation. This is the essence of the new transatlantic dynamic: pay to walk away. And it could not come at a more urgent time. Over 70,000 Palestinians—mostly civilians, including women and children—have died in Gaza. The West Bank is being annexed inch by inch under the fog of war. Snipers, starvation tactics, and displacement policies have become the Israeli tools of ethnic cleansing, while the United States stands not as an observer, but as a partner. Aid convoys are blocked, journalists are silenced, and the world's conscience is shaken. Yet Trump and the Washington elite cling

to the claim that it is Hamas stealing the aid, killing their own people, and using children as human shields. This grotesque inversion of reality is not a miscalculation. It is the price of silence paid by those whose secrets are buried in Israeli vaults. For Europe, this recognition has become a turning point. The realization that the most powerful nation on Earth is being manipulated by a foreign government through political blackmail has shattered the myth of American moral leadership. The EU and UK now see that siding with the United States means inheriting its shame. Instead, they have chosen to distance themselves—not in anger, but in survival. Even Britain, once Washington's closest ally, is showing signs of divergence. Parliamentarians across the spectrum are calling for investigations into Israeli war crimes and for halting arms shipments. What was once unthinkable is now politically inevitable. Across Europe, the tide is turning—from Stockholm to Madrid, from Berlin to Dublin. This is not just political evolution. It is moral resurrection. Europe has realized that being allied with the United States no longer means standing with freedom, justice, or truth. It means endorsing genocide, shielding war criminals, and being complicit in the slow, deliberate erasure of a people. The trade agreement, as one-sided as it may appear on paper, has become Europe's ticket to redemption. Trump will parade the deal as a win for American exporters, energy giants, and defense contractors. And indeed, U.S. goods will now flood European markets. American military hardware will find new buyers in EU defense ministries. Liquefied natural gas will power European homes. But what America has lost in the process—its ability to command respect, to dictate values, to lead with integrity—is far greater than any tariff gain. Europe has not just exited America's economic orbit—it has escaped its moral vacuum. And in doing so, it has emerged not weaker, but stronger, not as a junior partner, but as a sovereign collective. This is not the end of the alliance. It is the beginning of a new, equal relationship—one where truth is not blackmailed, where justice is not bartered, and where freedom is no longer for sale.

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

# The mental health gap in Pakistani higher education

Eman Qadeer

The difference was stark. Mental health wasn't an afterthought at Manchester; rather, it was ingrained in the situation. Academic accommodations, peer support, mindfulness training, and counselling services weren't discussed in private. They were rather offered as part of the structure, without any shame. In contrast, during my undergraduate degree in Pakistan, mental health was never part of the academic conversation. There were no counselling offices, no workshops, and no trained support staff

I ARRIVED at my university accommodation in Manchester, filled with ambition but silently grappling with self-doubt, I was greeted by a welcome envelope thoughtfully seated on the desk. Inside were the usual essentials – maps, food delivery options, transport guidance. But tucked between them was something I hadn't expected: a flyer on mental health services. It struck me as odd. Mental health? In a welcome pack? I didn't think much of it. After all, I had never been taught to give such things attention. Where I came from, mental health was invisible – rarely acknowledged. So I set the flyer aside and got on with unpacking. The next day, at the introductory session with our course directors, we went over the program structure, module choices, and assessment timelines. However, one unexpected thing that stuck with me the most was a professor reminding us that we could take a break, pause the degree, get help, and return when we are ready, if ever faced personal challenges. "There's no point pushing through if you're not mentally well," he said. "It affects your performance, and your results". That moment took me back in time. During my undergraduate years in Pakistan, I once sat through an entire exam season in a deeply distressed mental state. I wasn't in any shape to focus, but I had no choice. There was no one to talk to, no system that recognised what I was going through. Because mental health wasn't visible, it didn't count. The difference was stark. Mental health wasn't an afterthought at Manchester; rather, it was ingrained in the situation. Academic accommodations, peer support, mindfulness training, and counselling services weren't discussed in private. They were rather offered as part of the structure, without any shame. In contrast, during my undergraduate degree in Pakistan, mental health was never part of the academic conversation. There were no counselling offices, no workshops, and no trained support staff. If someone was

struggling, they had to either push through silently or quietly drop out. There was no formal channel to ask help, and worse, there was often stigma if anyone did. It wasn't that people didn't care. Many professors were kind and supportive – but only in an academic sense. Emotional well-being simply wasn't seen as part of the university's responsibility. Silence was the norm. You were expected to manage it on your own. The culture surrounding mental health at the University of Manchester was completely different. It was not only recognised but also carefully anticipated. Faculty members received training on how to have open discussions about mental health, and students were encouraged to speak up without fear of being judged. There were awareness-raising posters in the residence halls and all over campus. A free, anonymous hotline that was open around-the-clock allowed students to speak with a counsellor whenever they wanted. During exam season, workshops on breathing techniques and anxiety management were conducted, and supportive messages were distributed. Furthermore, students could also ask for deadline extensions based on their mental health. Additionally, access to the SafeZone mobile application offered peace of mind by allowing students to easily reach out to mental health services – whether to browse support resources, book an appointment, speak with a counsellor, or report a concern. The overall goal was clear: to create a safe space and supportive environment where students could prioritise their well-being without fear or stigma. The comparison made me think about how many students in Pakistan might be slipping through the cracks – not because they lack intelligence or ambition, but because they are fighting invisible battles with no support. The emotional toll is high because of the combined weight of family pressure, financial strain, and academic competition. However, students are left on their own in the absence of regulations, and qualified experts.

The adage failing to plan is planning to fail is painfully accurate in this situation. Higher education institutions are not only failing to support their students, but also contributing to their mental breakdown if they do not have a proactive, structured approach to mental health. I am not suggesting Pakistan should copy the UK model in every aspect. However, there are valuable lessons to be learnt. Meaningful change doesn't have to be drastic. Small steps can be taken first, such as hiring counsellors, conducting workshops on mental health, normalising classroom discussions and allowing for flexibility when students actually need it. Although I received good grades for both of my degrees, the atmosphere that characterised my postgraduate degree experience was one that valued openness, inclusivity, and sincere support for mental health. I didn't completely understand the significant influence that such an environment can have on student's overall experience until I relocated overseas for my higher education. Unfortunately, because a small fraction of the students have this opportunity to study abroad, the majority of the students back home never get to see this difference. This striking disparity emphasises the urgent need to rethink the educational landscape in our country in order to establish inclusive, academically demanding environments that also take into account the student's mental health and general well-being. Academic progress is not the only goal of university. It's a place where students develop their identities, take chances, and deal with pressure. We owe it to them to ensure that mental health is taken into consideration.

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## Briefs

## Shibli, Ayub sentenced to 10 years each

FROM PAGE 01  
In its verdict, the special ATC sentenced 108 people of the total 185 accused, which also includes Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) chief MNA Sahibzada Hamid Raza, who has been handed 10 years imprisonment. However, Fawad Chaudhry and Zain Qureshi were acquitted, highlighting what critics call a selective application of justice. In the second case registered at the Civil Lines Police Station, the anti-terrorism court sentenced 28 out of the 32 accused and acquitted four individuals. A total of 107 people were named in the case, of which 32 were tried. Among those acquitted are Fawad Chaudhry, Zain Qureshi and Khayal Kastro. In another case related to the May 9 violence registered at Ghulam Muhammadabad Police Station, the court sentenced 60 individuals, while seven of the 67 accused were acquitted.

