



# Islamabad POST

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**Pak calls for boosting peacekeeping role of United Nations: Asim**

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**Field Marshal says**

## India escalates proxy war after suffering defeat

COAS assails India's sponsorship of terrorists as failed attempt to target Baloch people's patriotism

STAFF REPORT / DNA

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Asim Munir has said that India escalated its proxy war against Pakistan following its defeat in "Marka-e-Haq" – the 19-day military conflict with New Delhi spanning April 22 to May 10, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Wednesday. Interacting with participants of the 16th National Workshop in Balochistan, the military's media wing added, the chief of army staff (COAS) vehemently condemned India's blatant sponsorship of terror proxies, characterising them as a failed attempt to target the deep-rooted patriotism of the people of Balochistan. Noting that India had escalated its proxy war to advance nefarious designs i.e., 'Fitna-al-Khawarij and Fitna-al-Hindustan' – pawns of hybrid war against Pakistan – Field Marshal Munir said that "these proxies will face a similar fate and humiliation as faced in Marka-e-Haq". Addressing a diverse group of stakeholders including parliamentarians, representatives of civil society, civil servants, academicians, media personnel and youth, the army chief emphasised that terrorists knew no bounds of

religion, sect, or ethnicity, necessitating a unified national response, stressing the imperative of collective resolve in confronting this menace. Reaffirming Pakistan Army's unwavering commitment to uproot the menace of terrorism and the inevitability of socio-economic uplift of Balochistan for national cohesion and integration, the COAS reiterated the country's commitment to regional peace and underscored the nation's preparedness to respond decisively to any external or internal threats, protecting national prestige and ensuring the well-being of its citizens. Furthermore, he also highlighted the pivotal role of development initiatives in Balochistan, advocating for enhanced inter-agency cooperation and a cohesive national approach to propel provincial progress and national advancement. His remarks come days after the Pakistan Army's top brass, during the 271st Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC), vowed to take decisive and holistic actions at all levels against the Indian backed and sponsored proxies. The CCC meeting chaired by the field marshal Munir, took note of the Indian Army's baseless insinuations to offset its comprehensive defeat.

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**Vows to lift curfew**

## KP seeks confidence over Bajaur military operation

CM Gandapur ordered all deputy commissioners not to impose any curfew without permission from the KP home department, regardless of "any kind of situation"

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has opposed the newly launched military operation in Bajaur unless it is taken into confidence by the Centre and has vowed to lift a three-day curfew imposed in the district's 16 areas yesterday. Security forces backed by gunship helicopters and artillery launched 'Operation Sarbakaf' against terrorists in the Lowi Mamund tehsil on Tuesday. Tribal elders in Bajaur and some other KP districts have long opposed any military operation, citing concerns over displacement.

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## Shibli Faraz urges CJP to review May 9 trials

In letter to CJP, PTI senator warns current judicial process risks becoming "bereft of credibility"

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the Opposition in the Senate Shibli Faraz has urged Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Yahya Afridi to intervene in the

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## NATIONAL DAY OF MOROCCO



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Rana Ranveer Hussain Federal Minister for Food Security, Ambassador of Morocco Mohamed Karmoune and others cutting cake to celebrate the Twenty Sixth Anniversary of the Accession to the throne of His Majesty of the Kingdom of Morocco, at Islamabad Serena Hotel. – DNA

## Major Arab countries join call for Hamas to disarm

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Arab countries including Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Egypt joined calls on Tuesday for Hamas to disarm and end its rule of Gaza, in a bid to end the devastating war in the Palestinian territory. Seventeen countries plus the European Union and Arab League threw their weight behind a seven-page text agreed at a United Nations conference on reviving the two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians. "In the context of ending the war in Gaza, Hamas must end its rule in Gaza and hand over its weapons to the Palestinian Authority, with international engagement and support, in line with the objective of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State," said the declaration. It followed a call on Monday by the Palestinian delegation at the United Nations for both Israel and

Continued on Page 06

**Blow to New Delhi**

## US to impose 25% tariff on India from Aug 1: Trump

US president says India will also face an unspecified penalty on Aug 1

CENTRELINE REPORT

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that United States will impose a 25% tariff on goods imported from India starting on August 1. Trump said India will also face an unspecified penalty on Aug 1, but he did elaborate on the amount or what it was for. "While India is our friend, we have, over the years, done relatively little business with them because their Tariffs are far too high, among the highest in the World, and they have the most strenuous and obnoxious non-monetary Trade Barriers of any Country," Trump wrote in a Truth Social post. "They have always bought a vast majority of their military equipment from Russia, and are Russia's largest buyer of ENERGY, along with China, at a time when everyone wants Russia to STOP THE KILLING IN UKRAINE – ALL THINGS NOT GOOD!" India's commerce ministry, which is leading the trade negotiations with the United

States, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump's decision dashes hopes of a limited trade agreement between the two countries, which had been under negotiation for several months. US and Indian trade negotiators had held multiple rounds of discussions to resolve contentious issues, particularly over market access for American agricultural and dairy products. Despite progress in some areas, Indian officials resisted opening the domestic market to imports of wheat, corn, rice and genetically modified soybeans, citing risks to the livelihood of millions of Indian farmers. The new tariffs are expected to impact India's goods exports to the US, estimated at around \$87 billion in 2024, including labour-intensive products such as garments, pharmaceuticals, gems and jeweler, and petrochemicals. The United States currently has a \$45.7 billion trade deficit with India.

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## Briefs

### Rescue 1122 saves 160 tourists

STAFF REPORT

GILGIT: Rescue teams evacuated 160 stranded tourists from Naran in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Mansehra district after flash floods, triggered by heavy rainfall, swept through parts of the region on Wednesday, according to a Rescue 1122 spokesperson. Monsoon rains, which fall across the region from June to September, are crucial to the livelihoods of millions of farmers and food security. However, they also wreak havoc by triggering deadly floods, landslides and displacement, particularly in vulnerable, poorly drained, or densely populated areas. This year's monsoon rains continue to lash many parts of the country, prompting authorities to release an urban flooding warning for several cities. Mansehra's Rescue 1122 spokesperson, Amir Khadam Khan, told Dawn.com that 160 tourists were stranded after floods hit Naran, Jalkhad, Barwai and Besar. Rescue 1122 personnel crossed the flood drain on foot near Besar to access more than 160 stranded tourists and vehicles," he said.

### Iran President due on Saturday

Iranian official says president Pezeshkian to travel to Pakistan on PM Shehbaz's invitation

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Iranian President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian will visit Pakistan on August 2 (Saturday) for a two-day visit, his political adviser said on Wednesday, Iran's IRNA news agency reported. Taking to X, Political Adviser to the Iranian President, Mehdi Sanai, said: "Dr Pezeshkian will travel to Pakistan on Saturday evening, August 2, at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif." According to the adviser, official meetings and discussions with "cultural and business elites" were planned during the president's visit. "The relations between the two countries encompass political, economic, religious, and cultural dimensions," he said.

## Pahalgam attack: Pak hits back at India for glorifying aggression

FO says Indian leaders should acknowledge losses to their armed forces, third parties' role in ceasefire

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has rejected the Indian leadership's "fabrications" over the Pahalgam attack, saying that New Delhi should stop acting as judge, jury, and executioner. "Pakistan categorically rejects the baseless assertions and provocative claims made by the Indian leaders during the Lok Sabha debate on the so-called 'Operation Sindoor'," said FO spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan on Wednesday. Indian Home Minister Amit Shah, a day earlier, claimed before the parliament that Indian security forces recovered Pakistani voter identity cards and locally made chocolates from three men killed in a gun battle in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), who according to him were involved in Pahalgam attack. Addressing the same session, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also denied that any world leader pushed India to stop fighting Pakistan during their recent conflict, after repeated claims by US President Donald Trump that he had brokered peace. The South Asian rivals fought an intense four-day conflict in May that took more than 70 lives on both sides before Trump announced a ceasefire between the nuclear-armed neighbours. "The statements reflected a dangerous tendency to distort facts, justify aggression, and glorify conflict for domestic consumption," the spokesperson added. "The world knows that India attacked Pakistan without any verifiable evidence or a credible investigation into the Pahalgam Attack. During the intervening night of 6 and 7 May 2025, India's targeting of the alleged terrorist infrastructure resulted actually in the martyrdom of innocent men, women, and children." "India failed to achieve any of its strategic objectives. On the other hand, Pakistan's resounding success in neutralising the Indian fighter jets and military targets is an indisputable fact." The spokesperson asked the Indian leaders to acknowledge the losses incurred by their armed forces and accept the active role played by the third parties in realising the ceasefire, instead of misleading their compatriots. "India did not avail itself of the immediate offer made by

Continued on Page 06



During the Special Immunization Activity (SIA) in September, the girls aged 9-15 years will be vaccinated. Later HPV vaccine will be added in the routine vaccination schedule; EPI

**RAWALPINDI:** In a historic move for cancer preventive measures, Rawalpindi is preparing to launch a historic anti-cancer vaccination drive in the district. The anti 'Human Papillomavirus (HPV)' vaccine stands as a critical tool in global public health, offering robust protection against infections that can lead to various types of cancer, as well as other serious health conditions.

Dr. Waqar Ahmad, heading District Disease Surveillance and Response Unit (DDSRU), informed APP that HPV vaccine is a highly effective immunization designed to prevent infection from specific types of Human Papillomavirus.

"HPV is a common virus, typically transmitted through skin-to-skin or physical contact", he said.

While many HPV types are harmless, certain high-risk strains are known to cause cancers and genital warts.

"The vaccine works by introducing virus-like particles (VLPs) which are non-infectious components that mimic the virus's outer shell", he added.

These VLPs prompt the body's immune system to produce protective

antibodies and ultimately prepares the immune system to swiftly recognize and neutralize the actual HPV if encountered, thereby preventing infection and subsequent disease development.

The vaccine is most effective when administered before exposure to the virus, typically in pre-adolescent years. Dr. Waqar observed that the widespread adoption of HPV vaccination programs yields significant and far-reaching public health benefits including primary cancer prevention with the most profound impact on cervical cancer, with nearly all cases attributable to HPV. The vaccine specifically targets the high-risk HPV types responsible for the majority of these cancers, leading to substantial reductions in HPV infections and pre-cancerous lesions among vaccinated populations globally. "Beyond the cervical cancer, the vaccine offers protection against other HPV-related cancers, including those of the anus, mouth, throat, genital organs. It also prevents the common occurrence of genital warts", said Dr. Waqar who is also the spokesman of the District Health Authority.

High vaccination rates within a community reduce the overall circulation of HPV, providing indirect pro-

tection to unvaccinated individuals. This "herd immunity" amplifies the vaccine's protective effect across the population.

Moreover, the protection provided by the HPV vaccine is proven to be durable and long-lasting as the vaccine helps alleviate the significant healthcare burden associated with screening, diagnosis, and treatment of these conditions.

Rawalpindi's health authority is preparing for the vaccination campaign which will be launched in September this year.

"A sophisticated training for the vaccinators is underway in which the lectures and training are being given regarding vaccine administration methodology, general public awareness and guiding tools", informed Dr. Waqar, while confirming a special immunization activity to be initiated in the month of September. He termed HPV vaccine a major advancement in preventive medicine, empowering communities to actively combat a leading cause of cancer and improve overall public health.

During the Special Immunization Activity (SIA) in September, the girls aged 9-15 years will be vaccinated. Later HPV vaccine will be added in the routine vaccination schedule; EPI.



**ISLAMABAD:** Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan signing the letter of Intent with the PILDAT representative.

## DNA

**LAHORE:** The Lahore Arts Council at Alhamra organised a beautiful flute and sitar concert to promote classical music and celebrate Pakistan's rich cultural heritage, here on Wednesday.

Renowned artists Naushad Khan (flute), Ustad Saleem, and Moeen Khan (sitar) performed at the event, captivating the audience with their soulful and traditional music. Their performances reminded everyone of the deep roots and emotional power of classical Eastern instruments.

Alhamra Chairman Razi Ahmed said that in today's fast-changing world, instruments like the flute and sitar are an important part of our culture and identity. He said these instruments still connect us to our traditions and artistic values.

Alhamra Executive Director Tauseef Haider Kazmi added that the sitar and flute express human emotions in a unique way. He said Alhamra is proud to support classical music and provide artists a platform to keep these traditions alive. The audience responded warmly, giving standing ovations and showing great appreciation.—APP

SIUT team  
successful  
deceased  
organ  
transplant

**PESHAWAR:** A team of transplant surgeons of SIUT (Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation) successfully performed a deceased organ donation transplant of two kidneys. According to the institutes' sources the surgery was performed in early hours of this morning by a team of urologists and anesthetists. Giving the details a spokesperson of SIUT said one Sultan Zafar, a 23 year old student of dental surgery, met a fatal accident and suffered severe head injuries, says a press release. He was rushed to a local hospital in a comatose condition. He remained in the ICU for a week before he was declared brain dead. Subsequently he was brought to SIUT for deceased organ donation transplantation. The deceased's mother Dr Mehr Afroze who is a Consultant Nephrologist at SIUT took a courageous decision.—APP

LAHORE:Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that the Punjab government is enforcing a strict zero-tolerance policy against human trafficking.

In her message on the World Day Against Human Trafficking, the CM said it is her government's resolve to eliminate this grave violation of human rights, particularly the illegal trafficking and exploitation of children.

