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UK visa to further strengthen our ties, says Jane Marriott

Detailed News On Page-08

KP CM Ali Amin Gandapur vows to expose India

Detailed News On Page-08



Indian designs unmasked by Pak: Shafqat

Detailed News On Page-01



19% for Pakistani goods

Donald Trump hits dozens of countries with steep tariffs

US president releases executive order listing higher import duty rates of 10% to 41% starting in seven days

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has announced a fresh wave of steep import duties, targeting dozens of countries – including Pakistan with 19% reciprocal tariff, ahead of a Friday trade deal deadline. The move is part of his wider effort to shake up global trade rules. Pakistan now joins a list of 69 nations whose goods will face new US tariffs, ranging from 10% to 41%, starting next week. Trump said that the new tariffs are meant to fix what he sees as unfair trade imbalances and protect US economic and security interests. Trump released an executive order listing higher import duty rates of 10% to 41% starting in seven days for 69 trading partners as the 12:01 am EDT (0401 GMT) deadline approached. Some of them had reached tariff-reducing deals, and some had no opportunity to negotiate with his administration. The order said that goods from all other countries not listed in an annex would be subject to a 10% US tariff rate. Trump's order stated that some trading partners, "despite having engaged in negotiations, have offered terms that, in my judgement, do not sufficiently address imbalances in our trading relationship or have failed to align sufficiently with the United States on economic and national-security matters." Trump issued a separate order for Canada that raises the rate on Canadian goods subject to fentanyl-related tariffs to 35% from 25% previously, saying Canada had "failed to cooperate" in curbing fentanyl flows into the US. The higher tariffs on Canadian goods contrasted sharply with Trump's decision to grant Mexico a 90-day reprieve from higher tariffs of 30% on many goods to provide more time to negotiate a broader trade pact. A US official told reporters that more trade deals were yet to be announced as Trump's higher "reciprocal" tariff rates were set to take effect. "We have some deals," the official said.

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Pakistan to get first US oil shipment

West Texas Intermediate light crude cargo expected to arrive in Karachi in second half of October

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI/SINGAPORE: Pakistan's largest refiner Energycio will import 1 million barrels of oil from Vitol in October, its vice chairman Usama Qureshi told Reuters on Friday, marking the country's first-ever purchase of US crude following a landmark trade deal. The West Texas Intermediate light crude cargo will be loaded from Houston this month and is expected to arrive in Karachi in the second half of October, Qureshi said. "This is a test spot cargo under our umbrella term agreement with Vitol. If it is commercially viable and available, we could import at least one cargo per month," he said, adding that the shipment was not meant for resale. The deal follows months of multiple negotiations which first began in April, he said, after US President Donald Trump threatened to impose 29% tariffs on imports from Pakistan. Qureshi said Pakistan's finance and petroleum ministries encouraged local refineries to explore US crude imports after the April tariff announcement. Vitol did not immediately respond to a request for comment sent outside of office hours.

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RAWALPINDI: The 98th Anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China was commemorated at GHQ. – DNA

Five cops martyred in attack on check post

IGP Punjab Dr Usman Anwar summons report from RPO Bahawalpur, orders to arrest culprits

NEWS DESK

RAHIM YAR KHAN: At least five policemen were martyred and two others injured when armed bandits attacked a police check post in the Rahim Yar Khan district of Punjab late on Thursday night. A police official said that heavily armed dacoits targeted Shekhani check post, martyring five Elite Force personnel and injuring two other cops. During an exchange of fire, one dacoit was also killed, said the spokesperson. The martyred cops were identified as Muhammad Irfan, Muhammad Saleem, Muhammad Khalil, Nakheel and Ghazanfar Abbass.

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Iranian President to arrive in Islamabad today

APP

ISLAMABAD: President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian is scheduled to arrive here on Saturday for a two-day state visit to Pakistan on August 2-3, 2025, at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Dr. Pezeshkian will be accompanied by a high-level delegation, including Foreign Minister of Iran Seyed Abbas Araghchi, senior ministers, and other high-ranking officials, according to a Foreign Office press release. During his stay, President Pezeshkian will meet with President Asif Ali Zardari, and hold delegation-level

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Relations solidified

Pakistan, China are true brothers, says Field Marshal Asim

The 98th Anniversary of the founding of PLA of China commemorated at GHQ; the Chinese Ambassador expressed his sincere gratitude to the COAS for hosting the event commemorating the PLA's 98th anniversary

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The 98th Anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China was commemorated at GHQ today. Jiang Zaidong, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Pakistan, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The ceremony was also attended by Major General Wang Zhong, Defence Attaché, officials from the Chinese Embassy, and senior military officers from the tri-services of Pakistan. Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff, extended a warm welcome to the Chinese guests and congratulated the PLA on its 98th founding anniversary. He lauded the PLA's pivotal role in China's defence, security, and nation-building. The COAS underscored the strength and strategic significance of Pakistan-China relations, emphasizing that the bond between the two nations is unique, time-tested, and exceptionally resilient amid evolving

regional and global challenges. The Field Marshal highlighted that the Pakistan-China strategic relationship exemplifies mutual trust, unwavering support, and shared commitment. He stressed that despite shifting strategic dynamics, the friendship between the two nations has remained steadfast and unshakable. Concluding his address, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir reaffirmed that the Pakistan Army and the PLA are true brothers-in-arms. He emphasized that their enduring partnership will continue to play a pivotal role in promoting regional stability and safeguarding shared strategic interests. Addressing the gathering, the Chinese Ambassador expressed his sincere gratitude to the COAS for hosting the event commemorating the PLA's 98th anniversary. He acknowledged the steadfast role of the Pakistan Armed Forces in the fight against terrorism and reaffirmed China's unwavering support for and commitment to its strategic partnership with Pakistan.

National polio count rises to 18 with new case

Latest case was detected in 10-month-old boy from Union Council Mullazai in district Tank

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Pakistan's national count climbed to 18 for the year 2025 on Friday after a new case of poliovirus was confirmed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health has confirmed the detection of the case in the Tank district. According to a press release, the case was detected in a 10-month-old boy from the Union Council Mullazai in the Tank district, marking the eleventh case in KP this year, alongside five from Sindh and one each from Punjab and Gilgit-Baltistan. The continued detection of polio cases underscores the persistent threat to chil-

dren, particularly in areas with low vaccine acceptance. "It is crucial for communities to understand that poliovirus can re-emerge wherever immunity gaps persist. Every unvaccinated child remains vulnerable and can also contribute to the spread of the virus," the press release stated. "Polio is a highly infectious and incurable disease that can cause lifelong paralysis. The only effective protection is through repeated doses of the oral polio vaccine (OPV) for every child under five during each campaign, along with the timely completion of all essential immunisations." Despite significant improvements in nationwide polio vaccination efforts, the southern districts of KP remain a

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Briefs

Pak for early resolution of Ukraine issue

Asim says Istanbul talks must be built upon

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: Pakistan has reiterated its firm support for a peaceful resolution of Ukraine conflict. At the UN Security Council meeting, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN Asim Iftikhar Ahmad said his country stands ever ready to support all efforts towards that end. Asim Iftikhar emphasized the need for adopting a path of inclusive and constructive diplomacy, involving key regional and international stakeholders to promote trust and build confidence to pave the way for a just and lasting peace. He said Istanbul talks must be built upon and taken forward with genuine and reciprocal commitment to peace.

Pak annual inflation accelerates

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The consumer inflation accelerated to 4.1% year-on-year in July, up from 3.2% in June, driven by rising prices for food items, fuels and medicines, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) said on Friday. July's consumer price inflation month-on-month was 2.9%, the bureau said. The higher inflation reading follows the State Bank of Pakistan's assessment of a deteriorating inflation outlook, leading it to leave the key interest rate unchanged at 11%.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. – Editor

Political space shrinking

Opp demands fresh 'Charter of Democracy'

Multi-party conference seeks women's rights, judicial reforms, media freedom and economic justice

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: A multi-party opposition conference on Friday warned that political space in the country was shrinking rapidly, accusing the government of suppressing dissent and violating as it called for a fresh charter of democracy to "restore" the Constitution and democracy. "The opposition [of this country] is being deliberately cornered and denied political space," senior politician Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar said while addressing a press conference following completion of Tehreek-e-Tahafuz-e-Ayeen-e-Pakistan's (TTAP) two-day multi-party conference. He claimed the state was undermining the constitutional right to assembly by obstructing opposition gatherings, while economic pressures were driving the business class abroad. Khokhar highlighted that 45% of the population was living below the poverty line and unemployment had soared to 20%. Reading out a joint declaration of the multi-party conference, Khokhar demanded the

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Imran's sons awaiting Pakistan visas

"Ambassador has intimated he is awaiting approval from Ministry of Interior," says Khan's sister

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's sons are awaiting approval from the interior ministry, his sister, Aleema Khan, said on Friday, as they plan on visiting the country. "A few days ago, Suleiman [Khan] and Kasim [Khan] applied for their visas with the Pakistan High Commission in London," Aleema, who had previously announced the duo's plan to visit Pakistan, said in a post on X.