## Tarar welcomes court's...

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He described May 9 as one of the darkest days in the nation's history. He pointed out that acts of vandalism were committed at the offices of defense institutions in Faisalabad and today's verdict is a moment of justice and a victory for the country's legal system. The Minister remarked that those who believed they were above the law and could carry out such attacks without consequences have now been proven wrong. He said that after these sentences, no one will dare strengthen the enemy's hand. Attaullah Tarar highlighted that every word and action of the perpetrators was captured on camera. It is now absolutely clear that the mastermind behind the May 9 incidents is behind bars.

## Pakistan launches remote...

FROM PAGE 01  
highlights the strong technological partnership between Pakistan and China. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar praised the joint efforts of scientists and engineers from both countries, calling the mission a testament to innovation and international cooperation. This milestone aligns with Pakistan's vision for a technologically advanced future, leveraging space technology for socio-economic progress. With enhanced satellite imaging, the country is now better equipped to tackle challenges like deforestation, climate change, and infrastructure development.

## PM Shehbaz hails launch of satellite

FROM PAGE 01  
the betterment of humanity," the Prime Minister said in a statement. The Prime Minister emphasized that the newly launched satellite will bring wide-ranging benefits, particularly for CPEC. It is expected to play a vital role in areas such as agriculture, urban planning, disaster management, environmental monitoring, and the mapping of transportation and infrastructure networks.

## Gen Sahir calls on...

FROM PAGE 01  
Suez Canal Authority and His Eminence Professor Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Ahmed El-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar. Discussions focused on bilateral military cooperation, security, counter-terrorism and prevailing regional situation. Dignitaries from both sides emphasized upon the shared interest in further strengthening and expanding existing military-to-military relationship in the domains of training, joint military exercises and defence cooperation. While interacting with His Eminence Professor Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Ahmed El-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, CJSC highlighted the importance of religious and interfaith harmony to promote tolerance, inclusivity and address underlying causes of terrorism.

## Pak advance to WCL final after India's withdrawal

*Pakistan to face either South Africa or Australia in final on August 2*

## SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The withdrawal of India Champions from semi-final clash led Pakistan Champions' advancement to the World Championship of Legends (WCL) 2025 final, the tournament organisers confirmed on Wednesday. The defending champions, who pulled out of their high-octane against Pakistan Champions earlier in the tournament, earned a miraculous qualification

into the semi-finals by comprehensively defeating West Indies Champions which powered them past England Champions due to a superior net run rate. India Champions, as a result, finished fourth in the standings, setting up a blockbuster semi-final with arch-rivals Pakistan Champions, who finished at the top of the standings with nine points in five matches. However, soon after the matchup was confirmed, the uncertainty continued to jeopardise the blockbuster clash, caused due to

India Champions' reported refusal to partake in the fixture. Meanwhile, as per the latest development, the WCL has confirmed the abandonment of the clash due to India Champions' withdrawal, citing public sentiment. Since the Pakistan Champions were ready to compete, they have now advanced to the final, where they will face winner of the second semi-final on Saturday. "At WCL, we have always believed in the power of sport to inspire and bring about positive change in the world," the cricket

league said in a statement. "However, public sentiment must always be respected after all, everything we do is for our audience. "We respect the India Champions' decision to withdraw from the semi-finals, and we equally respect the Pakistan Champions' readiness to compete. "Taking all factors into consideration, the match between the India Champions and the Pakistan Champions has been called off. "As a result, Pakistan Champions will advance to the final," it concluded.

## England and India set for final push in gripping Test series

LONDON: Both England and India are set to field new-look teams when the decisive fifth and final Test of an enthralling, gruelling, and often spiky series gets underway at the Oval on Thursday. England confirmed Wednesday they will be without captain Ben Stokes after the inspirational all-rounder was ruled out with a shoulder injury – a huge blow to the hosts. In last week's drawn fourth match at Old Trafford, which preserved his side's 2-1 series lead, Stokes became just the fourth England cricketer to score a century and take five wickets in the same Test. The 34-year-old is also the leading wicket-taker on either side, with 17 wickets at 25.23, while sending down 140 overs – the most the lively seamer has delivered in any series. "I am obviously disappointed to not be able to finish the series," an emotional Stokes told reporters on Wednesday, adding: "Bowling was ruled out as soon as we got the scan results." England, in an exhausting

schedule of five Test in under seven weeks, have made four changes to their side at the Oval. Spin-bowling all-rounder Jacob Bethell makes his first Test appearance of 2025, effectively as a replacement for Stokes. Pacemen Josh

bowler would only feature in three games during the current series. The world's top-ranked Test bowler made his third appearance at Old Trafford and has little time to recover after bowling a draining 33 overs, during which he



Tongue, Gus Atkinson and Jamie Overton all come into the team, with Jofra Archer and Brydon Carse rested. Liam Dawson has been dropped, with England opting against deploying a specialist spinner. India, meanwhile, have still to confirm if Jasprit Bumrah will play at the Oval. Bumrah's back injury earlier this year prompted India to announce the fast

took two wickets and conceded 100 runs for the first time in a Test innings. "We are going to take a decision tomorrow (Thursday)," India captain Shubman Gill said Wednesday. "The wicket looks pretty green. So, we will see how it turns out." India are set to recall Akash Deep, who took 10 wickets in Bumrah's absence during India's 336-run win in the second Test

## Fritz beats rain, Carballes Baena, to advance in Toronto

TORONTO: Second-seeded Taylor Fritz struggled with three rain delays and a stubborn Spanish opponent on Wednesday, pulling out a tight 7-5, 7-6 (7/1) win over Roberto Carballes Baena at the ATP Toronto Masters. The second-round match was halted repeatedly by light rain, with the final 18-minute pause coming just as the second-set tiebreaker was about to start. But Fritz, winner of Stuttgart and Eastbourne titles this season, quickly sprinted to victory before heavier rains were expected to set in. The American was far from pleased with a win which was marred by 45 unforced errors and confessed that he has not yet felt on his game in Canada. "Even in practice I'm having a hard time putting the ball into the court," he said. "But I'm happy to get through this one. "Everything is not feeling great, it's tough to control the ball. "Since I've been here it's been absolutely brutal. But I have another match to figure it out and hopefully I can play myself into the tournament." Fritz's fourth-seeded compatriot Ben Shelton had no complaints after earning his first career win over gritty Frenchman Adrian Mannarino 6-2, 6-3. Shelton had dropped two prior meetings with 37-year-old qualifier Mannarino but said he was able to vary his serve to get over the line this time. "This win was huge for me. He's a shot-maker, he can take the racquet out of your hands," Shelton said. "I've played well against him in the past and come up short, he can make things really difficult." -American Frances Tiafoe squeezed out a win after more than two and a quarter hours against Japan's Yosuke Watanuki, hailing his opponent's fighting spirit after a 1-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7/5) triumph. "He can hit a winner on any shot," Tiafoe said. "I needed some luck in those last two sets to win." Tiafoe managed just 19 winners to the 45 of his 158th-ranked foe, but now lines up against Australian Aleksandar Vukic, who defeated Briton Cam Norrie 6-3, 6-7 (2/7), 6-3. Andrey Rublev, runner-up in Canada a year ago to Alexei Popyrin, won his 250th career match on hardcourt as he beat France's Hugo Gaston 6-2, 6-3. -Agencies