Calling human trafficking a modern form of slavery, the CM emphasized that this day serves to raise awareness and renew national commitment to combat this menace. "No child must be left behind

in the fight against human trafficking," she said, highlighting the provincial government's special focus on child protection. "Children are my red line, their protection is my top priority," the CM said. "I am determined that every child in Punjab is shielded from all forms of trafficking and exploitation. Such cruelty towards children will not be tolerated under any circumstances."

She urged parents to remain vigilant, especially when their children seek employment opportunities, and warned against falling prey to traffickers. CM Maryam Nawaz also appealed to the public to choose legal and safe

channels for overseas travel, pointing to recent tragedies involving illegal migration routes. "The drowning of dozens in boat on their way to Europe was a heart-wrenching human tragedy," she noted. The CM said, "These criminals do not hesitate to play with innocent lives in their lust for wealth. We are committed to eradicating this evil through strong enforcement, public awareness, and inter-agency coordination." She called on citizens to report any suspicious activity, reiterating that the fight against human trafficking requires joint responsibility and collective vigilance.—APP

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday announced an expansive and spirited schedule for the upcoming Independence Day celebrations across the province. Speaking at a press conference, the Chief Minister said the festivities, starting from August 1, will carry the theme "Marka-e-Haq," symbolising both national pride and the triumph of justice over oppression. The press conference, held at Sindh Information Dept Social Media Cell, was attended by provincial ministers, including Sharjeel Inam Memon, Nasir Shah, Saeed Ghani, Mohammad Bux Khan Mahar and Zulfiqar Shah.

Shah emphasised that this year's celebrations would go beyond ceremonial observances, aiming to ignite a renewed sense of patriotism, showcase Sindh's cultural richness, and honour the resilience of its people, especially those rebuilding their lives after recent floods. The festivities will commence on August 1, with the overall theme this year aligned with the "Marka-e-Haq" (Battle of Truth). The Chief Minister emphasised that this year's celebration will not only mark Independence Day but also the victory of truth against India, reminding the public of the pride of a free nation and contrasting it with the feelings of oppressed peoples. Highlighting economic progress over the past year, Murad Shah stated that improvement programs, including the flagship initiative "Uraan Pakistan," will be featured prominently in the independence celebrations.

A special decoration competition will be held, rewarding the best-decorated private buildings, cars, and vehicles. On August 13 and 14, a grand concert will take place at the National Stadium, including a fireworks display. Major events include, August 8: Event in Hyderabad; August 10: Event in Sukkur alongside a marathon and traditional donkey cart race from Clifton to Frere Hall; August 13: Cultural boat float from Sea View to Boat Basin; Women's cycling rally from Karachi to Chokundi. Over 114 programs organised by the Sports Department, including Cricket matches Mayor XI vs Ministers XI on August 8; Qalandars XI vs Bhatti XI at Moen Khan Academy on August 9, in which the Chief Minister himself will play.—DNA

**FAISALABAD:** Faisalabad has received 127 millimeters (mm) rain and heavy downpour triggered emergency response of Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) as it made its field staff on high alert. A WASA spokesman said here on Wednesday that following heavy monsoon showers in Faisalabad, the WASA swiftly activated its field operations on the instructions of WASA Managing Director (MD) Sohail Qadir Cheema. He said that the agency placed its field staff on high alert and launched immediate drainage operations across the city to minimize urban flooding.

ing and water accumulation at key locations. He said that the highest rainfall was recorded in Gulistan Colony at 127 millimeters (mm) followed by Jail Road with 113 millimeters whereas Ghulam Muhammad Abad witnessed 61 millimeters of rainfall. Similarly, the rainfall reports included 35 millimeters in Dogar Basti, 28 millimeters in Madina Town and 24 millimeters in Allama Iqbal Colony, he added.

He said that as the rain began, WASA promptly activated its dewatering machinery at major ponding points. He said that teams were deployed across low-lying areas to ensure rapid

drainage of accumulated rainwater. Meanwhile, MD WASA's Sohail Qadir Cheema said that all available resources were being mobilized for drainage operation. He said that drainage operations officially began immediately after the heavy downpour subsided to remove excess rainwater from main roads and central inter-sections. He said that WASA's teams would remain active in the field until complete drainage is achieved. He also directed the field staff to remain on duty round the clock to ensure quick response to any further rainfall. —APP

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presided over the 29th meeting of the Thar Coal & Energy Board (TCEB) to review ongoing projects and approved several strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing the region's coal mining and electricity generation capabilities. The CM stated that since 2019, Thar's coal power initiatives have already generated over 2,600 MW of power generation capacity, supplying electricity to millions of households at a significantly lower cost, around Rs 4.8 per kWh compared to power from imported coal (roughly Rs 19.5 per kWh, resulting in a savings of approximately \$1.3 billion in foreign exchange for the country. The meeting, held at CM House, was attended by provincial Energy Minister Nasir Shah, Education Minister Syed Sardar Shah, Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro, MNA Shazia Atta Marri, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Secretaries, and Members of the Board. (On video link) Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar and other federal government representatives. The chief minister is the chairman Thar Coal & Energy Board (TCEB). The Board deliberated on pivotal measures to bolster Pakistan's indigenous coal-based energy sector. The Board, recognised as a decisive entity for accelerating Thar coal development, reviewed ongoing projects and unanimously approved several strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing the region's coal mining and electricity generation capabilities. The Board ratified the indexed and adjusted coal tariff orders proposed by the Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC) for the periods of October to December 2024 and January to March 2025. This decision aligns coal pricing with current cost indices, ensuring stability and predictability in the fuel supply for power generation. Further advancing the Thar coal project, the Board sanctioned the Commercial Operations Date (COD) stage tariff for Sino Sindh Resources (Pvt.) Ltd. (SSRL), which operates a coal mine with a capacity of 7.8 million tonnes per annum at Thar Block-I. The approval signifies a major milestone, facilitating the full-scale launch of commercial mining operations that are crucial for domestic energy production. In a bid to enhance investment confidence in the Thar coal sector, TCEB has extended the 18 per cent Internal Rate of Return (IRR) incentive on equity for Thar coal mining projects until December 31, 2026. This extension aims to provide financial assurance to both current and prospective investors, mitigating potential delays in project timelines due to adverse investment conditions.—DNA

QUETTA: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection Syed Imran Ahmed Shah and Federal Minister of State for Education and Professional Training Wajihah Qamar on Wednesday said that poverty alleviation and development of Balochistan are the top priority of federal government to bring it as per other province. They said that the development and prosperity of women would play an important role in economic strength, poverty is not just a lack of income, it is a result of deprivation, lack of opportunities and unequal access to resources, poverty eradication and inclusive development are not possible alone saying that only through coordinated efforts between the government, international partners, civil society and the private sector, we create a future where every Pakistani gets equal opportunities, Balochistan would develop when its women and youth are empowered. They expressed these views while addressing an event titled Women Leadership and Modernization in Agriculture here at Governor House. On this occasion, Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhel, Provincial Education Minister Raheela Hameed Durran, Senator Sardar Umar Gorgaze, former Senator

Roshan Khuneed Barocha, Provincial Advisor for Women Development Dr. Rubaba Buledi, Secretary Agriculture Noor Ahmed Pirkan, Chief Executive Officer of Pakistan Poverty Evaluation Fund Nader Gul Bareach, Maulana Anwarul Haq Haqqani, Chief Executive Officer of Balochistan Rural Support Program Dr. Tahir Rashid and others were also present. Syed Imran Ahmed Shah said that this is my first visit to Balochistan, I make it clear that our hearts beat with Balochistan when I got the ministry, I promised that we would not feed fish but teach them to catch them, the second is to reduce poverty and Balochistan is the first priority in this regard. He said that it is clear how inclusive growth through social protection not only transforms people's lives but also directly targets the roots of poverty. At the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, we believe that poverty is not simply a lack of income but a result of deprivation, lack of opportunities and unequal access to resources, he said. In this regard, I would like to specifically highlight the efforts of the Pakistan Poverty. He said that Alleviation Fund, which is being implemented through the Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress Project, this six-year project is being imple-

mented with the financial support of the European Union, managed by the International Trade Centre, in partnership with FAO and PPAF. He stated that the scope of the project extends to a total of 22 disadvantaged and needy areas of the country including 12 districts of Sindh and 10 districts of Balochistan. The main objective of GRASS is to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth in rural Pakistan. Its specific goal is to create equal income and employment opportunities for women and men, and to increase the productivity and profitability of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) which are associated with primary production, services and value addition sectors as far as real achievements are concerned, they are before us. The Minister said that 399 matching grants were given under GRASSP at a cost of about Rs. 1.52 billion, which directly benefited rural entrepreneurs. The project signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with 24 financial institutions while 13 financial institutions were supported to provide credit guarantee schemes. As a result, 22 financial institutions are now providing specialized financial facilities.—APP



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JULY

July 01/Japan Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada National Day

July 01/Somalia Independence Day

July 04/USA Independence Day

July 05/Algeria Independence Day

July 09/Argentine Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium National Day

July 20/TRNC Independence Day

July 23/Egypt National Day

July 26/Cuba National Day

July 26/Liberia National Day

July 30/Morocco National Day

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133

Marriott.....051- 2826121

Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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& Rescue Services.4451122

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Motorway Police.9270601-20

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WASA Rawalpindi.5555489

CAA.....9281092



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MH.....561116

Cantt Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# CDA’s initiative of uplifting of Diplomatic Enclave lauded

Both sides agreed to enhance collaboration in horticulture and sustainable landscaping

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of the Netherlands in Pakistan, Hajo Provó Kluit called on Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa at CDA Headquarters. Chairman CDA warmly welcomed the Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy H.E. Hajo Provó Kluit. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest were discussed, including opportunities for collaboration in urban development, sustainable infrastructure, and environmental conservation. The Deputy Head of the Mission of Netherlands, Hajo Provó Kluit appreciated CDA's excellent day and night efforts followed by the successful resolution of drained water issue after recently unprecedented heavy rainfall spell during moon soon season. He also appreciated CDA's initiative of uplifting of Diplomatic Enclave, the ongoing projects of beautification especially making CDA Nursery as Gardenia Hub and digitalization of its services thus making Islamabad from safe city in to smart City. He expressed the Netherlands' interest in contributing expertise in smart city planning and green technologies. Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa briefed the Deputy Head of the Mission of Netherlands, Mr. Hajo Provo Kluit on the initiatives taken by CDA for uplifting of Diplomatic Enclave in line with the directions of the Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsn Naqvi thus transforming the Diplomatic Enclave into a model zone that meets the International Standards. This includes infrastructure improvement, beautification including landscaping &



horticulture, implementation of long-term upgrades of the infrastructure and related facilities. He also briefed about making CDA's Nursery as State of the art Gardenia Hub, thus making Islamabad as the most beautiful Capital of the world. He also expressed hope for future partnerships in areas such as waste management, water conservation, and eco-friendly urban planning and beautification. Both sides agreed to enhance collabora-

tion in horticulture and sustainable landscaping. Chairman CDA shared that CDA is actively promoting indigenous plantation drive and climate-resilient horticultural practices. The Deputy Head of Mission highlighted the Netherlands' expertise in tulips, Dutch roses, and sustainable horticulture technologies. It was discussed that the Netherlands could share its expertise in the field of horticulture, soil advisory, and other related areas.

Both sides agreed to continue dialogue and explore avenues for bilateral cooperation in urban development and beautification. H.E. Hajo Provó Kluit assured full cooperation and expressed his country's keen interest in deepening collaboration with CDA in the areas of green infrastructure, and urban beautification. The meeting concluded on a positive note, with both sides reaffirming their commitment to further deepen cooperation in areas of mutual

## Sahiwal Power Plant keeps country’s grid steady

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan battled record-breaking heatwaves and relentless monsoon rains in 2025, the Sahiwal Coal-Fired Power Plant (CFPP), with its 1,320 MW generation capacity, emerged as a key pillar of national grid stability, ensuring uninterrupted electricity supply when it was needed the most. According to official sources from Sahiwal Coal-Fired Power Plant, as electricity demand surged due to unprecedented heatwaves and heavy rainfall events, the plant's strategic location, robust base-load capability, and technical integration into the national transmission network allowed it to play a vital role in supporting the Independent System & Market Operator (ISMO) in maintaining uninterrupted power delivery across major regions. During the peak summer months of May to July 2025, Pakistan experienced some of the highest recorded temperatures in recent years. This led to a dramatic spike in electricity consumption, particularly in major urban and agricultural areas within the Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), Multan Electric Power Company Limited (MEPCO), and Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) jurisdictions. Air conditioning, refrigeration, irrigation pumping, and industrial operations collectively strained the system, pushing daily peak demand to nearly 30,000 MW. his surge put immense stress on the grid, increasing the risk of power imbalances, voltage drops, and forced load-shedding. In this critical scenario, the Sahiwal plant operated as a reliable anchor for the power system, delivering consistent base-load generation and helping keep system frequency close to the ideal 50 Hz mark. When other sources such as hydropower and wind showed variability due to changing water inflows and wind speeds, Sahiwal's steady output provided much-needed balance. Beyond frequency stability, the plant also helped manage voltage levels, especially in central and southern Punjab. Prior to the commissioning of Sahiwal, voltage fluctuations and overloaded transformers caused frequent outages in these regions. However, in 2025, the reactive power support from Sahiwal's generators stabilized voltages across the 500 kV and 220 kV networks, particularly during hot afternoons when air-conditioning demand was at its peak. This helped prevent under-voltage issues and reduced stress on downstream transformers. The plant's contribution extended beyond generation. Its integration into the national grid through the Yousafwala 500 kV substation improved power flow to high-demand areas. In past years, transformer banks at Yousafwala were operating below their rated capacities. However, with the operational stability and load dispatch coordination established between Sahiwal and ISMO, these assets were now being utilized optimally. In fact, an additional 600 MVA transformer was added to Yousafwala to accommodate the consistent power being injected from the plant. This led to improved voltage regulation and reduced technical losses in transmission.—DNA

## Pakistan strengthens action against human trafficking

ISLAMABAD: Marking the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons under the global theme “Human Trafficking is Organized Crime – End the Exploitation.” Stakeholders from various international organizations and the Government of Pakistan reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening collaboration and accelerating efforts to combat trafficking in persons (TIP) as a form of organized crime, with a strong emphasis on justice for victims, inter-agency coordination, and prevention through awareness. The event spotlighted the urgent need to recognize human trafficking as a transnational organized crime driven by powerful criminal syndicates that prey on the vulnerable for profit. Between 2020 and 2023, over 200,000 victims were detected globally – just the visible portion of a much larger crises. Each year, traffickers are exploiting more victims, over longer distances, with greater violence and for greater financial gain. The real number of unreported cases is

significantly high. Organised criminal networks are using migration routes, legal loopholes, global supply chains, and online platforms to carry out trafficking for forced labour, sexual exploitation, and coercion into criminal activities. As criminal tactics become more sophisticated, justice system must also respond with equal determination. This high-level event, was jointly hosted by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO), International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), and the International Returns & Reintegration Assistance (IRARA)—with kind financial support from international partners including Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, European Union, the US Embassy, British High Commission, the Government of Australia – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Norway.—DNA

## NDMA warns of urban flooding

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued nationwide impact-based weather alerts amid intensifying monsoon activity, warning of heightened risks of urban flooding, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), and landslides across vulnerable regions.