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India's Operation Mahadev holds no significance for Pakistan: Foreign Office

India failed to achieve strategic aims in May attacks, says spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday dismissed India's claims regarding "Operation Mahadev" as meaningless, asserting that the narrative holds no importance in Islamabad's view. During the weekly press briefing, Foreign Office spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan said that Indian Home Minister Amit Shah's statement was based on "lies and fictional storytelling". He stressed that Pakistan categorically rejects India's nuclear blackmailing rhetoric and the strategic relevance attached to the so-called Operation Mahadev. Indian Home Minister Shah, earlier this week, 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

(IIOJK), who, according to him, were involved in the Pahalgam attack. The spokesperson described Indian political leaders' remarks in the Lok Sabha concerning Operation Sindoor as baseless and provocative, saying that New Delhi is distorting facts and attempting to justify unprovoked aggression. He also condemned the Indian attack carried out on the night of May 6 and 7 without any investigation into the Pahalgam incident. He said the attack resulted in the martyrdom of innocent civilians, and India completely failed to achieve its strategic objectives. "Pakistan responded decisively by targeting Indian aircraft and assets," he noted. He added that Pakistan had proposed a transparent and independent investigation into the Pahalgam attack, which India rejected. "Instead of cooperating,

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Marka-e-Haq celebrations with poster & art exhibition

SUKKUR: Sukkur IBA University kicked off its two-week "Marka-e-Haq" celebrations, marking Pakistan's Independence Day, with a poster and art exhibition themed "Guardian of the Soil" here on Friday. Students showcased artwork reflecting national identity, unity, and cultural pride.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Asif Ahmed Shaikh praised the students' creativity and national spirit, stating that such activities foster patriotism and empower students to envision a better Pakistan. Winners of the exhibition will be awarded on August 14, 2025, during the main Independence Day ceremony.—APP

Rs 95m set aside to protect Layyah riverine areas

MUZAFFARGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has approved a major flood protection initiative for the vulnerable area of Bait Moonghar in district Layyah.

The project involves the construction of 10 stud embankments at a cost of Rs. 95 million to prevent river erosion and protect human settlements, agricultural lands, and infrastructure.

The approval was granted during a video-link meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Disaster Management, chaired by Senior Provincial Minister for Health Khawaja Salman Rafique. The meeting was held at the office of Deputy Commissioner Layyah and attended by Deputy Commissioner Ameer Abidaar, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Muhammad Shahid Malik, Executive Engineer Irrigation Abdul Rauf, and other relevant officials. During the meeting, DC Layyah Ameer Abidaar presented the critical situation caused by continuous river erosion in Bait Moonghar. The committee took serious notice of the matter and approved the construction of the protective embankments.

DC Abidaar expressed gratitude to the Punjab government for prioritizing the safety of riverine populations. He said the chief minister's decision reflects her commitment to safeguarding lives, livelihoods, and essential infrastructure from the devastating impact of river erosion.—APP

CM Bugti takes notice of murder of 2 young girls

QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, has taken strong notice of the brutal murder of two innocent young girls in Quetta's Kechi Baig area and the tragic double homicide of a married couple in Mastung. Expressing deep sorrow and outrage over the incidents, the chief minister described them as shocking assaults on societal values, human conscience, and the writ of the state, press release said on Friday. Mir Sarfraz Bugti directed the Inspector General of Police Balochistan, to ensure the immediate arrest of all individuals involved and asserted that no perpetrator, regardless of influence or status, will be spared from the full force of the law.—APP

Kundi, Magsi discuss boosting science, Tech in underserved regions

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi met with Chairman NADRA, Lieutenant General (R) Muhammad Munir Afsar, here on Friday to discuss the provision of identification documents and civic services in the province

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi met with Federal Minister for Science and Technology Sardar Khalid Magsi here on Friday to discuss enhancing cooperation in the field of science and technology in the province, particularly focusing on youth capacity building and the provision of technical facilities in Dera Ismail Khan. During the meeting, the Governor emphasized the immense potential of the youth in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially in Peshawar and the southern districts. He stressed that with access to modern scientific education, research, and training opportunities, young people could play a significant role in national development.

Governor Kundi highlighted the importance of establishing science and technology institutions, laboratories, incubation centers, and related facilities in underdeveloped areas such as Dera Ismail Khan to align local youth with contemporary technological trends. Federal Minister Khalid Magsi appreciated the Governor's vision and assured full support from the Ministry of Science and Technology in creating opportunities for KP's youth and advancing scientific initiatives in the region. Meanwhile, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi met with Chairman NADRA, Lieutenant General (R) Muhammad Munir Afsar, here on Friday to discuss the provision of identification documents and civic services in the province. During the meeting, the Governor expressed concern over the lack of NADRA facilities in remote and underdeveloped areas of KP, particularly highlighting the need for service expansion in large villages of Paharpur Tehsil, Dera Ismail Khan. He emphasized the importance of ensuring doorstep access to NADRA services for the local population. Chairman NADRA assured the Governor that the authority would soon increase the number of mobile registration vans in these areas and initiate consultations with local administrations to establish permanent offices. He also announced the creation of separate facilitation desks for women, elderly citizens, and persons with disabilities to streamline the registration process.



Key issues discussed included CNIC issuance, child registration (B-Form), family record updates, and inheritance documentation. Governor Kundi praised NADRA's ongoing digitalization drive and cybersecurity initiatives, saying that the adoption of modern technology would enhance the efficiency and transparency of the institution. Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi held a meeting with the Managing Director of Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Ahmed Hayat to discuss gas supply issues and expansion projects in the southern districts of the province. During the meeting, the Governor stressed the need to improve the gas distribution sys-

tem and called for immediate action to meet the growing energy demands of the public. He directed OGDCL officials to prioritize ongoing gas supply projects in the southern districts and ensure their timely completion, particularly ahead of the winter season. The discussion also covered proposed expansion projects in Daraban and surrounding areas, including the laying of new gas pipelines, upgrading existing infrastructure, and exploring new gas reserves. Governor Kundi emphasized that these initiatives would not only provide much-needed relief to the local population but also contribute significantly to regional economic development.

Monsoon tree plantation drive launched in Naran

NARAN: A monsoon tree plantation campaign was launched in Naran by the Additional Assistant Commissioner Revenue, in collaboration with the Sub-Divisional Forest Officer (SDFO) Kaghan, as part of ongoing efforts to combat climate change and promote environmental conservation.

The drive aims to reduce environmental pollution, curb the adverse effects of climate change, and preserve the natural beauty of the region. During the campaign, a variety of indigenous tree saplings were planted across the mountainous terrain of Naran and its adjoining areas to enhance greenery and prevent soil erosion. Speaking on the occasion, the Additional Assistant Commissioner emphasized the vital role of public participation—particularly by youth and students—in such initiatives. He stated that planting even a single tree is a meaningful contribution to environmental preservation and a step toward securing a healthier future for generations to come.

Officials from the Forest Department, local community members, and representatives of other relevant organizations actively participated in the drive. Participants pledged to take full advantage of the monsoon season by planting as many trees as possible across the region.—APP

Addressing problems of legal fraternity top priority

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Friday emphasized that politics of bars should be limited to the bars so that the judiciary and the institution of lawyers maintain their impartial identity. The long-standing issue of court fees has been resolved on the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, he said, adding that E-libraries and solarization projects are underway with the co-operation of the Punjab government and the Punjab Law Minister.

The law minister stated this during a meeting with the

delegations of bar associations of southern Punjab, including the Multan High Court Bar Association. In the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the welfare of lawyers, problems faced by bar associations and their effective solutions.

The President of the Multan High Court Bar thanked the Law Minister for the government steps taken for the legal community and said that the role of the Law Ministry is commendable. Azam Nazeer Tarar said that the law ministry placed the welfare of lawyers at the top of its priorities and

will provide all possible support to resolve their legitimate issues. The presidents and representatives of the Shujaabad, Jahanian, Lodhran, Duniyapur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Kot Addo, Rajanpur, Muzaffargarh, Alipur, Jatoi, Jalalpur, Kabirwala and Borewala Bar Associations also attended the meeting and apprised the Law Minister about the issues faced by lawyers in their respective areas. Tarar assured all bar representatives that their issues would be resolved on a priority basis and communication with the bars would be further strengthened.—APP

NIH confirms new Polio case from Tank

ISLAMABAD: The Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health (NIH), Islamabad, has confirmed a new case of polio from District Tank in South Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A 10-month-old boy from Union Council Mullaazai in District Tank, South Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has been confirmed as the eleventh polio case from the province this year, bringing the total number of polio cases in Pakistan in 2025 to eighteen. The continued detection of polio cases underscores the persistent threat to children, particularly in areas with low vaccine acceptance. It is crucial for communities to understand that poliovirus can re-emerge wherever immunity gaps persist. Every unvaccinated child remains vulnerable and can also contribute to the spread of the virus.