## German Olympic champion dies

*"Despite tireless efforts by the local rescue teams, persistent adverse weather severely hampered rescue operations," he added. Dahlmeier, 31, who also won the 2017 women's biathlon World Cup, was seriously injured after being hit by falling rocks while climbing Laila Peak at an altitude of around 5,700 meters (18,700 feet) in the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) region, which borders neighboring China*

BAKU: A German mountaineer and Olympic gold medalist, who was injured while attempting to scale a peak in northern Pakistan, has been confirmed dead, Anadolu Agency reported citing an official. Laura Dahlmeier was injured and stranded while attempting to scale Laila Peak in the Karakoram mountain range on Monday. "German Olympic champion Laura Dahlmeier was confirmed dead on Wednesday after a tragic mountaineering accident in the high mountains of Pakistan," said Karrar Haidri, vice president of the Alpine Club of Pakistan, the country's official mountaineering body, in a statement. "Despite tireless efforts by the local rescue teams, persistent adverse weather severely hampered rescue operations," he added. Dahlmeier, 31, who also won the 2017 women's biathlon World Cup, was seriously injured after being hit by falling rocks while climbing Laila Peak at an altitude of around 5,700 meters (18,700 feet) in the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) region, which borders neighboring China. Her climbing partner, Marina Eva, remained unhurt and managed to successfully descend to base camp on Tuesday with help from local rescuers. The northern GB region is home to five of the 14 peaks above 8,000m (26,246 ft), including K2, where mountaineering accidents are not rare. - Agencies

## Swiatek cruises, Osaka battles, Bouchard says goodbye in Montreal

Switzerland's Belinda Bencic sent Bouchard into retirement with a 6-2, 3-6, 6-4 victory – but not before the Canadian thrilled her hometown fans by seizing an early break in the third set

MONTREAL: Wimbledon champion Iga Swiatek cruised, Naomi Osaka battled through and Canadian Eugenie Bouchard called time on her WTA career with a gutsy second-round loss in Montreal on Wednesday. Switzerland's Belinda Bencic sent Bouchard into retirement with a 6-2, 3-6, 6-4 victory – but not before the Canadian thrilled her hometown fans by seizing an early break in the third set. Spectators were on their feet, trying to will Bouchard to another victory on the heels of her first-round triumph on Monday – her first WTA win since 2023. But Bencic won five of the last six games to vanquish Bouchard, who had announced earlier in July she would retire after a final appearance in her home tournament. "I think it's so special to play my last match here in Montreal on this court in front of you guys," a teary Bouchard said as she was honored on court after the match. "I remember being a little kid sitting in these stands, hoping and dreaming that I would play on this court one day. "I grew up playing on these courts, and courts all around Montreal and near here, so it feels like such a full circle moment to finish my career here." Bouchard, who rose as high as fifth in the world rankings, shot to prominence in 2014 when she reached the Wimbledon final and made semi-final runs at the Australian and French Opens. But her career was hindered by injuries, including a concussion suffered in a locker room slip at the 2015 US Open and a shoulder injury that required surgery in 2021. There was no drama for Poland's Swiatek, who breezed past Chinese qualifier

Guo Hanyu 6-3, 6-1 in her first match since her crushing victory over Amanda Anisimova in the Wimbledon final. Swiatek, seeded second, broke Guo's serve six times to book her spot in the third round. It was much harder going for Japan's four-time Grand Slam champion Osaka, who saved two match points in a 4-6, 7-6 (8/6) 6-3 triumph over Liudmila Samsonova. Osaka, now working with Tomasz Wiktorowski after announcing on Monday she had split with coach Patrick Mouratoglou, surrendered early breaks in each of the first two sets. Wimbledon quarter-finalist Samsonova served for the match at 5-4 in the second and led 40-15. The Russian fired a forehand long on her first match point and on her second a lackluster drop shot effort gave Osaka an opening and the Japanese star pounced. Samsonova's double fault on break point allowed Osaka to level the set, and after storming back from 5-2 down in the tiebreaker to force a third set Osaka took control early, breaking Samsonova twice on the way to a 4-1 lead. "She definitely came out really hard and, for me, I was definitely overwhelmed and I didn't know if I should also be hitting winners," Osaka said. "After a while I just tried to keep the ball in court." Jessica Pegula, the two-time defending champion and third seed, saved five set points in the opening set on the way to a 7-5, 6-4 victory over Maria Sakkari of Greece. Australian Open champion Madison Keys, the sixth seed, opened her campaign with a 6-2, 6-1 victory over Laura Siegemund, avenging a third-round loss to the German at Wimbledon. - APP

## PTF Launches First-Ever Pakistan Tennis League

*"The junior development program is already producing positive results," he said, highlighting that national Under-14 team recently defeated arch-rival India in Sri Lanka*

## ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark move to elevate Pakistan's standing on the global sports stage, the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) has announced the launch of the country's first-ever Pakistan Tennis League (PTL). The initiative aims to promote the nation's soft image while nurturing world-class tennis talent. The announcement was made by PTF President Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi during a "Meet the Press" session organized by the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Sports Journalists Association (RISJA), presided over by RISJA President Abubakar bin Talat. Aisam expressed confidence that the inaugural league would become one of the finest in the world, adding that top international tennis players will be invited to Pakistan to help enhance its image globally. He emphasized that the PTF is placing strong focus on developing young talent to represent Pakistan at the highest levels. "The junior development program is already producing positive results," he said, highlighting that the national Under-14 team recently defeated arch-rival India in Sri Lanka. "This year alone, we have awarded wild cards to 21 players for international events," he added. Aisam also shared that PTF is working on improving its structural framework in preparation for the league. He noted that during a meeting with the President of the International Tennis Federation (ITF), discussions were held regarding the future of tennis in Pakistan, which he described as

"bright." He expressed gratitude to Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi for his continued support of tennis development in the country. Aisam also revealed plans to construct new tennis courts in Islamabad in collaboration with the Capital Development Authority (CDA), including efforts to develop indoor facilities.

In response to a question, he confirmed that the national squad for the Davis Cup tie against Paraguay in September has been finalized. The team includes Muzammil Murtaza, Aqeel Khan, Huzaifa Abdul Rehman, Aisam-ul-Haq, and Mikaeel Ali Baig. Before traveling to Paraguay, the team will undergo a five-day training camp in Turkey,

followed by a preparatory camp in Islamabad. Aisam also addressed criticism directed at the federation, saying that while some elements are spreading baseless propaganda, the PTF remains open to constructive feedback. On the occasion, RISJA pledged its full support for the growth and promotion of tennis in Pakistan.



## India seeks Pakistan's return to...

FROM PAGE 01  
against Pakistan, particularly highlighting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a region gravely affected by terrorism and militancy. Pakistan was taken off the FATF grey list in 2022, giving it a clean bill of health on terrorist financing and boosting its reputation among lenders – essential for Pakistan's crisis-hit economy. The FATF's grey list – in which Pakistan was placed from 2018-2022 – places a country under increased monitoring until it has rectified identified flaws in its financial system.

## Indian state refiners 'pause'...

FROM PAGE 01  
familiar with the refiners' purchase plans told Reuters. IOC, BPCL, HPCL, MRPL and the federal oil ministry did not immediately respond to Reuters' requests for comment. The four refiners regularly buy Russian oil on a delivered basis and have turned to spot markets for replacement supply – mostly Middle Eastern grades such as Abu Dhabi's Murban crude and West African oil, sources said.