Citizens are strongly urged to adopt precautionary measures and avoid unnecessary travel during the forecast period, which spans through July 31 to August 3. According to NDMA's National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC), weak monsoon currents are penetrating upper and central Pakistan and are likely to intensify further under the influence of a westerly wave. This system poses significant hazards, particularly in urban and low-lying areas of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Urban flooding is forecast in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Lahore, Sialkot, Khushab, Narowal, and other cities, with sudden nullah swellings expected in northeastern Punjab, especially Bein, Basanter, and Deg Nullah. Citizens residing in these flood-prone areas are advised to remain vigilant and avoid unnecessary travel during intense weather. Rapid water level rises in streams, nullahs, and rivers can pose serious life-threatening risks, especially to those living near their banks or on hilly slopes. Meanwhile, widespread rainfall is also expected in various districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kalam, Mansehra, Battagram, Abbottabad, Haripur, Swabi, Mardan, Peshawar, Charsadda, Kohat, Hangu, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan and surrounding areas. These areas may experience localized urban and low-lying area flooding. There is also an increased risk of landslides and flash floods in hilly areas, along with the possibility of strong winds and thunderstorms which could knock down weak trees and power lines, causing short-term power outages. Rain and dust may also reduce visibility, increasing the likelihood of road accidents. At the same time, a Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) alert remains in place for the glaciated regions of Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where a combination of heavy rainfall and recent heat-induced glacier melt is likely to trigger GLOFs and flash floods until August 3. Vulnerable valleys include Badswat, Hinarchi, Tersat, Hundur, Darkut, Ishkamen, Shisper, Reshun, Brep, Booni, Sardar Gol, and Arkari. These areas are at heightened risk of sudden downstream flooding, landslides, damage to roads and power infrastructure, and disruption of access to remote areas. NDMA advises all relevant provincial and district administrations to ensure the operational readiness of flood response teams, clear drainage systems, and make necessary arrangements for possible evacuation and rescue operations. Tourists and travelers are strongly advised to avoid high-altitude and glacial regions of GB and KP during the forecast period. NDMA is closely monitoring the evolving situation through NEOC and remains in constant coordination with provincial and district disaster management authorities to ensure a timely and coordinated response. Citizens are encouraged to stay updated through official channels and download the “Pak NDMA Disaster Alert” mobile application for real-time alerts and guidelines.

## Sherry welcomes UK, France's recognition of Palestine

ISLAMABAD: Vice President of the Pakistan Peoples Party Senator Sherry Rehman, has welcomed the recent announcement by France and the United Kingdom to officially recognize the State of Palestine, calling it “a timely move that gives voice to the cries from Gaza that have shaken the global conscience. “After months of unimaginable suffering, the world is finally beginning to acknowledge the scale of Israel's assault on Gaza,” Senator Rehman said in a statement. “The UK and France's decision is not just symbolic, it is the first step toward justice, humanitarian accountability, and global peace.” She added that the sounds of children crying from hunger, the images of devastated families, and the relentless targeting of civilians have moved the conscience of the international community. “More than 60,000 Palestinians, many of them women and children have been martyred under Israel's brutal bombardment. Gaza is not living; Gaza is dying. And it is dying in slow motion, while food and water are being turned into weapons of war,” she said. Senator Rehman noted that following increased diplomatic pressure from France, the UK, and other countries, Israel has finally permitted limited humanitarian aid trucks into Gaza. However, she emphasized that such half-measures are not enough. “We need a complete restoration of humanitarian assistance, not piecemeal access. What the people of Gaza need is not just sympathy, they need protection, food, medicine, and above all, freedom.” Calling for a sustainable solution to the conflict, she reiterated that a two-state solution remains the only viable path to peace in the Middle East. “The international community must now go beyond condemnation and take concrete, coordinated, and immediate steps to enforce international humanitarian law.—APP

## IIUI extends admission deadline

ISLAMABAD: The International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) has announced an extension in the deadline for admission applications for Fall Semester programs. The new deadline is August 18, 2025. The admissions cover BS, LLB, LLM, MS and PhD programs. Applicants can visit the University's website at [www.cms.iiu.edu.pk](http://www.cms.iiu.edu.pk) to explore available programs, eligibility criteria, and fee structure, said a press release issued here on Wednesday. For admission-related queries, male applicants may contact via WhatsApp at 0319-5213192, while female applicants can reach out at 0319-5213193.—APP

## Saying “No” is her right, not a crime

ISLAMABAD: Islam grants every woman the right to accept or reject a marriage proposal without fear or coercion. The Constitution of Pakistan echoes this freedom under its protections for personal liberty and choice. And yet, across the country, a woman's refusal is too often seen not as autonomy, but defiance, a perceived insult that some men answer with cruelty, violence, or murder. On June 2, 2025, Sana Yousaf was shot twice in the chest by Umar Hayat, a man whose repeated proposals she had declined. In Rawalpindi, 18-year-old Sidra Bibi in a latest incident was allegedly murdered on the orders of a local jirga after marrying a man of her choice. These are not isolated cases. They reflect a dangerous cultural pattern where male ego, unchecked entitlement, and fragile masculinity respond to a woman's “no” with rage and revenge. Her right becomes a crime in the eyes of those around her. Maulana Hafiz Muhammad Yasir Attari, a respected Islamic scholar, talking to media said, “According to Shariah, a woman has full right to accept or reject a marriage proposal.—APP

## PNCA launches miniature painting workshop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) has launched a miniature painting workshop running from Monday to 7th August, 2025, as part of the 79th Independence Day celebrations, drawing participants from diverse professional backgrounds including engineers, doctors, advocates, architects, and artists. The workshop focuses on traditional miniature techniques, including monochrome (SUFFAID QALAM) and multicoloured (GUCHRANG) styles, reflecting growing interest in Pakistan's cultural heritage. Ms. Farrah an acclaimed visual artist and Associate Professor at COMSATS University Islamabad, is conducting the workshop. A graduate of National College of Arts (NCA) Lahore with expertise in Mughal miniature painting, she has exhibited in over 160 shows worldwide and received the President's Award for Prize of Performance in 2024. Her works are featured in prominent collections, including the World Bank and PNCA, National Art Gallery, permanent collection. The workshop will conclude with an exhibition of participants works and all attendees will receive certificates of participation. This initiative is part of PNCA's efforts to revive traditional art practices and promote cultural exchange among professionals.





## Briefs

## Police nab 12 drug dealers

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police have launched a major crackdown against drug peddlers, arresting 12 suspects during various operations conducted over the past 24 hours, on Wednesday. A public relations officer told APP that as part of these operations, police recovered over 12 kilograms of hashish, 4.37 kilograms of heroin, 2.361 kilograms of crystal meth (ice), and 32 bottles of liquor. The seized narcotics are estimated to be worth several million rupees in the local market. First Information Reports (FIRs) have been registered against all the accused, and large-scale investigations are now underway to identify and apprehend the broader network of facilitators involved in drug trafficking. The spokesperson said that the Islamabad Police, under the directives of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, are committed to eradicating drugs and safeguarding the future of the younger generation. "No element will be allowed to endanger the lives of our youth," the official added. He also urged the public to report any suspicious activity related to drug trafficking, assuring that the identity of informants will be kept strictly confidential.

## Pakistani engineer participates in training

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Rana Shaheer Mehmood, a senior engineer at the Operation and Maintenance Department of Pak Matari-Lahore Transmission Co. (PMLTC), took part in a smart grid information engineering training program hosted by Shenyang Normal University, China. This international training brought together 30 engineers and officials from 10 different countries. The focus was on the future of intelligent power systems, according to Shaheer shared. Led by experts from the State Grid Corp. of China, the training covered key topics such as Smart Grid development and global trends, high-voltage direct current (HVDC) systems, flexible energy systems and AI applications, distributed energy coordination, smart energy communication, and data privacy. Participants also took part in site visits to leading Chinese companies and power plants. The program included cultural exchange activities in Beijing, Shenyang, and Tieling, along with visits to energy R&D institutions and pioneering industry enterprises. According to Shaheer, the sessions were rich in technical insights and strategic foresight. "I return home with a deeper understanding of China's intelligent grid transformation and a renewed sense of responsibility to contribute to the future of Pakistan's power infrastructure," he concluded. The ±660 kV Matari-Lahore HVDC Transmission Line is one of the early-harvest projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiative.



ISLAMABAD: Spouses of Ambassadors of Japan and Philippines attending the annual general body meeting a multimedia presentation by Farhana Azim held at Islamabad Serena Hotel. Mrs. Wiqarunnisa Boolani also spoke on the occasion. – DNA

## Govt allocates over Rs 13b for key Gwadar projects

The project, revised and approved by ECNEC in January 2021 at a total cost of Rs. 38.02 billion, has so far consumed Rs. 32.89 billion. In PSDP 2025–26, Rs3 billion have been earmarked for its continuation

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government has allocated more than Rs. 13.63 billion for various infrastructure, education, energy, and social development projects in Gwadar. The funding aims to accelerate the district's transformation and broader national development goals. While most of the projects are located within the Gwadar district—focusing on city infrastructure, services, and institutional development—some, such as the Gwadar-Ratodero Road, serve as vital external linkages, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. Although these connecting projects lie outside the city geographically, they play a crucial role in integrating Gwadar with inland Pakistan and facilitating economic flow. One of the largest allocations under PSDP, 2025-26 has been made for the construction of the Gwadar-Ratodero Road Project (M-8). The project, revised and approved by ECNEC in January 2021 at a total cost of Rs. 38.02 billion, has so far consumed Rs. 32.89 billion. In PSDP 2025–26, Rs3 billion have been earmarked for its continuation. The New Gwadar International Airport, a flagship initiative to enhance

regional and international air connectivity, will receive Rs. 4 billion this year. The total cost of the project stands at Rs. 54.98 billion, with Rs. 42.71 billion already spent. For the Gwadar Safe City Project, which aims to modernize urban security through surveillance infrastructure, Rs. 1.5 billion have been allocated. The project's total cost is Rs. 2.48 billion, with Rs. 738 million spent so far. The Establishment of University of Gwadar (Phase-I), approved in 2022 with a total cost of Rs. 2.49 billion, has been allotted Rs. 500 million for the current fiscal year. In the water sector, the long-standing project for Necessary Facilities of Fresh Water Treatment, Supply and Distribution, approved in 2010, will receive Rs. 470.648 million. Since its inception, Rs.23 billion have been spent on the project. The Rehabilitation of Old Town Gwadar (Provision of Missing Facilities), underway since 2021, has been allocated Rs. 400 million in the current PSDP. Similarly, the construction of Shehzanik Dam in District Gwadar, approved in 2021, has received Rs. 220 million this year, with cumulative spending of Rs. 1.75 billion. To improve sanitation, the Gwadar Smart

Environmental Sanitation System and Landfill Project, approved in May 2024, will get Rs. 200 million. The Gwadar Development Authority (Business Plan), initially approved in 2010, will receive Rs. 250 million. In education, Rs. 100 million have been allocated for the Establishment of FG Junior Public School Gwadar. The project, approved in February 2024, has a total cost of Rs. 384.667 million, with Rs. 184.667 million spent to date. The Award of Scholarships to Students from Gwadar under the HEC scheme, launched in 2017, has been allotted Rs. 18.344 million this year, bringing the cumulative disbursement to Rs. 146.769 million. In the emerging blue economy sector, the Gwadar Blue Economy Centre (Phase-I), approved by CDWP in June 2024 at a total cost of Rs. 3.92 billion, will receive Rs. 15 million in the current fiscal year. Land acquisition for 750 acres at Grandani Junubi, in line with the Gwadar Master Plan, has been allotted Rs. 1.11 billion. The project, approved in June 2024, is estimated at Rs. 3.92 billion. The Ancillary Facilities at GPA Housing Complex, Gwadar, will get Rs. 125.435 million against a total cost of Rs. 225.435 million. The Construction of Model Custom Collectorate Gwadar has been allocated Rs. 680.833 million.