Polio is a highly infectious and incurable disease that can cause lifelong paralysis. The only effective protection is through repeated doses of the oral polio vaccine (OPV) for every child under five during each campaign, along with the timely completion of all essential immunizations. Despite significant improvements in the quality of polio vaccination campaigns nationwide, the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remain a key area of concern due to restricted access and operational challenges in conducting house-to-house vaccination. These barriers continue to hinder immunization efforts in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, leaving thousands of children unvaccinated. Over the last year, the Pakistan Polio Programme has made measurable strides. Since September 2024, six high-quality campaigns, including four nationwide campaigns, have each reached over 45 million children. The National EOC is planning to conduct two nationwide and one sub-national campaign between August and December 2025, besides, targeted campaigns in selected high-risk districts. These efforts will help stop virus transmission and protect children from poliovirus. As part of intensified efforts to eradicate polio in South Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Prime Minister's Focal Person on Polio Eradication, and the Coordinator of the National Emergency Operations Centre, held a meeting with the Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in Peshawar to review ongoing initiatives in the province. The meeting focused on campaign performance, current challenges, and targeted strategies to interrupt poliovirus transmission, particularly in high-risk southern districts of KP, including Tank. Additionally, a special planning meeting focused on South KP is scheduled to be held at the Chief Secretary's Office on August 2 and August 3.—DNA

PTDC hosts inaugural ceremony of "Central Asia Tour 2025"

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), in collaboration with Globe Strainers (Pvt.), hosted the inaugural ceremony of the "Central Asia Tour 2025," an international motorbike rally promoting tourism, peace and cultural integration across Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, here on Friday. The adventure rally carries the theme: "Explore Muslim Heritage & Culture – Promote Tourism & Friendship," aiming to open new frontiers for tourism, strengthen diplomatic ties, and promote peace and friendship across borders. This unique 23-day journey will cover over 5,000 kilometers, showcasing Pakistan's tourism potential while fostering regional collaboration through people-to-people diplomacy.

The tour commenced from Lahore on July 31, passing through Islamabad, Torkham, and Kabul, before reaching Kunduz and entering Tajikistan via Kalai-khum. Riders will explore key destinations including Dushanbe and Khujand, and later cross into Uzbekistan, visiting cities such as Tashkent, Samarkand, and Bukhara. The rally will return via Afghanistan, concluding in Lahore on August 22. The ceremony was graced by Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, National Tourism Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Tourism, as the Chief Guest, and Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, Secretary, Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC), as the Guest of Honour. The event was also attended by Aftab ur Rehman Rana, Managing Director of PTDC; Alisher Tukhtayev, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan; and Sharifzoda Yusuf Toir, Ambassador of Tajikistan.—APP

Shah pledges to strengthen PBM services in Balochistan

QUETTA: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Syed Imran Ahmed Shah, has vowed to enhance the operations of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) in Balochistan, aiming to address public grievances and expand the province's access to vital welfare services. During a departmental briefing led by PBM Balochistan Director Muhammad Daud on the other day, the minister emphasized the urgent need to broaden PBM's footprint in education, healthcare, and social services across Quetta and the wider province. Syed Imran Ahmed Shah described this expansion as essential to alleviating the long-standing sense of deprivation felt by Balochistan's residents. He reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to strengthening social welfare initiatives and delivering comprehensive support to marginalized communities.

PBM's Impact in Balochistan Director Muhammad Daud highlighted PBM's achievements over the past three years. He informed that a total of 2,505 poor and needy patients were provided medical assistance worth Rs 286.76 million. Muhammad Daud added that the PBM has provided scholarships to 1089 deserving students worth of Rs 30 million. PBM operates 23 Women Empowerment Centers across Balochistan, where 50,000 women have been trained in various vocational skills, he briefed. Muhammad Daud in his briefing said through 14 Child Labour Schools, over 4,022 children have received education. In PBM-run Sweet Homes located in Turbat, Quetta, Kharan, and Zhob, 400 orphaned children are currently receiving free education, food, and accommodation, he said. Minister Syed Imran Ahmed Shah said that his visit to Quetta

aimed to assess PBM's on-ground performance and identify ways to further support underprivileged segments of society. He pledged that PBM offices and institutions in Balochistan would be made more efficient and people-friendly. He stressed the importance of empowering orphans not only through education but also by equipping them with vocational skills so that they can become self-reliant and productive members of society rather than being dependent on others.

Praising PBM's efforts, the minister highlighted that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision goes beyond mere financial assistance. "Our institutions must not be limited to disbursing aid but they should play a transformative role in the lives of women and youth by imparting marketable skills that promote economic self-sufficiency and dignified living," he concluded.—APP

Murad opens My Karachi exhibition, highlights Sindh's role in creation of Pak

KARACHI: Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah has inaugurated the "My Karachi" exhibition as the chief guest at the Karachi Expo Center on Friday. The event was organized by the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), where CM Shah was warmly welcomed by KCCI President Javed Balwani and other office bearers. Prominent attendees included Sindh Minister for Local Government Saeed Ghani and Minister for Industries Ikramullah Dharejo. Addressing the event, Sindh Chief Minister said that the Sindh government is officially launching Independence Day celebrations from August 1. He said "Quaid-e-Azam achieved

Pakistan through peaceful struggle. After the 1971 debacle, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto held the country together." He credited Bhutto for making Pakistan a nuclear power and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto for advancing missile technology, strengthening the armed forces. He credited Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto for making Pakistan a nuclear power and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto for advancing missile technology, strengthening the armed forces. The CM praised the exhibition, calling it "a reflection of Karachi's potential" and said it has become the city's identity since its inception in 2004. "Karachi has seen times of terrorism and extortion, but the situation has improved significantly,"

he noted. He affirmed that the Sindh government will continue its support for the exhibition and city development. Referring to the Urban Development, CM Shah detailed major development works worth Rs. 300 billion underway in Karachi. He highlighted completion of projects under Karachi Mega Schemes, including road expansions, flyovers, underpasses, and neighborhood upgrades in areas like Tariq Road and PECHS. The Shahrah-e-Bhutto project is expected to be completed this year at a cost of Rs. 60 billion, stretching to M-9 Motorway by December. Talking about water supply projects, the CM emphasized the Sindh government's efforts to resolve Karachi's water

crisis. He referred to the K-IV project and said Federal government was to allocate Rs. 78 billion but released Rs. 3 billion this year. The CM called for full federal support to complete the project. He said the additional water will be sourced from Hub Dam and Dumloti. A new Hub Canal (100 MGD) is complete and will be inaugurated on August 14, Shah said and added that by end of 2025, Karachi will receive up to 200 MGD from Hub Dam. Syed Murad Ali Shah said the Sindh Govt had already introduced People's Bus Service, Electric Buses and Pink Bus Service for women, these initiatives aimed at providing best transport facilities to the people of Karachi. He said BRT Yel-

low Line and Red Line projects would soon be completed. He also referred to Solid Waste Management Authority and said due to it garbage collections system has improved across the city. He reminded the audience of Sindh's historical role in the Pakistan Movement and said Sindh Assembly had passed resolutions in favour of Pakistan before independence. He also recalled Sindh efforts to separate from Bombay in the 1930s which laid the foundation for Pakistan's creation.

CM Murad Ali Shah congratulated KCCI for successfully organizing the event and expressed his government's full support for Karachi's business community.—APP

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Aug 15/DPR Korea
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Aug 15/India
Independence Day

Aug 15/Poland
Armed Forces Day

Aug 17 /Indonesia
Independence Day

Aug 24/Ukraine
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Gohar briefs Australian envoy about political situation

Hawkins underlined Australia’s support for a stable, democratic and prosperous Pakistan and said Australia will continue to advocate to the Government of Pakistan on the importance of upholding democratic principles

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The Australian High Commissioner in Pakistan, Neil Hawkins met the Acting Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Barrister Gohar Ali Khan here on Friday. Barrister Khan apprised Hawkins about the evolving political situation in

the country and PTI’s efforts for restoration of the constitution and rule of law. He also spoke about the state of the judiciary after the passage of the political parties in Pakistan.

26th constitutional amendment whereby it has been rendered subservient to the dictation of the executive. The manner in which mass convictions are being ordered for virtually the entire PTI leadership without following due process of law also came up for discussion. Hawkins underlined Australia’s support for a stable, democratic and prosperous Pakistan and said Australia will continue to advocate to the Government of Pakistan on the importance of upholding democratic principles and human rights, consistent with its Constitution and international obligations. He underscored that Australia regularly engages diplomatically with major

Randhawa orders acceleration of development projects

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, has directed authorities to expedite development work across several key sectors of the capital, while ensuring strict adherence to quality and construction standards. The directive came during a high-level meeting held at CDA Headquarters, attended by senior officials including CDA Member Administration and Estate Talat Mahmood, Member Finance Tahir Naem, Member Engineering Syed Nafasat Raza, Member Planning Dr. Khalid Hafiz, Member Environment Esfandiyar Baloch, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon, and other senior officers. The meeting reviewed ongoing development efforts in Sectors C-14, C-15, C-16, E-12, I-12, Park Enclave, Shaheen Chowk, Faizabad Interchange, and Kashmir Chowk. Chairman Randhawa emphasized the importance of speeding up construction work, while maintaining transparency and high standards. “There must be no compromise on the quality of construction. Development must move faster and be visible to the public,” Randhawa stated. He instructed that CDA directorates, particularly the Directorate of the DC CDA, establish camp offices in sectors where development is ongoing. These offices are expected to address residents’ complaints at their doorstep and ensure timely, lawful resolutions. Highlighting the need for improved aesthetics and urban planning, the chairman called for modern lighting systems and upgraded road infrastructure in all new sectors. He also ordered the widening of major roads and the removal of encroachments and illegal structures in accordance with legal procedures. In Park Enclave, he specifically directed that the pace of development and installation of street lights be intensified. Addressing bureaucratic hurdles, Randhawa stressed that all bottlenecks delaying CDA sector projects be removed on a priority basis. The chairman also acknowledged the recent success of CDA’s commercial property initiatives. “The performance of the relevant wings in the auction of plots and shops has been commendable,” he said, instructing the Finance Wing to allocate adequate funds to sustain momentum in development. Looking ahead, Randhawa issued clear instructions for the upgradation of the Diplomatic Enclave to international standards, indicating a broader vision for infrastructural enhancement across the capital.—DNA