## PM Shehbaz thanks Trump...

FROM PAGE 01  
US President Trump announced on his Truth Social account, "We have just concluded a Deal with the Country of Pakistan, whereby Pakistan and the United States will work together on developing their massive Oil Reserves. We are in the process of choosing the Oil Company that will lead this Partnership. Who knows, maybe they'll be selling Oil to India some day." Earlier, Trump administration slapped 25% tariff and an unspecified penalty on goods imported from India starting on Friday.

## Pak-US trade deal redefines...

FROM PAGE 01  
elevate Pakistan's economic prospects and foster a broader range of opportunities for the future. In an exclusive interview, Khuram Shahzad expressed his appreciation for the visionary leadership of the US President, recognizing the pivotal role played by the United States in strengthening bilateral ties through the new trade agreement. He highlighted that this deal represents a forward-looking approach to enhancing economic relations between Pakistan and the US.

## PTI's Gohar says court rulings...

FROM PAGE 01  
Faisalabad sentenced several PTI leaders including opposition leaders in the National Assembly and Senate, Omar Ayub and Shibli Faraz, as well as parliamentary leader Zartaj Gul and others to 10 years in prison each in connection with a case registered in the aftermath of the May 9, 2023, violence at the Civil Lines Police Station. Talking to journalists in Islamabad, Gohar criticised the ongoing trials of May 9 riots-related cases, alleging that the proceedings were being conducted late into the night, sometimes until 2am.

## 'Statements about Iranian...

FROM PAGE 01  
stressing that the only valid and official stance on this matter remains the joint announcement issued on July 26, 2025. That announcement followed a tripartite coordination meeting in Tehran involving the governments of Iran, Pakistan, and Iraq. The Embassy reiterated that the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan is the sole competent authority authorized to issue official statements on the matter. Any relevant announcements are released exclusively through the Embassy's official communication channels and its Press Section in Islamabad.



## Briefs

Rupee gains  
08 paise  
against US  
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Thursday appreciated by 08 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 282.87 against the previous day's closing Rs 282.95. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 285.1 and Rs 285.6, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 3.27 to close at Rs 323.73 against the last day's closing of Rs 327.00, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 02 paise and closed at Rs 1.89, whereas a decrease of Rs 3.46 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 374.73 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 378.19. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal came down by 02 paise each to close at Rs 77.01 and Rs 75.40, respectively.—APP

Gold dips by  
Rs 2,000 per  
tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed a decrease of Rs.2,000 on Thursday and was sold at Rs.353,000 against its sale at Rs. 355,000 on the previous trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs. 1,714 to Rs.302,641 from Rs. 304,355 whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 Karat went down to Rs.277,421 from Rs. 278,992. The rates of per tola silver and ten gram declined by Rs63 and Rs53 to close at Rs.3,900 and Rs.3,344 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$20 to \$3,303 from \$3,323 whereas silver was traded at \$36.51 against \$37.90, the Association reported.—APP

'Poisoning'  
arrest at UK  
childrens  
summer camp

LONDON: UK police said on Thursday they had arrested a 76-year-old man on suspicion of administering poison after eight children at a summer camp were taken to hospital. Emergency services were called to the camp in the village of Stathern in central England on Monday after a "report of several children feeling unwell," Leicestershire police said in a statement. A triage center was set up to assess all the youngsters at and "eight children were taken to hospital as a precaution and have all since been discharged," the police added. The man in custody is being questioned on suspicion of "administering poison/a noxious thing with intent to injure/aggravate/annoy," the police said.—APP

Civilians face  
'devastating'  
impact of  
Ethiopia's  
Oromia conflict

ADDIS ABABA: Conflict between the Ethiopian army and rebels in the country's most populated region is having "devastating consequences" on civilians, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) warned on Thursday. Africa's second most populous country, home to some 130 million inhabitants, is being torn apart by several armed conflicts. Oromia, which surrounds the capital Addis Ababa, has seen clashes since 2018 between federal forces and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), with peace talks failing to yield progress. Authorities have classified the OLA as a "terrorist organization," but it claims to be fighting for the rights of the region's approximately 40 million inhabitants. "The ongoing conflict in the Oromia region is having a devastating effect on many communities, particularly those in remote areas," the ICRC in Ethiopia said in a statement.—APP

## No sugar crisis, sufficient stock available: Tanveer

Federal Minister for National Food Security, Rana Tanveer Hussain acknowledged that initial projections for the 2024-25 season estimated sugar production at 7 million metric tons, slightly higher than the previous year

ISLAMABAD: Categorically dismissing reports of a sugar shortage due to exports as a misleading perception, Federal Minister for National Food Security, Rana Tanveer Hussain asserted on Thursday that Pakistan continued to hold a surplus of the commodity and the government has implemented a system to ensure sugar remains available at officially fixed prices. "A perception is being created as if there is a major issue regarding the availability, supply, or pricing of sugar," the minister said while addressing a press conference. He added that the government has launched a crackdown on hoarders and profiteers, including retailers and even mill owners were being checked, to control manipulation in the market. Referring to criticism over the government's initial approval of sugar exports followed by import plans, Rana Tanveer said these narratives ignored historical trends and factual data. Citing records from the past ten years, he explained that sugar exports have traditionally been allowed soon after the crushing season and were occasionally followed by imports—except in one or two years. The minister explained that the Sugar Advisory Board—which includes federal ministers, secretaries, representatives from all four

provinces, and industry stakeholders—approved exports last year on basis of data. At the beginning of the season, Pakistan had an opening stock of 800,000 metric tons. The crushing season yielded 6.8 million metric tons of sugar, while the country's annual domestic consumption stood at 6.3 million metric tons—leaving a surplus of 1.3 million metric tons. "To prevent a supply glut that could harm both farmers and millers, the government had allowed gradual sugar exports," he said. Contrary to concerns that exports would lead to domestic shortages or price hikes, the market experienced a decline in prices—from Rs138 per kg to Rs119 per kg—after the export decision in October 2024. "This proves that the export decision was not responsible for any artificial shortage or price inflation," the minister added. Rana Tanveer acknowledged that initial projections for the 2024-25 season estimated sugar production at 7 million metric tons, slightly higher than the previous year. However, climate change adversely impacted agricultural output, including sugarcane yield. As a result, actual production dropped to 5.8 million metric tons.

Responding to the shortfall, the Prime Minister ordered an immediate halt to further exports in January 2025. By the end of the crushing season on April 30, the total available stock—including a buffer of 0.5 million metric tons—stood at 6.3 million metric tons, which matches national consumption requirements. Currently, the country holds around 2 million metric tons of sugar—enough to meet consumption needs for the next three months. The minister attributed recent price increases to market manipulation by mill owners, wholesalers, and hoarders, particularly following a rise in sugarcane procurement prices from Rs450 to Rs700 per 40 kg. He said the government intervened and negotiated with stakeholders to fix the ex-mill price at Rs165 per kg and the retail price at Rs173 per kg. To ensure compliance, the government has launched enforcement operations against violators across the supply chain. "Implementation will take some time, but the system is in place and action is underway," he said. Currently, retail prices have stabilized between Rs172 and Rs173 per kg, while ex-mill prices are holding

at Rs165. Rana Tanveer noted that sugar prices in Pakistan are broadly aligned with those in neighboring countries: India (Rs150/kg wholesale), Bangladesh (Rs187), Afghanistan (Rs173), and Iran (Rs250). The minister added, Pakistan earned \$402 million from the export of 750,000 metric tons of sugar last year. However, the minister acknowledged that earlier approval could have fetched higher export rates. To manage domestic availability, the government approved sugar imports of up to 500,000 metric tons, although only 300,000 tons are expected to be brought in, costing approximately \$150 million. Downplaying the sugar issue as overblown, Rana Tanveer urged media and policymakers to shift their focus toward strategic national developments. "Our real priority should be landmark achievements such as the recent trade agreement with the United States," he said. He also highlighted broader signs of economic recovery, citing improved foreign exchange reserves, a rising Pakistan Stock Exchange, and declining inflation rates as indicators of better economic management.—DNA



Geneva : Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq meeting with Speaker of the Parliament of Iran Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf on the sidelines of the 6th World Conference of Speakers of Parliament.