To support the city's power infrastructure, Rs. 384 million have been earmarked for the ongoing scheme of six feeders for Free Zone North and South. The project had already consumed Rs. 544.736 million by the end of the previous fiscal year. In the maritime sector, the Strengthening of Oceanographic Research Sub Station Gwadar, approved in 2021 with a cost of Rs. 300 million, has received Rs. 150 million in PSDP 2025-26. For the Project Management Cell for the Creation of Shipyard at Gwadar, approved in 2020 at a cost of Rs. 773.256 million, Rs. 186 million have been allocated this year. To date, the project has consumed Rs9.28 billion. The Infrastructure Works of Off-Dock Terminal at Gwadar, approved in May 2025 with a cost of Rs. 496.768 million, will receive Rs. 100 million. Meanwhile, the Construction of Eastbay Expressway Phase-II, though still with the status of "unapproved" and referred to ECNEC in June 2025, has been allocated Rs. 200 million out of a total estimated cost of Rs. 30.13 billion. Lastly, Rs. 10 million have been allocated for the Acquisition of Land for Rail Connectivity from Gwadar (Km 901) via Besima to Jacobabad (Km 387), a project approved in 2024 with a total cost of Rs. 15.59 billion.

## Pak-China vocational institute students visit Gwadar Port

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Students from Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute visited Gwadar Port, including greenhouse, desalination plant and port area, hosted by China Overseas Ports Holding Company Pakistan (Pvt.). In the greenhouse, students learned about seedling raising under artificial conditions such as manipulating temperature, humidity, and light to optimize growth and development. Later, they visited the China-aided Gwadar desalination plant, which just became operational on July 23. "Currently, the desalination plant is supplying 200 tons of water to the urban area daily, benefiting about 40,000 people in Gwadar," COPHC Pakistan revealed. "The desalination plant utilizes reverse osmosis (RO) membrane technology, which is widely considered the most mature method for water desalination in the world and known for its high efficiency and low energy consumption."

## Call for enhancing BISP role in community women resilience

ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) is not just a financial lifeline—it is a transformative initiative that restores dignity, builds resilience, and empowers the most marginalized women in Pakistan. This was stated by Chairperson of BISP, Senator Rubina Khalid during a meeting with Executive Director of Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) and a leading voice in climate advocacy and environmental diplomacy, Munir Ahmed. Munir Ahmed called on the Senator Rubina Khalid to congratulate on her historic third consecutive term in the Senate. Senator Rubina Khalid briefed Mr. Ahmed on BISP's progress and the positive impact of its initiatives across Pakistan.—APP

## SECP reverses unlawful action to avoid contempt of court

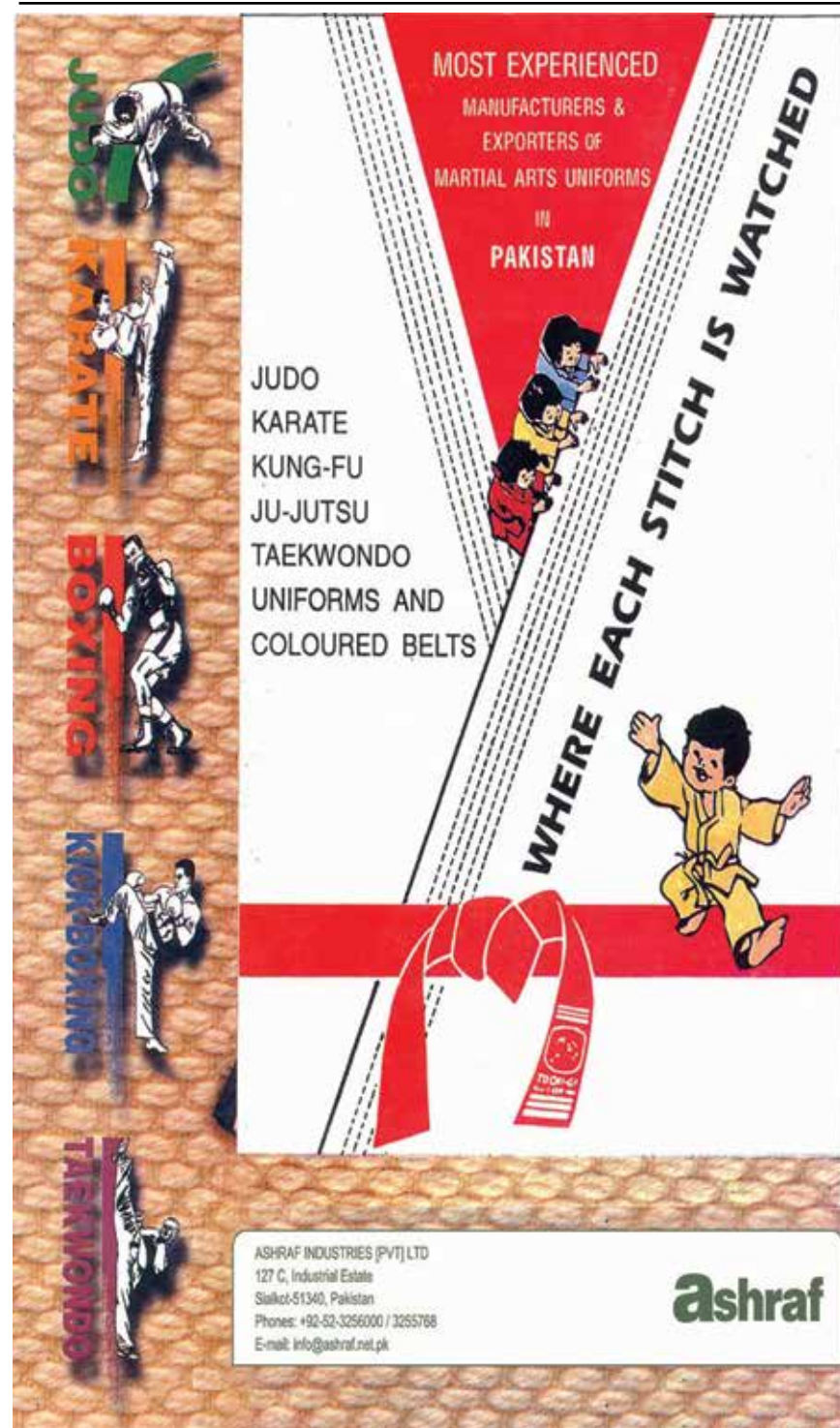
DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has agreed to immediately withdraw a controversial press release issued on 21 May 2025, following objections raised by United Insurance Company Pakistan Ltd (UIC). The assurance was conveyed to the Islamabad High Court by SECP's Chief Prosecutor, Syed Asad Haider, during a hearing. The development came as the court heard a contempt of court filed by the UIC against SECP Chairman Akif Saeed and others, represented by advocates Ahmad Hassan and Ch. Muhammad Atif. They argued that the press release had adversely impacted UIC's business operations and reputation. Additional Attorney General Rashid Hanif appeared on behalf of the federation, while Chief Prosecutor Asad Haider and Special Prosecutor Hasnain Raza represented SECP. The respondents assured the court that the SECP had decided to withdraw the press release without delay, an illegal stance that

was reversed. In response, the court noted that there was no need to proceed further. However, the petitioner's counsel stated that a final decision should depend on whether SECP files a formal compliance report confirming the withdrawal. If such a report is submitted, the petition will not be pressed. The court directed that the compliance report be submitted before the next hearing and adjourned the case to 12 August 2025. It may be recalled that Assistant Attorney General Asia Ba-tool, in a letter dated 21 July, warned the SECP about the contempt proceedings and conveyed the High Court's displeasure over the non-compliance with earlier directives. As previously reported, the SECP had barred UIC from the guarantee business illegally and issued a damaging press release without any defensible regulatory basis. The move triggered intense industry backlash, with stakeholders warning of increased uncertainty in the insurance sector. The SECP has so far not publicly explained the rationale behind either the issuance or the withdrawal of the 21 May release. However, legal observers say the Commission's latest decision reflects a retreat amid mounting judicial scrutiny and reputational loss.

## AIOU launches tree plantation campaign

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has taken a significant and purposeful step to address environmental pollution and climate change challenges by officially launching the monsoon tree plantation campaign titled "Plant Trees, Build the Nation." The campaign was inaugurated by the University's Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood who planted a Duchki Ficus tree in the Ladies Park of the university's residential colony, said a press release on Wednesday. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, Dr. Nasir Mahmood emphasized that planting trees is not just an environmental activity, it is a commitment to our collective survival, a healthier society and a brighter future. He noted that this is not merely a slogan but a practical movement that will lead us toward a greener and more prosperous Pakistan.—DNA



## Medical expert warns of alarming obesity surge

enced diets and regular physical activity while calling on health authorities to launch widespread awareness campaigns. "Addressing obesity today means preventing a future overwhelmed by chronic diseases," she concluded

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Medical expert Wednesday sounded the alarm on the rapid increase in obesity, especially among the youth, attributing it to poor eating patterns, inactivity and excessive screen use with about 81% of women and 74% of men now facing obesity and its dangerous health consequences. In an exclusive conversation with a local news channel, Dr. Zubala Yasir Lutfi highlighted the urgent need for immediate public action to combat the obesity crisis. She stressed the importance

of parental counseling, urging parents to guide their children towards healthier habits early on to prevent obesity and its serious health consequences. Without strong awareness campaigns and community involvement, the nation risks facing a severe healthcare burden in the near future, she added. "Obesity is not just a personal issue it is a public emergency that threatens the well-being of our entire society. We must prioritize education, promote active lifestyles and regulate unhealthy food marketing to protect our younger generation," Dr. Lutfi urged.

Dr. Zubala Yasir Lutfi warned that obesity is no longer a cosmetic issue but a medical emergency. "We are seeing diseases in teenagers that were once limited to adults. This must be addressed immediately". Experts are urging parents, schools and communities to raise awareness, promote physical activity, and reduce junk food consumption to prevent long-term health damage. She emphasized the direct connection between obesity and a range of serious health problems. "Explained that conditions such as weak bones, high blood pressure, heart disease and fatty liver are increas-

ingly being seen in patients struggling with obesity, adding, these issues are no longer limited to older adults as we are now witnessing them in much younger people due to rising obesity rates. Dr. Lutfi stressed the importance of early intervention and lifestyle changes to prevent these complications. She urged families to focus on balanced diets and regular physical activity while calling on health authorities to launch widespread awareness campaigns. "Addressing obesity today means preventing a future overwhelmed by chronic diseases," she concluded.



## France and UK to recognize Palestinian state in September

**I**N a landmark diplomatic development, France and the United Kingdom have reportedly agreed to recognize the State of Palestine by September this year. The joint move by two of Europe's most influential powers signals a tectonic shift in the region's political landscape, potentially opening the floodgates for similar recognition by other European Union member states.

Sources familiar with the matter suggest that the decision was pre-planned and finalized during a recent high-level meeting between British Prime Minister and former U.S. President Donald Trump, who continues to exert significant influence in transatlantic policy circles. This strategic move appears to be tied to the evolving situation in Gaza, which is now almost entirely under Israeli control, with Hamas said to be effectively eliminated.

The recognition comes at a time when the humanitarian cost in Gaza has drawn widespread global criticism. Over the past months, Gaza has faced intense Israeli military operations aimed at dismantling Hamas's militant infrastructure. While Israel claims success in neutralizing the threat, the toll on civilian life has been catastrophic, with tens of thousands of innocent Palestinians killed or displaced. Many observers view this joint recognition as a calculated post-conflict step—one that Europe withheld until Israel had achieved its military objectives. With Hamas largely dismantled, Western governments now see little strategic risk in granting Palestine statehood recognition. The underlying logic appears to be: the threat is neutralized, and formalizing Palestinian statehood may serve as a stabilizing factor. France and the UK have long advocated for a two-state solution in principle, but had held off on formal recognition, citing concerns over Palestinian governance, Israeli security, and regional stability. Now, with the military equation significantly altered in Israel's favor and the geopolitical landscape shifting, the calculus appears to have changed.

European diplomats argue that recognition could be the first step toward rebuilding Palestinian institutions and jumpstarting economic development. The recognition will open doors for Palestine to engage in bilateral trade, seek international loans and investments, and establish diplomatic and commercial ties with a broader range of countries. It is anticipated that this could usher in a new era of growth and reconstruction, especially in the battered Gaza Strip.

Interestingly, even many Palestinians are expected to welcome this development, despite its controversial timing. For years, Palestinian leaders and civil society have pushed for recognition as a sovereign state, and many may view this moment as a hard-earned diplomatic victory—albeit at a devastating cost. The recognition from two global powers could breathe new life into the long-stalled dream of an independent Palestinian state.