Pakistan to continue supporting Kashmiris’ right to self-determination

ISLAMABAD :Federal Minister and Chairman of the Kashmir Committee, Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon, on Friday reaffirmed Pakistan’s steadfast support for the Kashmiri people’s legitimate struggle to achieve their right to self-determination. Addressing a seminar “Unheard Voices of IIOJK: Six Years After Article 370”, organized by Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) here, he condemned India’s illegal actions in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIO-J&K), adding that the Kashmir issue has never been a bilateral, internal or regional issue but it is an international issue. The chairman expressed strong condemnation of the Modi government’s actions, particularly the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A on August 5, 2019. “The Modi government’s

tendency for false flag operations and subsequent aggression has become all too familiar,” he added. He condemned the Pulwama incident, Indian aggression and demographic changes in IIOJ&K and highlighted a troubling pattern of cultural, civilizational and religious aggression, alongside grave human rights violations carried out by Indian forces in Kashmir. He said if the Kashmir conflict was not resolved, there would be no peace and stability in South Asia. He condemned the widespread atrocities committed by the Indian military, which includes the continued detention of Hurriyat leadership. Among those imprisoned, he mentioned leaders like Syed Shabir Shah, Yasin Malik, Musarrat Alam Bhat, and Dr Qasim Faktoori, urging the interna-

tional community to intervene for their immediate release. The Chairman said, Pakistan gave a befitting response to the Indian aggression and the arrogance of the Modi government was deflated. Since the events of May 10th, the Kashmir issue has once again come to the forefront at global stage, demanding urgent and comprehensive resolution. “We salute Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Pakistan armed forces for inflicting a crushing defeat on Indian,” he added. “Our armed forces, alongside its diplomatic front, delivered a crushing blow to India’s arrogance, changing the balance of power in South Asia in a mere 16 hours,” he said. He said that ceasefire was never a permanent solution.—APP

CJP for Bars, Law & Justice Commission strong ties

ISLAMABAD: In a momentum towards reforming the justice sector, a high-level meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Chief Justice of Pakistan to review and enhance institutional linkages between the Bar Associations and the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan. According to a press release issued here Friday, the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi shared insights from his recent visits to some of the most remote districts in all provinces, where he assessed the state of judicial infrastructure and identified key challenges. Despite the availability of development funds, he observed that inadequate coordination among institutions has hindered effective implementation. He emphasized the need

to include Bar Associations in judicial development efforts, especially those linked to judicial complexes. To bridge the coordination gap, the Commission has decided to post senior-level representatives in every province. These officers will be based in the High courts and serve as liaisons with district bar associations. Their duties include raising awareness of justice sector initiatives, identifying local priorities, and supervising grassroots reforms. Bar Associations will also be invited to submit development proposals for consideration by the relevant District Development Committees headed by the D&SJ. Representatives from federal and provincial departments are now part of the process to accelerate execu-

tion and prevent resource duplication. Highlighting the importance of synergy, the Chair urged bar representatives to engage their members proactively and stay involved in these reform efforts. He directed that all government-provided support to Bar Associations be streamlined and properly structured to maximize impact and cost-effectiveness. He also called on provincial line departments to remain actively engaged with designated officers to ensure timely implementation of projects proposed by the District Committees. Noting challenges such as poor infrastructure, unreliable power supply, and limited digital access in underdeveloped districts, he stressed the need for targeted interventions.—APP

CPEC’s significance underscored at seminar

DNA
ISLAMABAD: “The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is crucial

for Pakistan’s economic transformation; it has already laid the foundation for putting the country on a trajectory of fast-paced sustainable growth. There certainly are challenges, including but not limited to se-

curity, but the two countries are committed to taking it forward, as per the initial design.” These views were expressed by speakers in a seminar titled “12 Years of CPEC: Progress and Prospects”, organized by the Eurasian Century Institute (ECI), in Islamabad, the other day. Mr. Wang Shengjie, Counsellor, Embassy of the People’s Republic of China graced the occasion as the Guest of Honor in the seminar. Dr. Noor Fatima, International Islamic University; Dr. Shaheryar Khan, Iqra University, and Ms. Sadia Saif Niazi, National University of Modern Language were the key speakers. Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director, China Pakistan Study Centre, Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad was in the chair. The speakers discussed the contributions made by CPEC over past 12 years since its inception, flagged the areas and aspects that need improvement and raised recommendations for policy makers of both the countries – for years ahead.

Police conduct search operations

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Police on Thursday conducted search operations in different areas to register the details of houses, shops, hotels and individuals. The search operations carried on the instructions of City Police Officer Syed Khalid Hamdani were aimed at rooting out criminal elements, the police spokesman said. The details of 184 houses, 124 shopkeepers, 02 hotels and more than 300 individuals were registered in the operations. Local police, Elite force, woman police and other law enforcement agencies participated in the operations conducted in the areas of Civil Lines, R A Bazaar, Waris Khan, Ratta Amral, Kahuta, Mandra, Chaurtra, Jatli, Dharmial and Rawat police stations. The spokesman said the search operations would continue under the National Action Plan.—APP

Advancing women’s economic inclusion held

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Balochistan has reaffirmed its commitment to advancing women’s economic inclusion and development through a high-level seminar series under the EU-funded GRASP project, implemented by the International Trade Centre in partnership with the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF). The two-day event, jointly organised by PPAF, the Government of Balochistan, and Paigham-e-Pakistan, brought together federal and provincial leaders, civil society representatives, and women entrepreneurs to explore strategies for inclusive growth in agriculture, livestock, and enterprise sectors, said a press release on Friday. Dr. Rubaba Khan Baledi, Advisor to the Chief Minister on Women Development, stressed the need for institutionalised support across all levels of planning and governance. “This is about system-building, not short-term projects,” she said, urging for women’s central role in value chains and digital inclusion initiatives. Ghazala Gola, Deputy Speaker of the Balochistan Assembly, called for gender-responsive laws and dedicated budgets grounded in evidence and political will. “We must close the gap between intent and impact,” she emphasized.—APP

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Briefs

Capital roads under sky eye

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has imposed a strict ban on the entry of heavy, overloaded vehicles and loader rickshaws into the federal capital, as part of a broader crackdown on traffic violations under drone surveillance, initiated on Friday.

A public relations officer told APP on Friday that Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Captain (R) Syed Zeeshan Haider has personally supervised the deployment of additional personnel on all major highways and intersections to ensure smoother traffic flow and public safety. He said the ITP will seize motorcycles and vehicles on the spot if found in violation of traffic laws, adding that violations such as signal breaking, speeding, lane discipline breaches, and wrong parking will result in fines and legal action.

"Strict monitoring through drone cameras is being carried out to identify violators and ensure transparency in enforcement," CTO Zeeshan said. He added that the ITP will enforce traffic laws on an equal basis, without discrimination. He said the Islamabad Traffic Education Unit will remain active on major roads to raise public awareness, while senior officers will be present in the field to manage traffic in real-time and handle emerging situations.

"The safety of citizens and prevention of road accidents is our top priority," said the CTO, urging residents to cooperate by following traffic rules. "No overloaded or heavy vehicle will be allowed to enter the city under any circumstances," he stressed.—APP

Pakistan's exports to US increase 10.72%

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's export of goods and services to the United States (US) witnessed an increase of 10.72 percent during the fiscal year 2024-25 as compared to the exports of the last year 2023-24, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The overall exports to the US were recorded at US \$6.028 billion during July-June (2024-25) against exports of US \$5.444 billion during July-June (2023-24), SBP data revealed. On a year-to-year basis, the exports to the US also surged to \$475.600 million in June 2025 against the export of \$444.589 million in June 2024. Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to the US witnessed a decrease of 7.85 percent during June 2025 as compared to the exports of \$516.149 million in May 2025, the SBP data revealed.

Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 4.24 percent in the fiscal year under review, from US \$30.979 billion to US \$32.295 billion, the SBP data revealed. On the other hand, the imports from the US into the country during the year under review were recorded at US \$2.350 billion against US \$1.875 billion last year, showing an increase of 25.33 percent in July-June (2024-25). On a year-on-year basis, the imports for the US also increased to US \$197.231 million in June 2025, against the export of US \$135.834 million in June 2024. On a month-on-month basis, the imports from the US into the country witnessed a decrease of 19.32 percent during June 2025, as compared to the imports of US \$244.487 million during May 2025, according to the data. The overall imports into the country witnessed an increase of 11.13 per cent, from \$53.156 billion to US \$59.076 billion, according to the data.—APP

Chairman CDA's efforts for making Islamabad beautiful

The revitalization of CDA Nursery transforming it into Gardenia Hub, public parks and recreational spaces is another major achievements of CDAs

DNA

Islamabad bring the capital city of Pakistan, is renowned for its natural beauty, greenery, and well-planned urban layout. In recent times, the efforts of the Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) under the vision of Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi and under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Randhawa has significantly contributed to enhancing the city's charm and livability. With a vision for a cleaner, greener, and more modern Islamabad, the Chairman CDA has initiated a series of impactful projects aimed at beautifying the city and preserving its natural environment. One of the key areas of focus has been the enhancement of greenery across the city. Massive plantation campaigns have been launched in collaboration with National Press Club and other various public and private sector organizations. More than one million trees and flowering plants have been plantation and are being planned along roadsides, in parks, and in green belts. These efforts have not only improved the city's visual appeal but also contributed to better air quality and a healthier ecosystem.

The revitalization of CDA Nursery transforming it into Gardenia Hub, public parks and recreational spaces is another major achievements of CDA. Parks such as F-9 Park, Lake View Park, and Damane-Koh have been upgraded with better landscaping, lighting, walking tracks, and children's play areas. The restoration of these spaces has



provided citizens with cleaner and more attractive places for leisure and physical activity.

The Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa is a sportsman as well as sports lover. He has

planned to functional 25 cricket and 25 football grounds in the federal capital besides establishing peddle courts . Moreover Paper Mulberry trees are being removed into phases thus replac-

ing with environment friendly trees. Regular cleanliness drives, improved waste management systems, and the deployment of modern machinery have led to visibly cleaner streets and public areas.

Special attention has been given to the timely collection of garbage and the removal of illegal dumping sites.

Under the Chairman's leadership, illegal encroachments have been removed, and public spaces have been reclaimed for community use. This has not only improved accessibility but also restored the city's original planning and symmetry. Roads and footpaths have been repaired and widened, while modern and fancy streetlights have been installed on major roads and bridges. Traffic signals have been installed to improve safety standards and visibility.

Furthermore, the beautification of 279 parks, major roads, intersections, entry and exit points of the city has given Islamabad a fresh and modern look. Art installations, fountains, and well-maintained green areas now welcome visitors and enhance the city's identity as a clean and cultured capital. The CDA is working in coordination with environmental experts, healthcare professionals, and urban forestry planners to ensure a balanced and sustainable approach to the tree replacement process.

The efforts of the Chairman CDA have brought a visible and positive change to Islamabad. Through visionary planning, efficient execution, and community engagement, the Chairman CDA, Muhammad Ali Randhawa is shaping Islamabad into a modern city that reflects both natural beauty and urban sophistication. These initiatives not only benefit the residents but also enhance Islamabad's image globally as one of the most beautiful capitals in the world.

PRSS-1 sold to Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Remote Sensing Satellite-1 (PRSS-1) China's first optical remote sensing satellite sold to Pakistan, China Economic Net reported on Friday. China successfully launched PPRSS-1 aboard a Kuaizhou-1A (KZ-1A) carrier rocket from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center, located in Sichuan Province.

The satellite was launched at 10:00 a.m. (Beijing Time) on Thursday. It entered its preset orbit successfully. The mission marked the 29th flight of the Kuaizhou-1A model. PRSS-1, China's first optical remote sensing satellite sold to Pakistan, will be used for land and resources surveying and monitoring of natural disasters.

PM, health minister discuss ministry's issues

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services Regulations and Coordination Syed Mustafa Kamal Friday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and discussed matters relating to the ministry. During the meeting the Syed Mustafa Kamal briefed the prime minister on progress of the ongoing projects and reforms in health sector.

Meo community's vibrant heritage celebrated at Lok Virsa

ISLAMABAD, Aug 01 (APP):Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi on Friday inaugurated a new cultural diorama dedicated to the Meo community at the Heritage Museum, Lok Virsa, declaring it a symbolic step towards preserving Pakistan's diverse cultural identity. Addressing the inauguration ceremony, the minister said the Meo community is a vibrant and integral part of Pakistan's cultural landscape, and their rich heritage, resilience, and contributions to local traditions deserve celebration and preservation. He said this initiative reflects the government's firm resolve to promote cultural inclusion and national unity through heritage platforms. The minister announced that a new National Cultural Policy would soon be unveiled, with a clear objective to promote Pakistan's soft image globally. "The policy aims to rejuvenate cultural and literary departments under the ministry and empower all communities, particularly those underrepresented," he added. He lauded Lok Virsa for consistently highlighting the stories of marginalized communities and congratulated the institute on its commitment to inclusivity. "Such creative platforms not only document living cultures but build national solidarity by honoring every thread in our cultural fabric," he said. The newly established Meo diorama, situated at the Pakistan National Museum of Ethnology, was made possible with the direct support and sponsorship of the Meo community, demonstrating meaningful community participation.—APP

Commerce Minister chairs, trade review meeting

ISLAMABAD :Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, chaired a high-level meeting of the Trade Review Committee on Friday to assess Pakistan's trade performance during the Financial Year 2024-25. The meeting brought together senior officials of the Ministry to review sector-wise progress and chart forward strategies amid persistent global trade challenges, said a release issued here. Despite facing continued global headwinds including tariff tensions, slowdowns in major markets, intensifying price competition, and geopolitical uncertainties, Pakistan's export sector displayed resilience. Total exports rose to US\$ 31.75 billion, up from US\$ 30.76 billion in FY 2023-24 — a notable gain driven primarily by robust performance in value-added and emerging sectors. The exports among the leading contributors to this growth were textile and apparel Sector, knitted garments surged by 15 percent, Woven garments up 16 percent and home textiles recorded a 9 percent increase. The exports in non-traditional and value-added including tobacco and cigarettes saw a remarkable 135 percent increase, plastic products grew by 17 percent, Cement exports rose by 25 percent and Pharmaceuticals and ICT-related services also continued to gain traction. The minister praised the performance of these sectors, especially the growth seen in diversified and non-traditional exports, which are critical to Pakistan's long-term trade sustainability. On the import side, a 24% increase in capital goods was observed — a sign of reviving industrial activity and rising consumer confidence in the economy. During the meeting, the Commerce Minister issued several strategic directives to sustain and accelerate export growth and the Country-specific export plans to be developed, with a strong focus on emerging and non-traditional markets. The minister directed for establishment of a 'Trade Alert System' to provide real-time responses to global trade disruptions, including SPS/TBT concerns and trade remedy actions. The revitalization of Sectoral export Councils to ensure effective private sector consultation and evidence-based policy making and adoption of Artificial Intelligence and data analytics for smarter trade intelligence, product-market alignment, and strategic global marketing also ensured. The minister also directed a comprehensive national strategy for services exports, focusing on ICT, freelancing, and creative industries, to be developed as a priority. At the conclusion, the minister stated "Our export growth, especially in value-added and non-traditional sectors, reflects the resilience and adaptability of Pakistan's trade ecosystem. The government remains fully committed to supporting the business community, expanding market access, and ensuring Pakistan leverages every bilateral and multilateral framework available. Trade is central to our economic transformation and job creation strategy, and the Ministry will continue to facilitate, innovate, and deliver." The meeting concluded with a strong reaffirmation that the Ministry of Commerce is committed to building a resilient, diversified and competitive export base, aligned with national development goals. —DNA

'Remote-Sensing Satellite' to revolutionize earth monitoring

ISLAMABAD: GM & the Head of Satellite Planning at SUPARCO Aisha Rabia Ahsan Friday described the launch of the remote-sensing satellite as another "Eye on the Sky" which will enhance Earth monitoring, enabling more accurate predictions and early alerts for natural disasters and will assist in evacuating people from sensitive regions during emergencies. In an exclusive conversation with media, the Aisha Rabia provided insight into the upcoming launch of Pakistan's new remote-sensing satellite, which she described as a significant advancement in Earth

monitoring. According to Rabia, the satellite, dubbed "Eye on the Sky," is designed to closely monitor the planet's movements and enhance the accuracy of early warnings for natural disasters. The satellite will play a key role in predicting and mitigating the effects of calamities, such as earthquakes and floods, offering invaluable data to authorities for timely intervention, she added. Rabia emphasized the importance of the satellite in disaster management, highlighting that it will greatly aid in the evacuation of people from vulnerable regions during emergencies, she adding, this technology will enable us to identify and assess high-risk areas in real-time, allowing for faster and more efficient evacuations". In her conversation, Aisha Rabia admired the partnership with the collaborating countries that made the remote-sensing satellite initiative possible. She highlighted that this development is the culmination of years of cooperation, noting that the first satellite was launched in 2018, followed by a second one at the beginning of 2025. She expressed her gratitude for the continued collaboration, acknowledging the vital role played by the partner nations in bringing these projects to fruition. "These satellites are not just a leap in technology but also a testament to the strength of international partnerships in advancing space exploration," she added.—APP