## KSA steps up fight against human trafficking with global partnerships

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia is intensifying its battle against human trafficking through sweeping reforms and new initiatives for protecting victims and holding perpetrators accountable, a top rights official announced on Thursday. President of the Human Rights Commission and Chair of the Saudi National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, Hala bint Mazayd Altuwaijri underscored the Kingdom's commitment to human rights under the leadership of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and with the firm backing of Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman. A major development in this regard, she revealed, is the establishment of the General Directorate for Community Security and Combating Human Trafficking Crimes, launched under the directive of the crown prince. Operating within the General Directorate of Public Security, the body is tasked with combating trafficking-related crimes and ensuring public safety. Altuwaijri highlighted that Saudi Arabia has bolstered its legal and institutional frameworks by adopting a National Policy for the Elimination of Forced Labor, alongside revising several laws, regulations, and protective measures. These reforms are designed to safeguard labor rights and offer protections for victims, witnesses, whistleblowers, and experts involved in trafficking cases. To ensure a long-term impact, the National Committee is actively executing its national action plan, developing a national referral mechanism for victims, and creating a comprehensive database of trafficking cases. —DNA

RCCI expresses  
strong resentment  
Over SBP's decision

RAWALPINDI: The President of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI), Usman Shaukat, has strongly criticized the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) for maintaining the policy interest rate at an excessively high level of 11 percent. The decision has sparked frustration among the business community, which had widely anticipated a significant rate cut to single digits in order to spur economic revival. Expressing deep concern, the RCCI President warned that this decision will prolong stagflation, deter investment, and adversely affect employment generation. "The private sector is under immense strain, and the SBP's inaction is exacerbating the challenges faced by manufacturers and exporters," he stated. RCCI has urged the government and the central bank to reconsider their approach and bring down the policy interest rate to single digits. "A growth-oriented monetary policy is urgently required to reinvigorate economic activity, protect jobs, and ensure the sustainability of businesses," he emphasized. In a statement issued on Thursday, RCCI President Usman Shaukat said that the SBP's reasoning, citing temporary inflationary pressures in May and June and possible energy price hikes in the coming months, is neither compelling nor aligned with the ground realities of Pakistan's economic situation. "Core inflation has substantially receded, and macroeconomic indicators clearly support an easing of monetary policy. Maintaining such a high borrowing cost is unjustified and will continue to hamper growth," he remarked. —DNA

## Aligning with global best practices key to Pak's eco future:Nasir

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, has lauded the government's stated commitment to regulatory reforms and institutional transparency, but stressed that now is the time for tangible implementation to unlock the true potential of Pakistan's business landscape. Speaking at a meeting with business leaders, he emphasized that while recent statements from the government reflect a positive intent, the business community continues to face challenges that can only be addressed through comprehensive and consistent reforms. He urged the leadership to move beyond policy announcements and deliver measurable results that restore confidence and stimulate investment. President Qureshi pointed out that institutional inefficiencies, red tape, and unpredictability in regulatory enforcement remain major concerns for both domestic and foreign investors. He called for simplified taxation procedures, digitalization of regulatory approvals, and a one-window facilitation system for businesses. "Our institutions must be restructured for transparency, efficiency, and accountability," he remarked. "Only then can we ensure a level playing field where entrepreneurship thrives and economic activity accelerates." The ICCI President further suggested that the private sector should be taken on board as a strategic partner in the reform process. Regular consultation between government bodies and chambers of commerce, he said, would ensure that reforms are grounded in practical realities and not merely theoretical frameworks. The ICCI President highlighted that countries which successfully modernized their regulatory environments witnessed an immediate boost in investor confidence and GDP growth. "Pakistan's economic future depends on how swiftly we can align our governance structures with global best practices," he asserted. The business community is ready to support the government, but reforms must be visible, verifiable, and sustained, he concluded.—DNA

## Pakistan, Algeria for deepening trade ties

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan held a significant meeting with the Ambassador of Algeria to Pakistan, Dr. Brahim Romani, to deepen economic ties and expand Pakistan's strategic trade footprint across Africa and Europe through enhanced cooperation with Algeria. The dialogue focused on key areas such as energy collaboration, investment promotion, and participation in Africa-centric trade exhibitions, said a press release issued here on Thursday. The Algerian Ambassador apprised the minister that Algeria has emerged as the third-largest economy in Africa and a major exporter of gas to Europe, with undersea pipelines delivering energy to Italy, Spain, and Tunisia. Highlighting a \$40 billion investment plan in the energy sector by several countries from Europe, Asia and the middle East, he invited Pakistan to invest in Algeria's energy sectors owing to vast reserves of oil, gas, hydrogen, and electricity. He stressed that Algeria's strategic geographic position and established infrastructure offer Pakistan a gateway to African markets, with air and land connectivity to over 10 African nations and Algeria's trade agreements with African and Arab states. During the meeting, the Ambassador also extended an invitation to Pakistan for participation in Algeria's first-ever INTRA-AFRICA Trade Fair, taking place in Algiers from September 4-10, 2025. The event will feature over 2,000 exhibitors from 140 countries and include global financial institutions, development banks, and industry leaders. The ambassador encouraged Pakistan to take part as strategic investors, not just traders, in sectors such as agriculture, energy, IT, innovation, health, and startups. Minister Jam Kamal Khan welcomed the initiative and noted the importance of leveraging such global platforms to secure meaningful investment and trade partnerships. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the "Look Africa" policy and emphasized the need to proactively engage with African economies through trade diplomacy. He highlighted that Pakistan's Trade Development Authority (TDAP) is focused on promoting export-led growth and supporting private sector outreach. Current trade between Pakistan and Algeria stands at \$43.93 million, with Pakistani exports—largely textiles, rice, and surgical instruments—valued at \$17.19 million. Imports from Algeria include phosphates, fertilizers, and cement. The minister acknowledged the modest trade volume but appreciated the recent momentum in bilateral engagement, including the increasing participation of Pakistani businesses in Algerian expos—from just 12 companies in 2022 to over 170 in 2024. To further support business-to-business cooperation, both sides agreed to expedite the inaugural meeting of the Joint Business Council (JBC), which was established in 2022 between FPCCI and the Algerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Ambassador informed that the Algerian Embassy is also offering fast-track business visas to Pakistani entrepreneurs, granting multiple-entry access without delays or central approval. As Algeria shifts its economic model from hydrocarbon dependence to diversified growth, both sides recognized the timely opportunity to forge a robust, forward-looking economic partnership. The meeting concluded with a shared resolve to boost trade, attract investment, and collaborate on multilateral platforms across Africa and beyond.—DNA