While some Palestinian factions may criticize the move as too little too late,

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or as legitimizing the destruction of Gaza, others see it as an opportunity to pivot toward state-building and international legitimacy. The Palestinian Authority, in particular, is expected to leverage this development to consolidate its governance over both the West Bank and Gaza, provided international donors support such a transition. Following the UK and France's lead, it is likely that other European nations—particularly Spain, Ireland, Belgium, and Norway—may move to recognize Palestine as well. Already, several of these countries have shown sympathy toward Palestinian aspirations and frustration with Israel's handling of the Gaza situation. If a critical mass of EU countries follow suit, it could prompt the European Union to adopt a formal bloc-wide recognition of Palestine, significantly bolstering its international status. Such a move would have implications far beyond Europe, potentially influencing the stance of other Western allies and institutions like the UN and IMF.

With international recognition comes new responsibilities—and opportunities. A recognized State of Palestine could begin signing trade agreements, joining international organizations, and establishing embassies. Global companies and humanitarian organizations might find it easier to operate in Palestinian territories, thus aiding reconstruction and economic development. This period may also see significant foreign investment, particularly from Gulf nations. Countries like Qatar, the UAE, and especially Saudi Arabia may pour resources into rebuilding Gaza and supporting new infrastructure projects in the West Bank. Interestingly, the recognition of Palestine may also unlock a new phase of diplomacy regarding Israel. Reports suggest that once Palestine achieves widespread recognition, efforts may be renewed to normalize ties between Israel and more Muslim-majority nations. Saudi Arabia is expected to lead this initiative, while Pakistan—long a vocal supporter of Palestinian rights—may also reconsider its stance. Pakistan has historically linked its recognition of Israel to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. With that condition potentially met, Islamabad may find it diplomatically feasible to explore formal relations with Tel Aviv, albeit cautiously. Such a shift would mark a dramatic evolution in Pakistan's foreign policy and could reshape regional alliances.

While the recognition of Palestine by France and the UK is being hailed by some as a positive and overdue step, it is impossible to ignore the tragic cost that has preceded it. The massive loss of life in Gaza, particularly among civilians, casts a long shadow over what should have been a diplomatic milestone.

Many critics argue that this recognition could have—and should have—been achieved without the devastation. The current move, they say, appears more like a post-conflict endorsement of Israeli objectives than a genuine stand for Palestinian self-determination. Still, if managed wisely, this recognition could mark the beginning of a new chapter for the Middle East—one in which both Palestinians and Israelis are afforded dignity, security, and the chance to thrive. As more nations prepare to follow France and the UK, the world will be watching to see whether this diplomatic breakthrough leads to genuine peace—or simply another pause in a seemingly endless cycle of conflict. The recognition of Palestine is not just a political statement—it is a moral and humanitarian acknowledgment that a people long denied sovereignty deserve a state of their own. The next steps—reconstruction, reconciliation, and regional diplomacy—will determine whether this historic moment becomes a foundation for peace or just another headline in a troubled history.

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

Qamar Bashir



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

**D**ONALD 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 peo-

ple, 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**

## Why Macron's recognition move is significant

Chris Doyle

Critics, largely American and Israeli, say Macron is just trying to appease his Muslim voters or attract investment from rich Gulf states. This ignores the massive public support in France for Palestinian rights. Another absurd argument is that this is a reward for Hamas and the atrocities it perpetrated on Oct. 7, 2023. This was trotted out by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, among many others. Why is it absurd? Hamas has not been calling for a two-state solution or pushing for the recognition of a Palestinian state

**S**ACRE bleu. France will recognize a state of Palestine. Is this a shock or not something to get worked up about? This was posted on social media by President Emmanuel Macron last Thursday. He said he would formalize recognition at the UN General Assembly in September. This was much touted, not least by the French leader himself, even when addressing the UK Parliament. Finally, he has confirmed his commitment, no doubt trying to carve out some legacy in his last two years of office and to show that France is still relevant on the world stage. Will this matter? France joins 147 other states in making this move. It will be the first G7 member to do so. Sweden, Spain, Ireland and Slovenia are so far the only EU member states to have made the move while being part of the bloc, so Macron's announcement is significant. Several other European states did so in the 1980s, including Poland and Hungary during the communist era. Who else might follow suit? France's move will look wiser if others follow. Belgium is a candidate. It has been one of Europe's most ardent critics of Israel. Reports indicate it might make a decision in early September. Canada is also a possibility. However, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni veered away from this. And Germany is unlikely to shift. Then there is the UK. Many hoped that Prime Minister Keir Starmer would consent to a joint position with France. A British-French recognition would have carried more weight. The two colonial powers, the co-authors of the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement, the two European members of the UN Security Council working together symbolically would have had strength. This option has been much debated in Britain over recent months. The government never ruled it out, arguing

it was waiting for clarity from the French side. In the end, Starmer has not bitten despite 221 British members of Parliament writing to him to push for this. Starmer had a choice: either side with US President Donald Trump or join Macron. He chose the former.

It is a reward for the Palestinian national movement, represented by the PLO and dominated by Fatah. Chris Doyle: Palestinians have tended not to be nearly as excited as some politicians in Europe, or even the Western media. Why, many ask, was this not done more than a decade ago or even earlier? Then, there would have been a genuine dynamic toward some form of solution. Why only now as Gaza burns and the Israeli colonization of the West Bank is on steroids? It is now only recognizing a failed dream, not a likely reality. In a choice between recognition and a ceasefire with proper aid access, those in Gaza would definitely take the latter. Talking to Palestinians in Gaza, many dismiss such symbolic gestures. To survive, they need food and water, even above a ceasefire. Death by bombing or shelling is far more preferable for them and their families than the horror of death by starvation or thirst. Recognition will not save a single starving baby. It will not provide lifesaving medicine for those struck down with disease. It will not stop the Israeli attacks on tents in the so-called safe zone.

Critics, largely American and Israeli, say Macron is just trying to appease his Muslim voters or attract investment from rich Gulf states. This ignores the massive public support in France for Palestinian rights. Another absurd argument is that this is a reward for Hamas and the atrocities it perpetrated on Oct. 7, 2023. This was trotted out by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, among many others. Why is it absurd?

Hamas has not been calling for a two-state solution or pushing for the recognition of a Palestinian state. Every single propagandist for Israel has routinely reminded the world that Hamas wants, in their view, to destroy Israel. If this is a reward for Hamas, it is not one it wished for.

It is a reward for the Palestinian national movement, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization and dominated by Fatah, the rival of Hamas. This is the movement that Western states, certainly European ones, have been supporting. They back the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah in spite of all its flaws. One of Hamas' criticisms of the national movement — one that often hits home among frustrated Palestinians — is that the PLO recognized Israel but the recognition was not mutual. Israel did not recognize a Palestinian state. The PLO abandoned violence but Israel did not. The PLO sought to achieve Palestinian liberation through negotiation but could not liberate one inch of Palestine. This is why recognition matters to the PLO, the party that abandoned the armed struggle and is prepared to talk to Israel, unlike Hamas. So, failing to recognize a state of Palestine undermines the nationalists and boosts the Islamists, which in theory runs against the agenda of European states. Macron deserves some praise. He could have done nothing. But his moral responsibility toward Palestinians is not anchored in recognition. Real leadership demands action to stop the genocide in Gaza. On that front, he is failing just like the rest of the world's leaders. If you cannot stop the genocide, recognition means nothing.

**– Chris Doyle is director of the Council for Arab-British Understanding in London. X: @Doylech**



## Briefs

## India escalates proxy war after...

FROM PAGE 01

The CCC's observation echoed the remarks made by Director General ISPR Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry during an interview with Al Jazeera where he said that New Delhi was acting as a "bully" and using terror cells and carrying out transnational killings in Pakistan. Lt-Gen Chaudhry, while stressing the available evidence, also pointed out the involvement of Indian intelligence officers in transnational killings through criminal enterprise to carry out targeted killing in Pakistan.

## Pahalgam attack: Pak hits back at India...

FROM PAGE 01

the Prime Minister of Pakistan for a transparent and independent probe into the Pahalgam attack." Slamming the Indian attacks on Pakistan, Shafqat said that New Delhi chose the path of belligerence and aggression. He added that India acted as a judge, jury, and executioner at the same time. "Against this backdrop, any claims regarding the so-called 'Operation Mahadev' do not hold any significance for us." "The account given by the Indian home minister is replete with fabrications, leading to serious questions about its credibility." "Is it a mere coincidence that the alleged perpetrators of the Pahalgam Attack were killed at the start of the Lok Sabha debate?" Shafqat questioned. "We also reiterate our unequivocal rejection of the ceaseless Indian statements on establishing a 'new normal' in bilateral relations. As we have already shown through our resolute actions in May 2025, we shall forcefully counter any future aggression." Shafqat said: "For us, the only 'normal' in bilateral relations is respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and adherence to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter."

## US to impose 25% tariff on India...

FROM PAGE 01

India now joins a growing list of countries facing higher tariffs under Trump's "Liberation Day" trade policy, aimed at reshaping US trade relations by demanding greater reciprocity. The White House had previously warned India about its high average applied tariffs – nearly 39% on agricultural products, with rates climbing to 45% on vegetable oils and around 50% on apples and corn. The setback comes despite earlier commitments by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Trump to conclude the first phase of a trade deal by autumn 2025 and expand bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030, up from \$191 billion in 2024. US manufacturing exports to India, valued at around \$42 billion in 2024, as well as energy exports such as liquefied natural gas, crude oil, and coal, could also face retaliatory action if India chooses to respond in kind.

## Major Arab countries...

FROM PAGE 01

Hamas to leave Gaza, allowing the Palestinian Authority to administer the coastal territory. The text also condemned the Hamas raid against Israel of Oct 7, 2023. France, which co-chaired the conference with Saudi Arabia, called the declaration "both historic and unprecedented." "For the first time, Arab countries and those in the Middle East condemn Hamas, condemn Oct 7, call for the disarmament of Hamas, call for its exclusion from Palestinian governance, and clearly express their intention to normalise relations with Israel in the future," said French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot.

## Pakistan likely to miss out on cricket at LA Olympics 2028

*Cricket at LA Olympics to start on July 12 with medal matches scheduled to be played on July 20 and 29*

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The International Cricket Council (ICC) has finalised the qualification process for cricket at the 2028 Olympics, with reports from British media outlet The Guardian indicating that Pakistan is unlikely to qualify for the men's event. Following discussions at its annual general meeting in Singapore, the ICC has approved a regional qualification format to decide the participating teams. The men's tournament at the Los Angeles Games will include six teams, with one automatic slot reserved for the host nation, the United States. Under the proposed model, the highest-ranked team from each continent will qualify, ensuring representation from all regions.

This means India is expected to claim Asia's spot, while Australia (Oceania), South Africa (Africa) and Great Britain (Europe) will also qualify automatically. With these allocations, Pakistan, Sri



Lanka and New Zealand will miss out on direct qualification. One of the Caribbean nations could replace USA if their governance issues are not resolved after the ICC called on USA Cricket's Board to resign this month. Pa-

kistan and New Zealand are unhappy with the ICC's decision, but while it has yet to be ratified by the board it is unlikely to be reversed. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) also pushed for the regional qualification system to ensure

global representation and promote cricket's international appeal.

This format, however, leaves just one spot open after India, Australia, South Africa, Great Britain and the USA have confirmed their places.

The ICC will decide how the sixth and final berth will be awarded. There is speculation that it could go to a representative team from the Caribbean Islands, similar to the arrangement during the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, where Barbados represented the region.

The men's and women's cricket tournaments at LA 2028 will be played in the T20 format. The ICC has already confirmed that both competitions will run from July 12 to July 29, 2028, with the women's medal match scheduled for July 20 and the men's final on July 29. Cricket will make its return to the Olympic stage after 128 years. The sport's only previous appearance was at the 1900 Paris Games, where Great Britain defeated France in a one-off match to claim gold.

## PSB Enforces Sports Funding Regulations 2025

**The aim of Sports Funding Regulations 2025 is to ensure transparent, efficient, and performance-driven use of public funds**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has officially enforced the "Sports Funding Regulations 2025" aimed at ensuring the transparent and performance-based utilization of government funds and providing financial support to sports federations on merit. According to the regulations, submission of annual performance reports, action plans, and budget estimates is mandatory for availing funding. Moreover, the funds will only be spent on approved athletes and officials. As per the regulations approved by PSB Director

General Muhammad Yasir Pirzada, the Board reserves the right to conduct financial inspections or audits at any time, while the Auditor General of Pakistan may also audit grants-in-aid. Federations are required to operate their bank accounts under dual signatories and must declare all financial sources, including sponsorships and donations, to the Board. DG PSB Muhammad Yasir Pirzada stated, "The aim of the Sports Funding Regulations 2025 is to ensure the transparent, efficient, and performance-driven use of public funds. Through these regulations, we seek to promote a culture of merit, accountability, and equitable distribution in sports."

All payments under these regulations must be made via cross cheque or electronic transfer, and cash payments exceeding Rs. 25,000 are strictly prohibited. Any additional expenses due to extended stays must be personally borne by the individuals or institutions concerned. Each federation must undergo an annual audit by a registered auditor and

publish the audit report publicly. Additionally, procurement must follow competitive quotation processes to ensure transparency. If any federation fails to utilize the full amount of funds after an event, it is obligated to return the remaining amount within 30 days, unless written approval is obtained from the Board. The PSB has made it clear that misuse of funds, submission of inadequate or suspicious documentation, or violation of regulations may result in suspension of future funding, disciplinary action, or even blacklisting of the respective federation or individual.

As per the regulations, grant approval remains at the discretion of PSB and cannot be claimed as a right by any federation. The Board reserves the authority to modify, relax, or impose additional conditions based on national interest, equity, or sports representation. It is also clarified that all previous notifications, policies, and instructions stand nullified with the implementation of the new regulations.