Expert call for media awareness

ISLAMABAD :Expert on World Breastfeeding Week, from August 1st to 7th, raise awareness about the benefits of breastfeeding and advocate for the creation of supportive environments for breastfeeding mothers, while also addressing the barriers that hinder breastfeeding practices. In an exclusive conversation with PTV News Channel, Principal SIMS Professor Zohra Khanum shed light on the theme for 2025's World Breastfeeding Week. World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is a crucial time to raise awareness about the benefits of breastfeeding and the support systems needed to ensure that mothers have the resources and knowledge to breastfeed successfully. The theme for 2025, "Priorities Breastfeeding: Create Sustainable Support Systems," emphasizes the importance of creating lasting infrastructures that support breastfeeding mothers worldwide, whether through healthcare services, community support, or workplace policies, she added. She emphasized that the primary focus of this year's theme is to raise awareness about the importance of breastfeeding for both mothers and infants. According to Prof Khanum, it is crucial for women to consult healthcare professionals if they face any health issues during their breastfeeding journey. Seeking medical advice ensures both the mother and child receive the best care and support, preventing any complications that could arise, she added. Prof Khanum also stressed the vital role of mother's milk in the early stages of a child's life, highlighting that it provides essential nutrients and antibodies that help protect newborns from infections. She encouraged new and expecting mothers to understand the immense benefits of breastfeeding, not only for the child's health but also for their own well-being, adding, this is why creating a supportive environment for mothers is key especially in communities where knowledge about breastfeeding might still be limited. Furthermore, Prof Khanum called for greater awareness among young girls about the barriers preventing many women from breastfeeding. She pointed out that social, cultural and economic challenges often hinder the practice. By educating young girls early on about the benefits of breastfeeding and the importance of overcoming these barriers, society can ensure future generations of women are better prepared to support breastfeeding as a natural, essential practice. —DNA

Kitchen items' prices fall by 0.35 pc

The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 witnessed a decrease of 0.42 per cent by declining from to 316.01 from last week's 317.34 points

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a decrease of 0.35 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on July 31, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 327.94 points as compared to 329.09 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 1.98 per cent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 witnessed a decrease of 0.42 per cent by declining from to 316.01 from last week's 317.34 points. The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,733 to 22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175, decreased by 0.42 percent, 0.37 percent, 0.37 percent and 0.33 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 11 (21.57%) items increased, 12 (23.53%) items decreased and 28 (54.90%) items remained stable. The items, which recorded major increase in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included tomatoes (17.26%), chicken (4.76%), bananas (2.97%), pulse moong (1.55%), LPG (1.39%), potatoes (0.73%), pulse mash (0.61%), wheat flour (0.59%) and pulse gram (0.58%).

The commodities which recorded major decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included eggs (1.80%), firewood (1.11%), cooked beef (1.08%), powdered milk (0.49%), energy saver (0.25%), garlic (0.24%), cigarettes and mutton (0.13%) each, beef (0.10%), gur (0.04%) and onions (0.02%). Year-on-year basis, the commodities that witnessed decrease in prices included onions (49.32%), tomatoes (42.31%), garlic (23.78%), wheat flour (22.90%), pulse mash (21.40%), tea packet (17.93%), potatoes (15.95%), chicken (11.71%), electricity charges for Q1 (10.02%) and lpg (0.86%). The commodities which recorded a increase in their average prices on year-on-year basis included ladies sandal (55.62%), gas charges for Q1 (29.85%), sugar (21.66%), pulse moong (14.27%), beef (14.16%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (12.33%), vegetable ghee 1 kg (11.95%), firewood (11.75%), gur (11.23%), eggs (10.94%), cooked beef (9.31%) and lawn printed (7.32%).

Pak ranks 4th globally with 167 snow leopards

ISLAMABAD, Aug 01 (APP):In a groundbreaking moment for wildlife conservation, Pakistan has unveiled its first-ever scientific estimate of the snow leopard population, 167 individuals, placing the country at number four globally among snow leopard range nations. This marks a major milestone in Pakistan's environmental research and conservation efforts.

The announcement was made during the Pakistan Wildlife Protection Awards 2025, organized by the Snow Leopard Foundation in collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC). The event brought together environmental experts, diplomats, educators, students, journalists, and conservation activists to honor the unsung heroes of wildlife protection. Based on 15 years of rigorous field surveys, camera trapping, and data analysis, the Snow Leopard Foundation determined that Pakistan's snow leopard population stands at 167 individuals. This newly released data provides a critical foundation for future conservation strategies aimed at protecting the elusive and endangered big cat in Pakistan's high-altitude mountain regions. During the ceremony, seven dedicated rangers and field staff from Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Azad Jammu & Kashmir were awarded for their bravery and long-standing service in safeguarding endangered species, often at great personal risk. Dr. Shezra Mansab Kharal, Minister of State for Climate Change, lauded the field officers as "the true heroes of our wildlife," emphasizing their vital role in strengthening Pakistan's climate resilience and environmental security. Wildlife Ambassador Sardar Jamal Khan Leghari echoed this sentiment, highlighting that "protecting wildlife means saving entire ecosystems and the future of coming generations."

Awardees included Muhammad Ismail (AJK), Sher Afghan Ali, Muhammad Raza, Sakhawat Ali, Israr Ullah, Muhammad Saleem, and Mehboob Shah, each receiving national recognition through category-specific wildlife awards. The ceremony also featured the screening of a documentary titled "Beyond Borders – The Heartbeat of Chitral Rangers", showcasing the harsh realities and sacrifices of those working in remote, high-altitude terrains to safeguard Pakistan's natural heritage. The Snow Leopard Foundation and MoCC&EC reaffirmed their commitment to advancing conservation research and expanding protection efforts for snow leopards and other endangered species across Pakistan. Snow leopards face increasing threats from habitat degradation, shrinking prey populations, and climate change. Expanding infrastructure, poaching, and conflict with herders continue to jeopardize their survival, making accurate population data essential for targeted conservation. The three countries with higher populations are China, Mongolia, and India. China hosts the largest number of snow leopards, with an estimated 2,000 to 2,500 individuals, due to its vast mountainous terrain spanning several provinces. Mongolia follows with around 1,000 snow leopards, benefitting from its remote and rugged landscapes that provide ideal habitats. India ranks third, with an estimated population between 500 and 700, primarily found in the Himalayan regions. These countries play a crucial role in the global conservation of this elusive and endangered species. Local communities, particularly those in Gilgit-Baltistan, have played a growing role in protecting snow leopards by participating in eco-tourism initiatives and reporting poaching incidents, making them vital stakeholders in long-term conservation.

Democracy under strain as PTI leaders face legal onslaught

IN what appears to be an intensifying campaign against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), the party finds itself increasingly cornered both politically and legally. In recent weeks, a disturbing pattern has emerged: senior PTI leaders are being handed severe sentences by lower courts, followed swiftly by their disqualification from parliamentary assemblies by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). These developments have not only raised questions about the fairness of the judicial process but have also sparked concerns about the broader implications for democratic norms in the country.

The most recent blow came with the conviction of senior PTI leaders—Shibli Faraz, Omar Ayub Khan, and Zartaj Gul—who were sentenced to ten years in prison in connection with the events of May 9, 2023. The charges relate to what the state has termed as orchestrated acts of violence and vandalism following the arrest of party founder Imran Khan. While the state's position is that the law must take its course, PTI and a growing number of observers argue that the judicial proceedings lack both justification and moral standing. The sentencing of these high-profile leaders is not an isolated incident. Over the past year, a string of PTI lawmakers and officeholders have been handed prison sentences by lower courts, often in cases related to political demonstrations or allegedly inflammatory speeches. What is particularly alarming is the speed with which the ECP has acted to disqualify these individuals from holding public office—sometimes within hours of a court's decision. This has given rise to a perception that a coordinated effort is underway to systematically dismantle PTI's political presence. Legal experts have questioned the procedural integrity of many of these cases, pointing to what they describe as a lack of due process and the apparent targeting of a single political party. "Justice must not only be done—it must also be seen to be done," says one senior lawyer familiar with the recent court proceedings. "What we are seeing does not inspire public confidence in the impartiality of the judiciary."

The exclusion of PTI from the political arena through legal and administrative tools poses a serious threat to the democratic fabric of Pakistan. Regardless of political affiliations, the right of a



party to participate in the political process is a cornerstone of democracy. By eliminating PTI's key leadership and stifling its organizational structure, the state risks undermining not just a party but the very principle of representative politics.

For many, this crackdown signals a return to the kind of political engineering that has historically plagued Pakistan. Civil society activists, independent journalists, and international observers have voiced concern that the narrowing of political space will have long-term consequences for governance, public trust, and national cohesion.

Amidst this mounting pressure, PTI has announced a protest on August 5 to register its opposition to the ongoing legal campaign against its leadership. The protest is seen by many as a litmus test for the party's ability to mobilize its support base under adverse conditions. Given the extensive restrictions on public gatherings, media coverage, and the arrest of activists, the demonstration is unlikely to be a massive show of strength. However, its symbolic value cannot be overstated. This protest could mark the beginning of a larger political movement—one that transcends PTI and speaks to broader concerns about repression and the state of democracy in Pakistan. "This isn't just about PTI anymore," said a party spokesperson. "It's about the future of political freedom in this country."