## Thousands of Afghans scramble for chance to work in Qatar

HERAT: When Mohammad Hanif heard Qatar was opening jobs to Afghans, he joined thousands of others to put his name down for a shot to make a living in the gas-rich emirate, his own country wracked by unemployment. The Taliban authorities announced a deal with Gulf state this month to recruit 3,100 workers from Afghanistan, who started applying on Tuesday at centers across the country. By Wednesday, more than 8,500 people had put their names down from the capital Kabul and surrounding provinces, labor ministry spokesman Samiullah Ibrahim told AFP, and more than 15,500 people are expected to register nationwide. The Taliban government says the jobs will help fight steep unemployment and poverty in the country of around 48 million people, facing what the United Nations says is one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. "Our country has many problems, most people are poor and work odd jobs," said Hanif, who traveled to western Herat from neighboring Badghis to register. "I have skills in car mechanics and cooking, and I have certificates to prove it,"

said the 35-year-old, adding he was grateful to Qatar for employing Afghans. Competition is steep, however, with centers swarmed by hopeful applicants ready to present the required passports, identification cards and professional certificates to nab roles ranging from bus driver to cleaner, cook, mechanic and electrician. More than 1,000 people have applied in southern Kandahar for around 375 positions allocated to the region, and in Herat, around 2,000 people lined up on Wednesday to try for one of a few hundred jobs, AFP journalists said. Qatar, where the Taliban opened an office during the two-decade war with US-led forces, is one of the handful of countries to have strong diplomatic ties with Afghanistan's rulers after they swept to power in 2021. Only Russia has so far officially recognized the Taliban government. Discussions are also underway with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Türkiye and Russia to set up similar deals, labor minister Abdul Manan Omari said in a statement on Tuesday. The process "will undoubtedly

have a positive impact on the country's economic situation and reduce unemployment," said Abdul Ghani Baradar, the deputy prime minister for economic affairs. Nearly half of Afghanistan's population lives in poverty, and the unemployment rate (over 13 percent) affects nearly a quarter of young people aged 15 to 29, according to the World Bank. Those who do have work often support large, extended families on stretched salaries. High unemployment has been driven by infrastructure hamstrung by 40 years of conflict, drought impacting the crucial agriculture sector and the recent mass removals of Afghans from neighboring countries, said Noorullah Fadwi, head of an association of job search companies. This year, nearly two million Afghans have returned to their country after being driven out or deported from Iran and Pakistan, where many had lived for decades. "We are grateful to Qatar and ask other (Arab) countries to hire Afghan workers too, because the situation in Iran and Pakistan is very bad," said 39-year-old Noor Mohammad, who registered in Herat, hoping for a hotel

job. The Taliban authorities have not yet detailed how the Afghan recruits will be housed or their potential working conditions, while pledging to safeguard their rights. Qatar, where foreigners make up nearly 90 percent of the three million-strong population, has faced heavy criticism over the treatment of migrant laborers, particularly during construction leading up to hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Qatar has since introduced major reforms to improve workers' safety and punish employers who violate the rules. It has dismantled its "kafala" labor system, which gave employers powerful rights over whether workers could leave their jobs or even the country. Mohammad Qasim, 37, said he would not go to Qatar if he could find a job in Afghanistan, but he earned a university degree in education four years ago and has been unemployed ever since. "I tried very hard to find work but there is nothing," he told AFP, saying he applied to be a cleaner at a center in Kandahar. At least in Qatar, he said, "I will earn something."—Agencies

## Azerbaijani gas to be transported to Syria this week

BAKU : Gas transported from Azerbaijan will be delivered to Syria this week, announced Türkiye's Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Alparslan Bayraktar. "We have signed a swap agreement with Azerbaijan. Under this agreement, gas exported from Azerbaijan will be transferred via Kilis to Syria, specifically to Damascus," said Minister Bayraktar. "On August 2, we will hold a ceremony in Kilis together with our counterparts from Azerbaijan, Syria, and Qatar." He further explained that the exported gas will be used for electricity generation in Syria. "With 6 million cubic meters of gas to be exported to Syria, it will be possible to generate 1,200 megawatts of electricity daily. This will help supply fuel to Syria's existing energy infrastructure," the minister added.—APP

## Strengthening harmony essential foundation for New Uzbekistan uplift

TASHKENT: The Friendship Festival, held at the initiative of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev by the Committee on Interethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries, once again demonstrates to the international community that peace, unity, cohesion, friendship, and harmony are the highest values in Uzbekistan. As part of the festival, an international conference on "Strengthening nationwide harmony – an essential foundation for the development of New Uzbekistan" was held in Tashkent. The event was attended by senators, deputies, activists of national cultural centers, members of the diplomatic corps, scholars, and experts from several foreign organizations. Advisor to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Ruslan Davletov, read the President's congratulatory message on the occasion of the People's Friendship Day. As noted in the congratulatory message, the ethnic diversity that has existed on our land since ancient times, being a unique social phenomenon, has gained new meaning and substance in the conditions of New Uzbekistan, preserving its continuity and traditions. Largely thanks to this, peace, friendship, kindness, and harmony prevail in the country, while the honor, dignity, and happiness of individuals are elevated.—APP

## Portugal to consider recognizing Palestinian state in Sep: PM

LISBON: The Portuguese government will consult the president and parliament on the question of recognizing the State of Palestine at the UN in September, Prime Minister Luis Montenegro's office said Thursday. Portugal "is considering recognition of the Palestinian state, as part of a procedure that could be concluded during the high-level week of the 80th United Nations General Assembly, to be held in New York in September," the statement said.

## Turkish city calls for help after heat tops 50C

SILOPI, Türkiye: A choking heatwave left astonished locals in southeastern Türkiye calling for state help to pay their air conditioning bills after the temperature surged past 50C. "We cannot cope with the heat," ice-cream maker Recep Esiyok, 59, told AFP in Silopi, where meteorologists measured 50.5C on Friday – a national record. "I've been living in Silopi for about 30 years. I've never seen such heat... I've never seen such heat anywhere." He is getting through the heatwave thanks to the air conditioner in his shop, but is now worried about paying for the electricity. "My bill last month was 59,000 lira (1,450 dollars). We are asking for state support on this issue. – APP



## Briefs

FBR imposes  
Rs 111 billion  
fine on solar  
import firms

## NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has imposed a record Rs111 billion penalty on several solar import companies involved in a major money laundering and over-invoicing scheme, senior customs official Shiraz Ahmed confirmed on Wednesday. According to Ahmed, who serves as Director of Post-Clearance Audit (South), the companies allegedly used fake documentation to over-invoice solar imports by over Rs120 billion in a bid to launder funds out of the country. In total, the fraudulent network is believed to have routed nearly Rs140 billion through banking channels using shell companies and fabricated paperwork. Authorities have already seized 327 containers of solar panels linked to the scam. These containers will be auctioned, with the FBR setting a revenue target of Rs1.5 billion from the sale, Ahmed added. The investigation has so far identified 13 fake companies allegedly involved in the operation, with links traced to Peshawar, Quetta, and Islamabad. Officials say the network also funnelled large amounts of money abroad under the guise of commercial imports. The FBR crackdown is part of wider efforts to clamp down on trade-based money laundering and protect the integrity of Pakistan's import system.