## Governor, FPCCI delegation discuss "Maraka-e-Haq

KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori held a meeting with the delegation of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FPCCI) led by its Senior Vice President Saqib Fayyaz Maggo and discussed regarding preparation to mark Independence Day this year in befitting manner. According to spokesman of the Governor House, Kamran Khan Tessori emphasized the vital role of the business community in the "Maraka-e-Haq – Independence Day" campaign. The participation of the business community is extremely important in this national initiative, Governor stated.

Governor Tessori further remarked that whatever we are today is because of this country. It is our collective responsibility to celebrate Independence Day in a dignified and befitting manner. The delegation was briefed on the ongoing preparations at the Governor House for the "Maraka-e-Haq" campaign, part of the Independence Day celebrations. – APP

## Jordan's Royal Tank Museum earns spot among world's top attractions

ASTANA: The Royal Tank Museum has been named a recipient of TripAdvisor's 2025 Travelers' Choice Award, placing it among the top 10% of global tourist destinations based on consistently high visitor ratings and reviews, Petra reports. The award follows the museum's ranking as the eighth most recommended attraction out of 120 destinations in Amman on TripAdvisor, the world's largest travel platform. The annual award is based on a full year of data from travelers around the world, reflecting exceptional visitor experiences and service quality.

According to TripAdvisor, the museum's selection for the prestigious accolade highlights its growing status as a leading cultural and heritage site in the region. Visitors praised the museum's curated exhibits, immersive storytelling, and high standards of organization and hospitality, comparing it favorably with world-class military museums.

Director General of the Royal Tank Museum, Nark Sejjaja, said the recognition reflects the team's commitment to delivering a distinguished and enriching experience to visitors. "Winning this global award underscores our mission to present Jordan's military legacy in a way that is both educational and engaging for all audiences," he said. He credited the museum's success to the dedication of its staff and the continued support of its Board of Trustees. "The board's unwavering backing has enabled us to maintain our leadership among international military museums and to represent Jordan with pride on the global cultural map," Sejjaja added. He noted that the museum's blend of traditional displays and modern interactive technology offers a unique experience for visitors of all ages, encouraging learning through exploration. Sejjaja emphasized that the award will serve as a driving force for the museum to continue raising the bar in terms of content and presentation. "This honor motivates us to strengthen the museum's role as a national institution and a premier destination for military history enthusiasts," he said. – APP

## One man's 30 years of toil to save Sierra Leone's orphaned chimps

TACUGAMA: Bala Amarasekaran has never felt like running his world-renowned sanctuary for orphaned chimpanzees in Sierra Leone was truly work, having come to his calling only after several unexpected twists of fate. Standing in his Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary not far from the capital Freetown, he tenderly patted a young ape's nose and stroked its cheek, whispering a few words of encouragement into its ear. A nearby adolescent, visibly jealous, grabbed at Amarasekaran's hand, pandering for his attention with an intense gaze. The chimps are not just Amarasekaran's life and work, but his family too. Since 1995 he has fought for them, nurtured them and preserved the oasis he created for them against an onslaught of dangers.

"I never feel I come to work because the chimps are a part of my life," Amarasekaran told AFP. "It's my passion, I come to see my family". In the face of armed rebel attacks during the country's civil war, mass deforestation and even Ebola, Amarasekaran has ensured the chimps' safety. In the midst of it all, Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary has become the country's leading ecotourism destination and a model for environmental conservation in west Africa. The little apes in the enclosure visited by Amarasekaran had only recently arrived following traumatic life experiences. Members of the critically endangered Western chimpanzee subspecies, the orphans are often malnourished or otherwise wounded by bullets or machetes, sometimes after being sold by poachers and kept as pets. At the sanctuary, located inside the country's Western Area Peninsula National Park, they will first be rehabilitated then freed into its dozens of hectares of protected tropical rainforest, already home to 123 primates. – Agencies

## One German climber rescued

*Aerial, ground teams working around the clock to locate missing mountaineer, says spokesperson*

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A rescue operation is underway in Gilgit-Baltistan region after two German mountaineers were caught in a landslide while attempting to summit Laila Peak (6,096 metres) in the Hushy valley of Ghanche district. The accident occurred on Monday when Dahlmeier was hit by a landslide. She was climbing with her partner, Marina Eva, also from Germany. In a statement, GB government spokesperson Faizullah Faraz said that one of the climbers, Marina Eva, was rescued on Tuesday. He said that the second German mountaineer Laura Dahlmeier remains missing and is believed to be injured. "Aerial and ground teams are working around the clock to locate her," he said in a statement. Dahlmeier retired from the sport in 2019, aged 25, a year after becoming the first female biathlete to achieve a sprint and pursuit double at the same Olympics.

The recent incident came after a Czech tourist, Klára Kolouchová, lost her life earlier this month after falling into a ravine near the Nan-



ga Parbat base camp in Gilgit-Baltistan, officials confirmed.

The 46-year-old mountaineer was part of a multinational expedition aiming to summit the 8,126-metre peak, known as Pakistan's "Killer Mountain." The country's northern mountainous regions have experienced

heavy flooding and landslides, killing several local tourists during the current monsoon spell of rains. Flooding and other rain-related accidents have killed 288 people in Pakistan since the monsoon season began in late June, says the country's National Disaster Management Authority.

## PMYP-Qalandars Trials Ignite South Punjab's Cricket Dreams

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), in collaboration with Lahore Qalandars, concluded a highly successful four-day cricket talent hunt in South Punjab in a sincere effort to discover and nurture grassroots cricket talent. Spanning two days each in Bahawalpur and Multan, the trials witnessed an overwhelming turnout of over 15,000 aspiring cricketers, including both boys and girls, all driven by a shared dream, to represent Pakistan on the international cricket stage. Held under the banner of the PM Talent Hunt Youth Sports League, facilitated by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), the trials aimed to identify top-tier talent from remote regions and provide them with a pathway to professional cricket. The initiative culminated in the selection

of one male and one female team from both the cities, featuring 16 boys and 16 girls, who displayed exceptional potential and passion. The first day in each city was reserved for male participants, followed by female trials on the second day. The sessions were rigorous, overseen by the Lahore

Qalandars' professional coaching staff, and focused on identifying raw talent, athleticism, and game awareness. This initiative reflects a broader national vision, to revive cricket from the grassroots and bring opportunities to regions often overlooked by mainstream talent pipelines.

Lahore Qalandars CEO Atif Rana praised the leadership and vision behind the initiative. "We are incredibly grateful to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, PMYP Chairman Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan, and the entire Prime Minister Youth Programme team for their all-out support and vision in making these

nationwide trials a huge success.

"The passion we witnessed in Bahawalpur and Multan was simply unmatched. The youth of this cricket-crazy nation have once again shown that if given the opportunity, they are ready to shine. We are proud to partner in this journey and congratulate all those who made it through the trials. This is just the beginning," he added. Atif Rana also acknowledged the hospitality and cooperation of local institutions, especially Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Kamran and the administration of Islamia University of Bahawalpur, for their 'excellent arrangements and lush cricketing facilities'.

"This is the opportunity of a lifetime. We are thankful to PM Shehbaz Sharif and the Lahore Qalandars team for looking toward cities like Bahawalpur and Multan," said one of the selected girls. "We promise to work harder, and Insha'Allah, make Pakistan proud."



## KP seeks confidence over Bajaur military operation

FROM PAGE 01

Although not confirmed officially by security forces, sources said that at least four terrorists were killed, around 12 were wounded, and about 10 were captured alive in different areas of the Lowi Mamund tehsil. Locals also claimed that a child was among two civilians who died, and eight others, including two minors and a woman, were wounded in clashes between security forces and terrorists.

Chairing a PTI parliamentary party meeting in Peshawar late last night, Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur said: "We are not in favour of any military operation without the provincial government being taken into confidence."

He lamented that the "relationship of confidence between our army and our public" was eroding due to the "martyred civilians and collateral damage in Bajaur", adding that the lack of trust was failing the country's fight against terrorism. The meeting vowed that the recent curfew in parts of Bajaur would be revoked today. However, an official announcement for that is yet to be made. It was decided that further course of action regarding an operation would be announced after the matter was debated in the KP Assembly.

"We are standing with our public. We will go to every extent for our public," CM Gandapur vowed. "We cannot ruin our soil for those decisions that are imposed on us without our consultation." The meeting made several decisions regarding the ongoing security situation and its future actions to address the concerns raised by the people. CM Gandapur ordered all deputy commissioners not to impose any curfew without permission from the KP home department, regardless of "any kind of situation". He also decided to transfer the powers of imposing Section 144, under which a curfew is put in place, to the department.

## Shibli Faraz urges CJP to review May 9 trials

FROM PAGE 01

ongoing May 9 trials, warning of "grave procedural violations" that he says are undermining fundamental rights and constitutional protections. In a detailed letter addressed to the chief justice, Shibli expressed deep concern over the conduct of anti-terrorism courts in cities such as Lahore, Faisalabad, and Sargodha. He claimed that court proceedings are being held at an "extraordinary pace," with sessions extending till 2 to 3am, depriving the accused of the right to a fair trial.

"Justice hurried is equally fatal," Faraz wrote, warning that the current judicial process risks becoming a mere "facade, bereft of fairness and credibility." He further alleged that the principle of natural justice is being "routinely compromised," citing the appointment of state counsels without consent and the denial of reasonable adjournments as key violations. These practices, he said, directly contravene Article 10-A of the Constitution and international fair trial standards.

He also questioned the transparency of the proceedings, stating that restrictions on media coverage and limited access for families evoke the image of "secret courts." He called for unhindered media access to ensure public oversight. Highlighting allegations of evidence tampering and coercion by police and prosecution, Shibli requested an impartial inquiry and warned that the rule of law is being subverted by arbitrary practices.

"The judiciary's role is more vital than ever in upholding impartiality," the opposition leader stressed, asking the CJP to examine all ongoing and concluded May 9 trials for procedural fairness. He concluded by urging the chief justice to take corrective steps, including reassessing past verdicts passed under questionable circumstances and restoring the constitutional guarantees of the accused. His letter follows a similar appeal made a day earlier by Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan.



## Briefs

PSX turns  
bullish, gains  
447 points

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index turned around to bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 447.43 points, a positive of 0.32 percent, closing at 138,412.25 points against 137,964.82 points last trading day. A total of 425,836,625 shares were traded during the day as compared to 606,334,880 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 24,999 billion against Rs 32.685 billion on the last trading day. As many as 476 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 152 of them recorded gains and 290 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 34 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Bank of Punjab with 24,809,434 shares at Rs 13.72 per share, Cres Star Ins with 20,904,522 shares at Rs4.34 per share and Maple Leaf with 14,501,544 shares at Rs 79.62 per share. Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 399.61 per share price, closing at Rs 33,020.02, whereas the runner-up was PIA Holding Company LimitedB with Rs 141.57 rise in its per share price to Rs 31,299.00. SS Oil Mills Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs87.90 per share closing at Rs 791.08 followed by Nestle Pakistan Limited with Rs78.52 decline in its share price to close at Rs7,611.32.—APP

Rupee gains  
10 paisa  
against US  
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Wednesday appreciated by 10 paisa against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 282.95 against the previous day's closing Rs 283.05. 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 and Rs 285.5, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 0.19 to close at Rs 327.00 against the last day's closing of Rs 327.19, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen gained 01 paisa and closed at Rs 1.91, whereas an increase of Rs 0.69 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 378.19 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 377.50. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal came down by 03 paisa each to close at Rs 77.03 and Rs 75.42, respectively.—APP

US envoy  
Witkoff  
expected in  
Israel

JERUSALEM: Steve Witkoff, US President Donald Trump's special envoy to the Middle East, is expected to visit Israel soon, a senior Israeli official told AFP on Wednesday. The US news site Axios reported that Witkoff would set off Wednesday but the Israeli official could not confirm this. Witkoff has been involved in indirect negotiations between Israel and Hamas to reach a ceasefire deal in Gaza, which broke down last week when Israel and the US recalled their delegations from talks in Doha. Netanyahu announced the following day that Israel, together with its US allies, was "considering alternative options to bring our hostages home."—APP

Thousands of  
carpets sun-  
bathe at Turk-  
ish resort

ANTALYA: Thousands of carpets and kilim rugs spread out in the sun form a festive and kaleidoscopic patchwork on the outskirts of Antalya, a coastal tourist city in southern Turkey. From June to September, in harvested fields cleared of stubble, merchants bring their cargo to age in the sun, tempering the bright hues of their natural colors and ridding them of undesirable elements. Hasan Topkara washed wool knotted carpets and rugs that come from across Turkey. He drives them, trims their fringes and stray strands if necessary.—APP

SAPM, French investor to  
boost gems jewellery sector

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Wednesday said that the establishment of a pharmaceutical joint venture between Pakistan and Russia marks a significant milestone in strengthening bilateral relations.