Despite the challenges, PTI's support among sections of the public remains significant. The party's digital presence continues to be strong, and its narrative of victimhood and resistance resonates with many disillusioned voters, especially the youth. Whether this can translate into effective street power under current conditions remains to be seen. What lies ahead is uncertain. If the current trajectory continues, Pakistan may find itself in a situation where the largest and arguably most popular political party is excluded from the electoral process—not through the ballot box, but through courts and administrative decisions. This would set a dangerous precedent, one that could haunt the country's political landscape for years to come.

There is still time for course correction. Fair trials, transparent judicial proceedings, and a level playing field for all political parties are essential to restoring faith in the democratic process. Pakistan has already paid a high price for political instability; further polarization and exclusion will only deepen its crises. While the state may succeed in sidelining PTI leaders in the short term, it is unlikely to extinguish the sentiments they represent. Political ideas do not vanish with imprisonments—they evolve, reorganize, and re-emerge, often with greater force. The real test for Pakistan's democracy is not whether it can suppress dissent, but whether it can accommodate it through democratic means. As August 5 approaches, all eyes will be on PTI's next move—and on how the state responds.

Recognition of State of Palestine: End of Impunity for Israel

Qamar Bashir



Global recognition would isolate Israel diplomatically like never before, branding it as the lone rejecter of peace among nearly all UN member states, with only the United States and a handful of allies shielding it from sanctions and prosecution. It would give Palestine stronger legal standing before the International Criminal Court and other UN agencies, enabling war crimes investigations into Israel's actions in Gaza and the West Bank and making arms sales and military aid to Israel politically toxic and legally indefensible

IF by September 2025, as promised by a growing coalition of European Union states, over 100 Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) nations, and key United Nations members, the State of Palestine is formally recognized, it will transform not just the diplomatic landscape but the lives of millions in Gaza and the West Bank. For seventy-seven years, Palestinians have lived stateless, denied protection under international law, treated not as a people but as a problem. This collective recognition would change that overnight, ending decades of unchecked Israeli impunity, shifting the balance of law, morality, and diplomacy, and offering Palestinians their first tangible hope of freedom, justice, and survival.

Global recognition would isolate Israel diplomatically like never before, branding it as the lone rejecter of peace among nearly all UN member states, with only the United States and a handful of allies shielding it from sanctions and prosecution. It would give Palestine stronger legal standing before the International Criminal Court and other UN agencies, enabling war crimes investigations into Israel's actions in Gaza and the West Bank and making arms sales and military aid to Israel politically toxic and legally indefensible. Europe could impose sanctions on settlement goods, halt arms trade, and channel reconstruction funds directly to Palestine under state-to-state frameworks, bypassing Israel's control over humanitarian aid and dismantling its stranglehold on Gaza's survival.

Most importantly, recognition would allow Palestine to demand humanitarian corridors, international peacekeeping forces, and binding UN resolutions for reconstruction and protection, breaking the decades-long cycle of siege, starvation, and slaughter that turned Gaza and the West Bank into open-air prisons. This historic shift is not theoretical; it is being built statement by statement, leader by leader, as the world finally breaks decades of silence that allowed Israeli crimes to go unchallenged. On January 20, 2025, at the 19th NAM Summit in Kampala, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres delivered one of his most forceful rebukes of Israeli policy to date, declaring, "The refusal to accept the two-state solution for Israelis and Palestinians, and the denial of the right to statehood for the Palestinian people, are unacceptable. The right of the Palestinian people to build their own state must be recognized by all." With over 120 NAM nations present, the call drew unanimous applause, a collective moral judgment against Israel's policies of siege and occupation.

This wave of recognition gained early momentum on May 28, 2024, when Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez formally recognized Palestine, calling it "a historic move towards justice and the only route to achieve peace." Spain joined Ireland, Norway, and 144 other nations that had already acknowledged Palestinian sovereignty, long before the latest atrocities in Gaza forced the world's attention.

On July 25, 2025, French President Emmanuel Macron stunned Washington and Tel Aviv by announcing that France would recognize Palestine at the United Nations General Assembly in September, stating, "We cannot resign ourselves to endless war. Recognizing Palestine is not a reward for violence but a step toward peace, justice, and shared humanity." France, a permanent UN Security Council member, shattered the decades-old Western condition that Palestinian statehood required Israeli approval—a condition perpetually sabotaged by occupation and annexation.

Just days later, on July 29, 2025, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer convened an emergency Cabinet meeting and declared, "We will recognize a Palestinian state before the UN General Assembly unless Israel takes substantive steps to end the appalling situation in Gaza, agrees to a ceasefire, halts annexation in the West Bank, and commits to a two-state solution." The UK, once one of Israel's staunchest allies, is now preparing to break from Washington's unconditional support, a dramatic shift driven by growing domestic and international outrage.

At a high-level UN conference on July 22, 2025, co-chaired by France and the UAE, France's Foreign Minister Jean-Elro Baro described Gaza as "a charnel house where corpses look famished and spirits are desperate. The time for half-measures is over. France will fully recognize Palestine by September." The conference saw Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations back this roadmap, while the Palestinian Authority pledged democratic reforms, elections in 2026, an end to militant funding, and Hamas' exclusion from Gaza's future governance—removing long-standing excuses Israel has used to block statehood.

Even long-standing defenders of Israel are faltering. During his July 2025 visit to Scotland, U.S. President Donald Trump, once Netanyahu's most loyal ally, admitted publicly, "There is starvation in Gaza, and we have to get more involved in distributing aid." Though still reluctant to confront Israel directly, his acknowledgment signals cracks in Washington's unwavering shield, driven by global

outrage and domestic anger over American complicity in supplying bombs used on civilians.

Meanwhile, Israel's leadership clings to narratives that no longer withstand scrutiny, claiming Hamas hoards aid while Israeli bombs have destroyed Gaza's infrastructure and decimated its leadership. Officials suggest Palestinians can "leave Gaza" for other nations, reducing an indigenous people to permanent refugees, while annexing West Bank land piece by piece. These absurdities expose a truth the International Court of Justice underscored in its July 2025 ruling: Israel is operating an illegal occupation, deliberate starvation, and ethnic cleansing campaign, shielded only by U.S. veto power and Western complicity.

For decades, Israel hid behind myths of morality and victimhood, presenting itself as the Middle East's only democracy defending against hostility. That veil has now been torn apart by the undeniable images of slaughtered children, bombed hospitals in Rafah, uprooted olive groves in the West Bank, and millions imprisoned under siege. The world sees not a beacon of democracy but a state waging systematic war on a stateless people, turning Gaza into a slaughterhouse under a policy of siege and starvation.

The coming September session of the United Nations could mark the beginning of the end of Israel's impunity. With NAM nations, Spain, France, the UK, Ireland, Norway, and more EU states ready to recognize Palestine, history is shifting decisively. Recognition will not immediately free Gaza or rebuild what decades of bombs have destroyed, but it will change the rules of the game.

It will make occupation and siege crimes in the eyes of the law, not "disputes," and finally give Palestinians a sovereign platform to fight for their survival and dignity. This is no longer about politics or negotiation; it is about humanity reclaiming its voice after decades of silence, choosing justice over complicity, choosing statehood over statelessness, choosing life over slaughter. The world has looked into the mirror and seen the cruel face of Israel's actions—and at long last, it is choosing to stand with Palestine, with recognition, law, and morality as its weapon for long-denied peace.

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

Countries should act unilaterally in recognizing Palestine

Faisal J. Abbas

The Arab and Muslim worlds are prepared to integrate Israel into a region brimming with economic potential and strategic value. Peace, prosperity, and progress are within reach — if only the leadership dares grasp it. Sadly, many in Israel's current ruling elite remain ideologically opposed to any peaceful settlement. These are individuals who have overseen West Bank annexations, weaponized hunger, and now face accusations of war crimes and crimes against humanity

IN the tangled web of geopolitics and moral responsibility, recognition of Palestine stands today not merely as a diplomatic choice, but as a litmus test of integrity, courage, and commitment to global justice. As the world watches yet another cycle of suffering unfold, it is time to call out the procrastinators, praise the bold, and demand that the international community act unilaterally in embracing the two-state solution — starting with the immediate recognition of Palestine. The UK's recent stance — threatening to recognize Palestine if Israel fails to meet certain conditions — encapsulates the paradox of delayed justice. "Too little, too late" is apt for a nation that played a pivotal role in creating the current geopolitical landscape. Yet, "better late than never" is equally valid if London finally chooses to right historical wrongs. Former colonial powers such as Britain and France share a legacy of deep entanglement in the Middle East, and the latter's courageous move to recognize Palestine deserves both praise and emulation.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warns that recognition of Palestine equates to rewarding Hamas — a curious argument, given that his government's long-term policies over more than 16 years have emboldened the very group he now seeks to vilify. Netanyahu's deviant support for Hamas is well-documented. "For years, Netanyahu propped up Hamas. Now it's blown up in our faces," read a headline in The Times of Israel in the immediate aftermath of the horrible Oct. 7 attacks. In 2019, the Israeli leader reportedly said: "Those who want to thwart the establishment of a Palestinian state

should support the strengthening of Hamas." Recognition is not about legitimizing terrorism. It is about affirming the rights of millions of Palestinians who have nothing to do with Hamas, and have endured statelessness, displacement, and daily suffering. It is about offering a framework for peace that includes Israelis, who also deserve security and stability. Not to mention ending the illegal occupation of Palestinian lands, as stipulated by the UN — an organization Israel is a member of but does not seem to respect.