Ombudsman  
orders  
removal of  
Moonis Alvi

## DNA

KARACHI: The Provincial Ombudsman Sindh has ordered the removal of K-Electric's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Moonis Alvi from his post after finding him guilty of harassing a female employee. Justice (r) Shah Nawaz Tariq, who serves as the Provincial Ombudsman for Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace, also imposed a fine of Rs2.5 million on Alvi. The fine must be paid within one month. According to the ruling, the complainant was subjected to harassment and mental distress by the KE CEO. If Alvi fails to comply with the order, the ombudsman has directed authorities to freeze his movable and immovable assets. His [Moonis Alvi] CNIC and passport may also be blocked if the fine is not paid, the ruling said. The verdict has been issued under the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act.

Govt slashes  
private  
Hajj quota

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousuf has said the government will start receiving Hajj applications from August 4. The News reported on Thursday. Giving the details of Hajj Policy 2026, as approved by the federal cabinet earlier in the day, he said Pakistan's quota of pilgrims will remain at 179,210, out of which 119,210 will perform Hajj under the government's regular scheme. He said the quota of the private scheme had been reduced by 50% to 60,000, meaning that two-thirds of the total quota had been given to the government scheme. The government scheme's quota is 66.52% and the private scheme's quota stands at 33.48%. The minister said the total Hajj expenses under the government scheme will vary between Rs1,150,000 and Rs1,250,000, while Rs500,000 would be deposited in the first installment, also in the first week of August. There would also be a Hajj package of 20 to 25 days under the government scheme. Those who got registered earlier, as directed by the ministry, would be given priority.

Pak investors invited  
to invest in Morocco

Moroccan Ambassador Celebrates 26th Throne Day Anniversary in Islamabad with renewed commitment to Morocco-Pakistan ties



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco celebrated the 26th anniversary of the accession of His Majesty King Mohammed VI to the Throne with a grand reception held at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad. The event was attended by a distinguished gathering of diplomats, government officials, business leaders, and members of the civil society. Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Mr. Rana Tanveer Hussain, was the chief guest on the occasion. In his welcoming speech, H.E. Mohamed

Karmoun, Ambassador of Morocco to Pakistan, extended his warm greetings to all guests and expressed deep gratitude for their presence. The ambassador highlighted the significance of Throne Day, calling it "an annual opportunity to renew the bonds of mutual allegiance between the people of Morocco and their Sovereign." Reflecting on the achievements of King Mohammed VI's 26-year reign, Ambassador Karmoun noted Morocco's impressive progress in various sectors despite the global economic uncertainties. He said that the country has maintained a competitive, diversified, and open economy. "Since His Majesty's accession to the Throne, the pillars of economic and social progress have been strengthened," he stated.

The ambassador emphasized Morocco's industrial transformation over the last decade, particularly in exports from the automotive, aviation, renewable energy, and food industries. Tourism, he added, remains a major contributor to national growth and job creation. Morocco's economy today connects to nearly three billion consumers worldwide through a network of free trade agreements, including with the European Union, United States, Turkey, UAE, Egypt, and others. Highlighting the country's ambitious development projects, Ambassador Karmoun pointed to key initiatives in water

management, desalination, food security, infrastructure, and energy sovereignty. He invited Pakistani investors and businesses to take advantage of Morocco's investment-friendly policies and strategic trade positioning. "I invite Pakistani investors to explore opportunities in Morocco, benefit from our investment facilities, and gain access to global markets," he said. Speaking on bilateral ties, the ambassador affirmed the deep-rooted and cordial relationship between Morocco and Pakistan. "Our bilateral relations have traditionally been strong and are based on shared values, mutual respect, and common historical experiences," he noted. He expressed Morocco's commitment to enhancing collaboration with Pakistan in fields such as trade, defense, joint investment ventures, tourism, and engagement on international platforms to address global challenges. "We must further strengthen our ties through increased high-level visits and collaborative efforts," he said, stressing the importance of building lasting partnerships that benefit both nations.

Ambassador Karmoun also revealed that a series of high-level meetings are in the pipeline between the two countries, focusing on boosting imports and exports, and identifying areas for business collaboration. The event concluded with a reaffirmation of the strong bonds between Morocco and Pakistan. "Long live Morocco-Pakistan friendship," the ambassador declared, echoing the sentiments of unity and cooperation that marked the evening. The ceremony was followed by a reception featuring traditional Moroccan cuisine and cultural elements, further strengthening the spirit of goodwill and partnership between the two nations.

Russia  
strikes kill  
six in Kyiv

KYIV: Russian strikes on Kyiv killed at least six people, officials said Thursday, as Moscow claimed the capture of a town that had been a key stronghold for the Ukrainian army in the east of the country. Drones and missile strikes hit at least 27 locations in Kyiv in the early hours, city officials said. "As of now, the services have confirmed six deaths," including a six-year-old boy, Tymur Tkachenko, head of the city's military administration, said in a post on Telegram. "We have 52 wounded people, almost 30 are in hospitals. Including nine children," he wrote. "It's a horrible morning in Kyiv. The brutal Russian strikes destroyed entire residential buildings and damaged schools and hospitals. Civilians are injured and killed. There are still people under the rubble," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybryga wrote on X. Russia's latest deadly attack on Ukraine came just days after US President Donald Trump issued a 10-day ultimatum for Moscow to halt its invasion of Ukraine, now in its fourth year, or face sanctions. — APP

Over 120  
flights  
disrupted by  
UK tech glitch

LONDON: Scores of flights to and from UK airports were cancelled Wednesday due to a technical glitch, according to the air traffic control service, prompting anger from airline chiefs. The number of aircraft in London's air space was limited by the service, known as NATS, as a result of a technical issue which was quickly resolved. Airports including London's Heathrow and Gatwick and Edinburgh were affected. Heathrow is Europe's busiest air hub. There were 67 departures and 55 arrivals cancelled as of 7:30 pm (1830 GMT) while a number of flights were also diverted, according to aviation analytics firm Cirium. In 2023 NATS suffered the country's worst systems failure in almost 10 years, stranding thousands of passengers. Airline chiefs reacted angrily to the cancellations which came at the peak of the UK summer holiday travel season. Ryanair CEO Neal McMahon called for NATS's chief executive Martin Rolfe to resign over the failure. "It is outrageous that passengers are once again being hit with delays and disruption," said McMahon. — APP

PM commends Leghari  
for power sector reforms

## SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday lauded Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari for his pivotal role in energy sector reforms, called his performance a turning point in the nation's journey toward economic resilience and energy security. In a formal letter addressed to the Federal Minister, the Prime Minister extended heartfelt appreciation for Leghari's efforts in reducing the circular debt by a staggering Rs 780 billion—bringing the total stock down to Rs 1,614 billion. He termed the achievement "Herculean," highlighting the complex institutional coordination it required. The letter also praised Leghari's decisive role in renegotiating Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) with over 35 Independent Power Producers (IPPs), including the com-

plete termination of six costly contracts. These reforms, the Prime Minister noted, have led to an estimated national saving of Rs 3.6 trillion—an unprecedented fiscal gain. The prime minister underscored the Rs 8.35 per unit reduction in power tariffs compared to the previous year, which has delivered substantial relief to households while also stimulating industrial growth. This drop in electricity prices, he emphasized, is expected to create long-term benefits across various sectors of the economy. PM Shehbaz Sharif also commended people-centric reforms such as the "Apna Meter, Apni Reading" initiative, calling it a progressive step toward transparent and citizen-focused governance in the energy sector. "I congratulate you and your team on these commendable strides, and I trust your continued efforts will further fortify Pakistan's energy landscape and economic outlook," the Prime Minister concluded.