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan Tuesday held an important meeting with a renowned French manufacturer of gems and jewellery Barney Plowright and discussed the potential and challenges in Pakistan's gems and jewellery export sector. During the meeting, key issues such as export documentation, value addition, and international market access were discussed in detail, said a news release. Haroon emphasized that Pakistan is among the top producers of high-quality gemstones in the world. However, he lamented that formal exports remain limited to

only a few million dollars annually. "Pakistan has gemstone reserves worth billions of dollars, yet nearly \$2 billion worth of gold is exported through undocumented channels each year," the SAPM said. He noted that this lack of documentation poses serious challenges for genuine investors and leads to substantial losses for the national exchequer. Highlighting the scale of the issue, Haroon said, "The illegal trade in gems and jewellery is causing billions of dollars in annual losses to the national treasury." He further stressed the urgent need for regulatory reforms and documentation of gold exports. "Proper documentation of gold

exports is essential to ensure transparency, attract investment, and support legal trade," he said. Haroon also announced that the government is considering policy measures to encourage legal and value-added exports of gold and gemstones. He directed for an immediate meeting to be convened with stakeholders from the gems and jewellery sector to chart a way forward. Meanwhile, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Wednesday said that the establishment of a pharmaceutical joint venture between Pakistan and Russia marks a significant mile-

stone in strengthening bilateral relations. The SAPM chaired a high-level meeting, which was also attended by Denis Nazarov, Representative of the Russian Government, senior officials from the Ministry of Industries and Production, Ministry of National Health Services and the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP). Discussions focused on the import of insulin from Russia, progress on pharmaceutical joint ventures, and the development of protocols for policy board implementation, said a press release. During the meeting, it was noted that DRAP had earlier granted registration to Genetics Pharmaceuticals, Lahore, for the import

of insulin from Russian company Zavod Medsintez. Haroon Akhtar noted that Pakistan is a major consumer of insulin, and the regular supply of insulin from Russia could greatly benefit diabetic patients across the country. He further stated that in line with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision, efforts are underway to initiate local manufacturing of insulin in Pakistan. A joint protocol between local manufacturers and Russian companies is expected to be finalized and presented soon. Haroon Akhtar Khan directed all stakeholders to develop a comprehensive proposal prior to its presentation in the Federal Cabinet.

CCP gains pace, 223  
cases resolved, Rs  
360m recovered

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has made significant progress in reducing its legal backlog and recovering penalties, marking a major turnaround in the enforcement of competition law. When the new management took charge in August 2023, the CCP faced 567 pending cases across different courts. Through early hearing applications and aggressive follow-up, 223 cases have since been decided, cutting the backlog by more than 40 percent, said a release issued here on Wednesday. The biggest relief came in the Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT), where 121 cases were decided out of 210, bringing down pendency by 58 percent. The Lahore High Court decided 39 cases, reducing backlog by 78 percent, while the Sindh High Court disposed of 40 cases, a 61 percent cut. The Islamabad High Court decided 13 cases, lowering pendency by 43 percent. At the Supreme Court, 11 cases were decided, and 171 cases challenging CCP's mandate have been clubbed for a single hearing. The resolution of cases has enabled the CCP to recover imposed penalties. In the past year alone, the Commission recovered PKR 360 million, surpassing the total PKR 201 million collected since its establishment in 2007. One of the landmark judgments was delivered by the Supreme Court of Pakistan in the Dalda Foods vs CCP case, which strengthened the CCP's enforcement capacity.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce, Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan, receives a souvenir from RCCI officials during the 2nd Med-Health Expo & Summit 2025 at Pak-China Friendship Center.

Belgium says will  
take part in Gaza  
aid-drop plan

BRUSSELS: Belgium will take part in a multi-country operation coordinated by Jordan to airdrop aid to Gaza, the government announced Wednesday, as UN agencies warn the Palestinian territory is slipping into famine. A Belgian plane carrying medical supplies and food worth some 600,000 euros (\$690,000) will fly "soon" to Jordan, and will remain on stand-by to conduct air drops in coordination with Amman, the defense and foreign ministries said in a statement. Belgium joins a string of Western nations including France, Spain and Britain looking to send aid into Gaza by air as fears mount of mass starvation in the territory. "These airdrops are a first step, but they can in no way be a cover for the urgent need to facilitate access by land," Belgian foreign minister Maxime Prevot said. "I will continue to plead with the Israeli authorities to allow these deliveries to enter Gaza by road as quickly as possible." The World Food Programme, UNICEF and the Food and Agriculture Organization warned Tuesday that time was running out and that Gaza was "on the brink of a full-scale famine."

Israel imposed a total blockade on Gaza on March 2 after ceasefire talks broke down. In late May, it began allowing a small trickle of aid to resume, amid rising fears of a wave of starvation. Then on Sunday, faced with mounting international criticism, Israel began a series of "tactical pauses" while allowing aid trucks to pass through two border crossings into Gaza, and Jordanian and Emirati planes to conduct airdrops. Deliveries have been ramped up, but the experts advising the UN said this effort would not prove enough unless aid agencies were granted "immediate, unimpeded" humanitarian access. During the call on Wednesday, the two sides emphasized the need for a just, lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians through a two-state solution in order to promote stability and a better future for the region. He praised the British prime minister's statements on Tuesday on recognizing the state of Palestine in the upcoming UN General Assembly in September. Sheikh Mohammed called for an urgent ceasefire in Gaza and the unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to help residents in the Palestinian coastal enclave. The two leaders also discussed cooperation and ways to enhance ties between Abu Dhabi and London in various sectors.—APP

Shan Sehgal represents  
HCSTSI in Edu Expo

HYDERABAD: Vice President Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industry (HCSTSI), Shan Sehgal has said that without a strong combination of education, skill development and modern technology, it was impossible to prepare our youth for global challenges. He expressed these views while addressing at Education Expo 2025, held at Bahria Town Auditorium, Karachi on Wednesday. This grand expo served as a unique platform, bringing together renowned educationists, former ministers of education, industry experts, CEOs, university vice chancellors and representatives from various chambers of commerce including FPCCI all under one roof to share insights and shape the future of education and career development in Pakistan. On this occasion, Shan Sehgal held productive meetings with several distinguished individuals including former Education Minister Rana Hussain, Head of CHBTK Muhammad Uzair and other esteemed guests. Speaking at the event, Vice President Shan Sehgal remarked that without a strong combination of education, skill development, and modern technology, it is impossible to prepare our youth for global challenges. He noted that Education Expo 2025 is not just an event, but a critical platform that bridges the gap between academic institutions and industry, while also helping young individuals identify their potential and career direction. He reaffirmed HCSTSI's ongoing commitment to support and promote youth-focused initiatives in education, skill-building, and entrepreneurship. The Expo featured panel discussions, workshops and sessions on key topics such as The Future of Education, Digital Skills and the New Economy, Youth Empowerment and Academia Industry Linkages, drawing participation from thousands of students, teachers, parents and professionals. Shan Sehgal concluded by stating that the leadership of HCSTSI is determined to play a proactive role in national progress by empowering youth through education and technology-driven initiatives.—APP

Dhaka Chamber pledge to deepen  
economic cooperation

ISLAMABAD: President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI), Nasir Mansoor Qureshi on Wednesday invited Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to explore trade and investment opportunities in Pakistan across key sectors, including textiles, IT, agriculture, renewable energy, food processing, infrastructure, pharmaceuticals, mining, and construction. He addressed the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) during a significant business visit to Bangladesh and urged the need for strengthening economic cooperation between Pakistan and Bangladesh, said a press release. Accompanied by ICCI Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, President Qureshi emphasized the deep-rooted bond between Pakistan and Bangladesh, a relationship founded on shared history, cultural affinity, and promising economic potential. He welcomed the recent development of visa-free access between the two countries as a visionary and long-overdue initiative, and further called for the early conclusion of a Pakistan-Bangladesh Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the enhancement of direct air connectivity to bolster trade, tourism, and investment flows. Earlier, DCCI President Taskeen Ahmed extended a warm welcome to the ICCI delegation and appreciated its proactive role in fostering regional economic ties. "Bangladesh is committed to a new era of cooperation with Pakistan, that prioritizes trade, mutual growth, and regional harmony," said Taskeen Ahmed. He underlined the importance of institutional linkages, collaborative ventures, and knowledge sharing between the business communities of both nations. "Our chambers must lead the way in building an economically integrated South Asia that is modern, resilient, and inclusive," he noted. The meeting concluded with exchange of shields between the Presidents of ICCI and DCCI, a gesture reaffirming the spirit of friendship and collaboration between the two institutions. Following the session, Business-to-Business (B2B) meetings were held between Pakistani and Bangladeshi entrepreneurs. Delegates explored potential joint ventures and discussed areas of collaboration in various sectors.—DNA

Volcano erupts  
after quake in  
Russia's far  
east

MOSCOW: A volcano in Russia's far east erupted on Wednesday, Russian scientists said, hours after a major quake prompted evacuations and tsunami alerts across parts of the Pacific coast. Eruptions of the Klyuchevskoy volcano — the highest active in Europe and Asia — are quite common, with at least 18 of them happening since 2000 according to the Smithsonian Institution's Global Volcanism Program. "The Klyuchevskoy is erupting right now," Russia's Geophysical Survey said on Telegram, posting photos of an orange blaze on top of the 4,700 meter (15,000 feet) volcano. "Red-hot lava is observed flowing down the western slope. There is a powerful glow above the volcano and explosions," it added. Earlier on Wednesday, an 8.8 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Russia's far eastern Kamchatka region. The tsunami warning in Kamchatka was lifted 11 hours later as the quake causing massive waves have spared the sparsely populated area close to Japan. No major damage or casualties from its eruptions were ever recorded, with the closest big city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsk located hundreds of kilometers away.—APP

Algeria to  
resume  
Lebanon  
flights in  
mid-August

BEIRUT: Air Algeria has announced the resumption of flights to Beirut, starting on Aug. 14.

The announcement follows an Algerian-Lebanese summit between the countries' presidents, Joseph Aoun and Abdelmadjid Tebboune, held in Algiers on Tuesday. Algeria's Tebboune confirmed he had issued instructions for Air Algeria to resume flights to Beirut, with two weekly flights starting within the next two weeks. Tickets are already on sale through the airline's commercial offices and website.

Tebboune also said discussions would be held on the establishment of a maritime line between Algeria and the port of Tripoli, in northern Lebanon. The link would aim to boost industry and commerce, especially during the country's reconstruction phase.

He pledged "unwavering support to Lebanon" in the area of renewable energy, including the construction of solar power plants.

"Agreements covering financial, economic and cultural cooperation will be signed in the near future," Tebboune said during a joint press conference with Aoun following the summit.

Aoun said: "Lebanon aspires to enter every brotherly Arab country and every Arab home with love and brotherhood. We do not interfere in the affairs of our brothers, nor do they interfere in ours — except to support what is in the best interest of each of us and for all our nations, in a spirit of full respect and genuine cooperation." On Tuesday, Tebboune awarded Aoun the Order of National Merit, Athir class, the highest honor Algeria can bestow upon heads of state. It was presented "in recognition of the relations of brotherhood and mutual understanding, and the historically significant positions shared between Algeria and Lebanon.—APP

## EVs in Pak: current status, challenges

KHALID MAHMOOD

global automotive industry is undergoing a significant transformation, with electric vehicles (EVs) emerging as a sustainable alternative to traditional internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles. Pakistan, like many developing nations, faces challenges in adopting EVs due to infrastructural, economic, and policy-related constraints. However, with increasing fuel prices, environmental concerns, and potential collaborations through international forums like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Pakistan has an opportunity to accelerate its EV transition.

This article explores the current status of EVs in Pakistan, identifies key challenges, and analyzes how partnerships with BRICS and SCO nations could influence the country's EV landscape. Pakistan has taken initial steps toward promoting EVs through policy measures. The National Electric Vehicle Policy (NEVP) 2020 introduced tax exemptions, reduced customs duties on EV imports, and offered incentives for local manufacturing. EVs benefit from lower sales tax (1% compared to 17% for conventional vehicles) and exemptions from registration fees. Additionally, plans are underway to install

charging stations in major cities like Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad. Imported EVs from brands like Tesla, Nissan, and BYD are gaining interest, but high costs limit accessibility. On the local front, companies like Sazgar and Nurray are manufacturing e-bikes and e-rickshaws, while MG Motors and Hyundai have introduced hybrid and electric models. Two- and three-wheelers, such as electric bikes and rickshaws, are becoming popular due to lower costs and fuel savings. Pilot projects in Lahore and Islamabad aim to introduce electric buses to reduce urban pollution. Cities like Karachi and Lahore are also exploring electric metro solutions with Chinese collaboration. Despite these efforts, EV adoption remains slow due to several challenges. EVs are expensive compared to conventional vehicles due to battery costs, and limited financing options make it difficult for middle-class consumers to afford them. There are insufficient charging stations outside major cities, and power shortages coupled with load-shedding issues disrupt charging reliability. Most EV components are imported, increasing costs, and there is a lack of skilled labor for EV maintenance and production. Many consumers are unaware of EV benefits, and fear of battery depletion due to inadequate

charging points remains a concern. Pakistan's electricity grid relies heavily on fossil fuels, reducing the environmental benefits of EVs unless renewable energy is integrated. Pakistan's engagement with BRICS and SCO could play a crucial role in overcoming EV adoption challenges. Both forums include major EV markets like China, Russia, and India, which can provide technological, financial, and infrastructural support. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) can facilitate EV infrastructure projects, including charging stations and battery manufacturing plants. Chinese EV manufacturers like BAIC, BYD, NIO, and SAIC can partner with Pakistani firms for local assembly. Russia and Belarus are key players in lithium and battery production, offering potential for joint ventures in battery recycling and energy storage solutions. The SCO promotes renewable energy projects, which can support clean energy for EVs. Pakistan can benefit from SCO's research and development initiatives in EV technology. The BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) can fund EV projects in Pakistan, while public-private partnerships with BRICS nations can boost local EV production. Encouraging joint ventures with Chinese and Russian automakers and providing subsidies

for local battery production can enhance domestic capabilities. Public-private partnerships can help install fast-charging stations, while solar-powered charging stations can reduce grid dependency.