US, China to  
strike fair trade  
deal: Trump

Trump says US to impose 15% tariff on South Korean goods

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump predicts that the United States and China will be able to work out a "very fair" agreement on further trade terms. "We're doing fine with China. I think it's going to work out very well. We're right in step. I think we're going to have a very fair deal with China," he told reporters. The last round of trade negotiations between China and the United States was held on July 28-29 in Stockholm. The nations extended the suspension of additional import duties for another three months. After negotiations in Geneva on May 10-11 the US and China reduced tariffs reciprocally by 115% for 90 days (starting from May 12) (up to 30% on imports of Chinese goods to the United States and 10% on imports of American goods to China). This deal expires on August 12. Meanwhile, President Donald Trump said Wednesday that the United States will impose a 15 percent tariff on imports from South Korea, as he touted a "full and complete trade deal" between both countries. "South Korea will give to the United States \$350 Billion Dollars for Investments," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform, adding that the country would buy \$100 billion in liquefied natural gas or other energy products. — Agencies

Thailand, Cambodia  
trade allegations  
of truce breaking

BANGKOK: Thailand and Cambodia exchanged allegations on Wednesday of breaching a ceasefire deal which has largely halted the open combat that engulfed their frontier. The nations agreed a truce starting Tuesday after five days of clashes killed at least 43 people on both sides, as a long-standing dispute over contested border temples boiled over into fighting on their 800-kilometre (500-mile) boundary. Khun Sudary, president of the National Assembly of Cambodia, urged other countries to help ensure the ceasefire is upheld. "To prevent the breach of the ceasefire, it is urgent to deploy international observers and inspection teams. Please hold accountable those who violate the ceasefire," she said at the sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Geneva. Thailand's foreign ministry said its troops in Sisaket province "came under attack by small arms fire and grenade assaults launched by Cambodian forces" in an offensive that continued until Wednesday morning. "This represents a flagrant violation of the ceasefire agreement," said a foreign ministry statement. Thai government spokesman Jirayu Huang also reported overnight clashes but said "the Thai side maintained control of the situation" and conditions along the border were "reported to be normal" from 8:00 am (0100 GMT). On Wednesday, a Cambodian defence ministry official accused Thailand of twice breaching the ceasefire, intended to end fighting which has seen the two countries evacuate a total of more than 300,000 people from border region. — Agencies

Pakistan offers huge benefits  
to foreign investors: Zardari

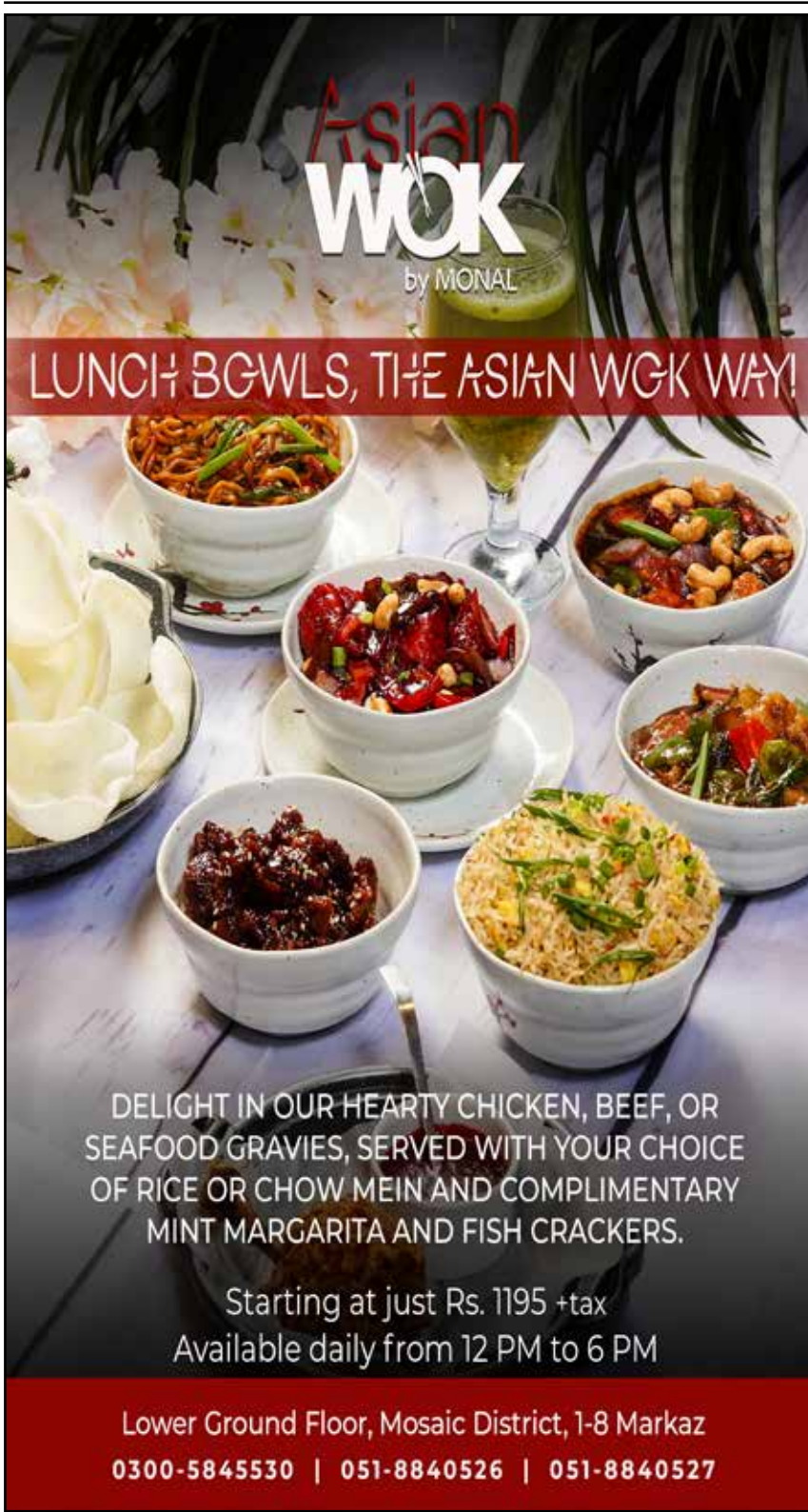
Pakistan's ambassador-designate to Ghana Calls on President

## NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Ghana, Mr. Najeeb Durrani, called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Bilt-



wal House, Karachi. Talking to the Ambassador-designate, the President said that Pakistan and Ghana enjoy cordial relations that need to be further strengthened for the mutual benefit of both countries. President Zardari urged the Ambassador to focus on promoting economic and trade relations between the two nations. He highlighted that Pakistan offers a business-friendly environment and asked the Ambassador-designate to encourage Ghanaian businesses to undertake joint ventures with Pakistani entrepreneurs and invest in Pakistan's economy. The President further stressed the importance of strengthening institutional linkages to bring the two countries closer. He expressed satisfaction that Ghanaian diplomats and engineers are receiving training in Pakistan, terming it a positive step towards expanding bilateral cooperation. The President congratulated Mr. Najeeb Durrani on his new assignment and wished him success in effectively representing Pakistan in Ghana.



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