Collaborations between the government and automakers can educate buyers on EV benefits, and test-drive initiatives can build consumer confidence. Increasing solar and wind energy contributions will make EV charging greener, and incentivizing off-grid charging solutions can further support adoption. Seeking technical assistance and investment from member countries, as well as participating in SCO's green energy initiatives, can drive sustainable mobility. Pakistan's EV industry is in its early stages but holds significant potential. While challenges like high costs, infrastructure gaps, and energy constraints persist, strategic collaborations with BRICS and SCO nations can accelerate progress. By leveraging Chinese technology, Russian resources, and regional cooperation, Pakistan can establish a sustainable EV ecosystem, reducing fuel dependency and environmental pollution. The government must continue policy support while fostering international partnerships to ensure a smooth transition to electric mobility.



## Briefs

IMF forecasts  
3.6% GDP  
growth for Pak

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has forecast Pakistan's economic growth at 3.6% for the ongoing fiscal year 2025-26, falling below the government's official target of 4.2%. For FY2025-26, the Fund expects moderate improvement, projecting growth at 3.6% — still lower than the government's official forecast.

On the global front, the IMF estimates world economic growth at 3% in 2025 and 3.1% in 2026. These projections are slightly higher than those in the April 2025 Outlook — by 0.2 and 0.1 percentage points, respectively — reflecting stronger-than-anticipated factors such as improved financial conditions, fiscal expansion in major economies and a weaker US dollar.

The Fund warned that any rebound in tariff rates, rising fiscal deficits, geopolitical tensions, or prolonged uncertainty could dampen global growth prospects. Conversely, successful trade negotiations and policy stability could provide an upside to growth.

The IMF stressed that to support recovery and resilience, countries must prioritise predictability, confidence and structural reforms, while safeguarding financial and price stability.

Rains: PDMA  
issues travel  
advisory

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Spokesman at Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Peshawar, Anwar Shahzad Wednesday issued a strong warning to tourists to strictly follow advisories in Chitral, Mansehra, Lower Dir and other tourist hotspots as flash flood and cloudburst threats loom and section 144 has been enforced in this regard.

In an exclusive conversation with a local news channel, PDMA spokesperson stated that tourist guides have also been advised to stop tourists from entering these high-risk areas and to fully cooperate with local administrations. Their role is critical in ensuring that people are kept away from flood-prone and landslide-affected zones. Guides are expected to act responsibly and discourage any travel or trekking activities in these sensitive locations, he mentioned.

Authorities have warned of possible flash flooding and cloudbursts in hilly and riverine areas. PDMA, in collaboration with the district administrations is monitoring the situation closely and has placed emergency response teams on high alert, he said.

Tourists are advised to avoid riverbanks, steep valleys, and camping in low-lying areas during this critical time, he added. Section 144 has been imposed in vulnerable districts, restricting unnecessary movement in high-risk zones.

Powerful quake in Russia's  
Far East causes tsunamiQuake damages buildings, generates tsunami, prompting  
warnings & evacuations stretching across Pacific Ocean

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: A magnitude 8.8 earthquake struck off Russia's Far Eastern Kamchatka Peninsula on Wednesday, generating a tsunami of up to 4 metres (13 feet), damaging buildings and prompting warnings and evacuations that stretched across the Pacific Ocean. Several people were injured in the remote Russian region, while much of Japan's eastern seaboard — devastated by a powerful earthquake and tsunami in 2011 — was ordered to evacuate. "Today's earthquake was serious and the strongest in decades of tremors," Kamchatka Governor Vladimir Solodov said in a video posted on the Telegram messaging app. A tsunami with a height of 3-4 metres (10-13 feet) was recorded in parts of Kamchatka, said Sergei Lebedev, regional minister for emergency situations, urging people to move away from the shoreline. The US Geological Survey said the earthquake was shallow at a depth of 19.3 km (12 miles), and was centred 119 km (74 miles) east-southeast of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, a city of 165,000. It revised the magnitude up from 8.0 earlier, and reported a strong aftershock of magnitude 6.9 soon after.

India faces  
25% US tariffs

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: India is bracing for higher US tariffs — possibly up to 25% — on some of its exports, as trade talks with Washington face delays. But officials in New Delhi remain hopeful, saying both sides are working behind the scenes to strike a broader trade agreement in the coming months. With a US delegation expected in mid-August, India is holding off on new offers for now, aiming to secure a better long-term deal rather than rushing into short-term compromises. India eyes to finalise a comprehensive bilateral agreement by September or October, one of the Indian officials told Reuters. "Talks are progressing well, and a delegation is expected in Delhi by mid-August," one of the Indian government officials said, adding that President Donald Trump could issue a tariff letter imposing duties of 20% or 25% in a "worst-case scenario". "However, we assume it would be a temporary measure, considering the five rounds of trade talks that have taken place. A deal will soon be worked out," the official said. Trump said on Monday that most partners who do not negotiate separate trade deals would soon face tariffs of 15% to 20% on their exports to the United States, well above the broad 10% tariff he imposed in April. His administration will soon notify around 200 countries of their new "world tariff" rate.

President calls for curbing  
human smuggling

Zardari said that the poverty, conflicts, ignorance, and unsafe migration were the root causes of human trafficking with women, children, and marginalized communities being the most affected groups

ISLAMABAD: As the global community observes World Day Against Trafficking in Persons on Wednesday, President Asif Ali Zardari called for international cooperation, effective mass awareness and concerted efforts to do away with the serious global challenge. The president, in his message on the Day, said that Pakistan was implementing strict laws and effective measures to prevent human trafficking as its agencies were making every effort to dismantle human smuggling networks and bring criminals to justice. He also reiterated the country's commitment to continue to work with global partners to eliminate human trafficking and establish a world free from human exploitation. He said that the Day was observed to raise awareness about protecting vulnerable individuals and addressing that severe violation of human rights. Calling the human trafficking a serious global challenge affecting millions of people, he said that 2025 theme, "Human Trafficking is Organized Crime — End Exploitation," highlighted that the offence was perpetrated through organised networks. President Zardari said that the poverty, conflicts, ignorance, and unsafe migration were the root causes of human trafficking with women, children, and marginalized communities being the most affected groups. He said that the human traffickers used unsafe migration routes, leading to the loss of hundreds of precious lives every year. — DNA

## Resolution of Kashmir issue

Pakistan calls for boosting UN  
peacekeeping missions' role

This Council, which mandates the missions, must ensure that missions are deployed with an accompanying credible political process that addresses the root causes of conflicts, and that mission mandates are demand-driven, clear, sequenced, and context-specific", Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has called for strengthening and better-equipping the United Nations peacekeeping to address the underlying causes of disputes, saying, "Nowhere is this more urgently needed than in Jammu and Kashmir" — a longstanding dispute on the UN Security Council's agenda. "This Council, which mandates the missions, must ensure that missions are deployed with an accompanying credible political process that addresses the root causes of conflicts, and that mission mandates are demand-driven, clear, sequenced, and context-specific", Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the 15-member body on Tuesday. "The imperative of political solutions is obvious," he said in a debate on 'Adapting Peace Operations for the Pursuit of Political Solutions— Priorities and Challenges'.

"This Council should fulfill its obligations and make concerted efforts to secure a just and lasting solution to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the wishes of the Kashmiri people," the Pakistani envoy added. In his remarks, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar highlighted Pakistan's experience of nearly eight decades of engagement with UN Peace operations, saying the country had remained among the top troop contributors, host to one of the UN's oldest missions — United Nations Military Observers Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), which monitors the Line of Control (LoC) in the distributed Kashmir region.



"We are also founding member of the Peacebuilding Commission," he said, pointing out that over 235,000 Pakistani peacekeepers have served with distinction in 48 missions across 4 continents. "A total of 182 of our bravest have laid down their lives in the service of peace. We greatly value the importance of the UN peace operations". "Overall, peace operations are a success story," added Ambassador Asim Iftikhar, who is the Council President for July, speaking in his national capacity.

Sugar mills racked up Rs  
300bn in windfall profits

PAC chairman says 42 families benefited from this profit surge, raises concerns over market monopolies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A list of sugar mills that exported sugar between July 2024 and June 2025 was presented in PAC revealing that 67 mills exported over 746,469 tonnes of sugar worth more than \$400.02 million (Rs111.97 billion). During the meeting, chaired by PAC Chairman Junaid Akbar Khan, lawmakers highlighted the contradiction between export policies and local market needs, emphasising the imbalance between domestic supply and commercial interests. They called for accountability, transparency and immediate measures to protect consumers from artificial shortages and price manipulation. The committee was informed that recent fluctuations in sugar prices led to massive profits for mill owners, with the Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) report estimating that sugar mills earned approximately Rs300 billion in windfall gains. The PAC chairman pointed out that only 42 families benefited from this profit surge, raising serious concerns over market monopolies and government regulation.

"Why is no one else allowed to set up sugar mills?" he questioned, criticising the lack of competition in the sugar sector. According to official documents presented in the PAC, JDW Sugar Mills emerged as the top exporter, shipping 73,090 metric tonnes (73.09 million kg) worth Rs11.1 billion. Tandlianwala Sugar Mills followed with 41,412 metric tonnes (Rs5.98 billion), while Hanza Sugar Mills exported 32,486 metric tonnes (Rs5.03 billion). Other major exporters included Thal Industries Corporation Limited (29,107 metric tonnes, Rs4.55 billion), Almoiz Industries (29,453 metric tonnes, Rs4.32 billion), JK Sugar Mills (29,969 metric tonnes, Rs4.09 billion), Madina Sugar Mills (18,869 metric tonnes, Rs2.79 billion), Fatima Sugar Mills (17,365 metric tonnes, Rs2.68 billion), Daharki Sugar Mills (16,533 metric tonnes, Rs2.45 billion), Ramzan Sugar Mills (16,116 metric tonnes, Rs2.41 billion), Indus Sugar Mills (14,047 metric tonnes, Rs2.10 billion), Ashraf Sugar Mills (11,317 metric tonnes, Rs1.67 billion), Unicol Limited (6,857 metric tonnes, Rs1.02 billion), and Habib Sugar Mills (6,253 metric tonnes, Rs960 million).

PNS  
Shamsheer  
conducts  
exercise

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PNS SHAM-SHEER and USS FITZGERALD conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) in the North Indian Ocean, underscoring the maritime cooperation between the two navies. The exercise featured a series of professional naval engagements aimed at enhancing interoperability. These interactions reaffirm the shared commitment of both navies to maritime security and regional stability.

CDA board  
approves  
budget  
estimates

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 14th meeting of CDA Board was held at CDA Headquarters, Islamabad, chaired by Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa. The meeting was attended by Member Administration and Estate Talat Mehmood, Member Finance Tahir Naem, Member Environment Esfandiyar Baloch, Member Planning Dr. Khalid Hafiz, Member Engineering Syed Nafasat Raza, while Professor Dr. Muhammad Ali, Vice Chancellor of Punjab University, participated via Zoom link. Several agenda items were discussed during the CDA Board meeting, the details of which are as follows: The meeting approved the outstanding auction of CDA's commercial plots and the appointment of an audit firm to improve CDA's financial management system, along with the following decisions: The meeting was informed that in 2025, CDA successfully auctioned 8 commercial plots and 4 shops, generating Rs. 19.56 billion. Furthermore, during the bidding process held from July 15 to 17, 2025, plots and shops were sold out through a transparent process at prices overall exceeding the market value by 11%, with some plots selling for 33% above the reserve price.

SBP keeps  
key policy rate  
unchanged  
at 11%

NAZIR SYIAL

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has decided to maintain key interest rate at 11%, surprising analysts who had expected another cut on the back of cooling inflation and the need to further push growth. The decision was announced by SBP Governor Jameel Ahmed following the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting. Addressing a press conference in Karachi, the SBP chief said that while inflation remained at its lowest in April, it rose slightly during May and June, driven largely by energy costs and the base effect. The governor noted that inflation may rise moderately in the coming months due to continued pressures on energy prices. On the external front, he said Pakistan's exports have grown by 4%, adding that a rise in exports is essential to maintain current account stability.

## Ayaz Sadiq calls for reformation of UN

The Speaker stressed that peaceful dispute resolution must now be seen not only as a legal obligation but as a strategic necessity. He said the world must invest in dialogue, diplomacy, mutual respect and genuine adherence to the Charter of the United Nations



DNA

GENEVA: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has called for peaceful resolution of longstanding international disputes particularly Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions. Addressing the main session of the 6th World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Geneva, he asserted that the politicization of humanitarian principles and the application of double standards in international affairs must be brought to an end to safeguard global peace and justice. The Speaker stressed that peaceful dispute resolution

must now be seen not only as a legal obligation but as a strategic necessity. He said the world must invest in dialogue, diplomacy, mutual respect and genuine adherence to the Charter of the United Nations. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq also called for urgent reforms to create a more equitable and development oriented global financial system which supports economic resilience, reduces inequality and facilitates meaningful progress for the Global South. The Speaker underlined the pressing need to reform and revitalize the UN system, particularly the Security Council to make it more representative, democratic, effective, transparent and accountable to the full membership of the United Nations.

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