Whether Netanyahu and his coalition of far-right nationalists accept it or not, the two-state solution remains Israel's safest path forward — both in terms of regional normalization and long-term peace. Saudi Arabia has repeatedly signaled that full normalization is contingent upon the creation of a Palestinian state.

The Arab and Muslim worlds are prepared to integrate Israel into a region brimming with economic potential and strategic value. Peace, prosperity, and progress are within reach — if only the leadership dares grasp it. Sadly, many in Israel's current ruling elite remain ideologically opposed to any peaceful settlement. These are individuals who have overseen West Bank annexations, weaponized hunger, and now face accusations of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Their worldview is not anchored in coexistence; it thrives on perpetual conflict and expansionism. For them, any compromise — even one that could save lives — is tantamount to betrayal.

Let us not forget that these are elected officials who have, without remorse, described

the people of Gaza as "human animals," called for nuclear strikes, and openly encouraged mass displacement. When such rhetoric becomes policy, and cruelty is cloaked in nationalism, the moral compass of governance is not just broken — it is weaponized.

That is why the global community, especially nations untainted by historical baggage, must act. A coalition spearheaded by Saudi Arabia and France, embracing the two-state solution through unilateral recognition of Palestine, is the only viable path forward. Waiting for consensus or negotiating around extremists only prolongs the suffering. This is no longer about diplomacy — it is about justice.

Now, more than ever, the stars seem aligned. Hamas and Hezbollah are weakened. Iran is notably quiet. We have a US president who is focused on negotiating peace deals between Ukraine and Russia, India and Pakistan, and Thailand and Cambodia. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman happens to be leading Saudi Arabia and has emerged as a pragmatic regional leader with transformative ambitions. This is a historic window to reimagine the Middle East not as a perennial battleground, but as the next Europe — a region of stability, trade, cooperation, and cultural exchange.

In the end, recognition of Palestine is not an act of defiance; it is a pledge to uphold human dignity. It is a call to end decades of suffering, and a step toward a future where Israelis and Palestinians can live not just side by side, but as equal partners in peace. History won't wait. Neither should we.

— Faisal J. Abbas is the Editor-in-Chief of Arab News. X: @FaisaJAbbas

Briefs

Donald Trump hits dozens of countries...

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“And I don’t want to get ahead of the President of the United States in announcing those deals.” Regarding the steep tariffs on goods from Canada, the second largest US trading partner after Mexico, the official said that Canadian officials “haven’t shown the same level of constructiveness that we’ve seen from the Mexican side.” The extension for Mexico avoids a 30% tariff on most Mexican non-automotive and non-metal goods compliant with the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement on trade and came after a Thursday morning call between Trump and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum. “We avoided the tariff increase announced for tomorrow,” Sheinbaum wrote in an X social media post, adding that the Trump call was “very good.” Approximately 85% of US imports from Mexico comply with the rules of origin outlined in the USMCA, shielding them from 25% tariffs related to fentanyl, according to Mexico’s economy ministry.

Pakistan to get first US oil shipment

FROM PAGE 01
On Thursday, Pakistan hailed a trade deal struck with the US, its top export market. Pakistan said the agreement would lead to lower tariffs and increased investment, without specifying the level of duties to be levied on Pakistani shipments. A key China ally, Pakistan has been warming up to Trump after he threatened tariffs. It has credited US diplomatic intervention for ending recent hostilities with neighbouring India and nominated Trump for the Nobel peace prize.

India’s Operation Mahadev...

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India chose the path of aggression, unilaterally becoming judge, jury and executioner,” he said. Khan urged Indian leaders to admit their losses and recognise the need for third-party involvement in such matters. “In May 2025, Pakistan gave a robust and successful military response to Indian aggression,” he reiterated. Rejecting India’s narrative of a “new normal”, Khan said Pakistan sees mutual respect for sovereignty and the UN Charter as the only foundation for bilateral relations. He also criticised Indian leaders’ statements about the Indus Waters Treaty, calling them unfounded and in violation of international obligations. “India’s unilateral suspension of the treaty is an affront to global agreements,” he said, adding that India’s pride in unlawful actions is regrettable.

Opp demands fresh...

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release of the PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi, and for their cases to be fixed before the Islamabad High Court. The conference, attended by opposition parties, lawyers, and media figures, criticised denounced what they termed the “rising fascism and political revenge” in the country. The declaration also condemned decisions against opposition leaders in the Senate and National Assembly, calling them politically motivated. It said Pakistan’s democratic system and human rights were in ruins and stressed the need for a new consensus-based charter of democracy among all political forces. Calling for reforms, the conference proposed setting up a ‘Truth and Reconciliation Commission’, ensuring media freedom through practical steps, and including women’s rights and education in any future charter. It also urged the federal government to return usurped provincial rights, abolish the 26th Constitutional Amendment, and introduce a transparent system for judicial appointments.

Central Asia friendship rally kicks off from Islamabad

Speaking at the launch ceremony, Prime Minister's Coordinator on Tourism Sardar Yasir Ilyas highlighted the significance of the rally; Ambassador of Pakistan to Uzbekistan, Alisher Tukhtaev, also addressed the gathering, terming the event a joyous occasion

ASNAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Central Asia Friendship Rally was formally launched from Islamabad, aiming to promote peace, tourism, regional connectivity, and Pakistan’s soft image across Central Asian countries. Eleven bikers will ride through Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan in a journey spanning 5,000 kilometers, carrying a message of friendship and cultural unity. Speaking at the launch ceremony, Prime Minister’s Coordinator on Tourism Sardar Yasir Ilyas highlighted the significance of the rally. “These bikers are ambassadors of peace, culture, and regional cooperation,” he said. “This initiative will showcase Pakistan’s soft image and promote our tourism potential on an international stage.” He further emphasized the role of media in portraying Pakistan positively. “We urge the media to highlight such positive initiatives. Pakistani people are known for their hospitality and do not charge tourists; this is our strength,” he remarked. Sardar Yasir Ilyas also acknowledged the valuable support of the ambassadors of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, appreciating their collaboration in making the rally possible. “This rally is a step towards greater regional connectivity,” he added. He also shared that Pakistan is in the process of developing its first-ever National Tourism Policy, which will be a joint framework with input from all stakeholders. “Tourism is not just about travel, it’s an economic driver,” he said. “We aim



to enhance both Pakistan’s image and its economy through the promotion of sustainable tourism.” Ambassador of Pakistan to Uzbekistan, Alisher Tukhtaev, also addressed the gathering, terming the event a joyous occasion. “This rally, starting from our brother country, will pass through Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan,” he said. “You will not only traverse mountains and tough terrains but will also serve as ambassadors of peace.” He added, “This rally will boost tourism and enhance people-to-people

ties between our nations.” Managing Director of PTDC (Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation), Aftab-ur-Rehman Rana, praised the uniqueness of the initiative. “This is no ordinary trip; this is a journey that highlights our culture and promotes mutual understanding among friendly nations,” he noted. He also commended the lead biker, Mukarram Tareen, for his leadership. “This ride will not only strengthen tourism ties but serve as a bridge between the people of these nations,” said Rana.

Mukarram Tareen, who is leading the rally, said: “This is a 5,000-kilometer-long journey with eleven bikers, and we are carrying a message of peace and love. Our brother countries – Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan – are close to our hearts, and we aim to deepen the bonds with their people.” The Central Asia Friendship Rally is not just a bike journey; it is a symbolic voyage to reinforce cultural ties, regional cooperation, and mutual peace among neighboring states through the power of tourism and people-to-people contact.

Zverev rallies in Toronto to claim milestone 500th ATP match win

TORONTO: Top seed Alexander Zverev switched into survival mode to claim a milestone 500th ATP match win on Thursday, fighting back to beat Matteo Arnaldi 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-2 at the Toronto Masters. Germany’s Zverev broke twice in the deciding third set to reach the fourth round of the US Open tune-up, converting his second match point to back up his defeat of the Italian earlier this year in Acapulco. “It’s a great achievement,” Zverev, winner of 24 ATP titles, said of reaching 500 career match wins. “Not a lot of player reach this milestone. ‘But I still want 500 more – maybe even more,’ he joked. “You always want to win as many matches as possible. I’m all about this.”

Unable to gain the upper hand in an 82-minute first set, Zverev said his game improved as the minutes dragged on against 2024 Canadian semi-finalist Arnaldi. “I started playing better from the baseline and found my rhythm a bit. My backhand felt off but I was comfortable and happy with my level,” added Zverev who next faces Francisco Cerundolo – a 6-3, 6-4 winner over fellow Argentine Tomas Echeverry. Alex Michelsen reached a Masters 1000 fourth round for the first time with a 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 upset victory over third-seeded Lorenzo Musetti. The 20-year-old American survived nearly 50 unforced errors and converted just two of nine break chances, but it was enough to vanquish Italy’s

Musetti, a two-time Grand Slam semi-finalist ranked 10th in the world. “It feels really good,” the 26th-ranked Michelsen said after finally converting his seventh match point. “I’ve put in a lot of hard work and it’s paying off a little bit. I was wondering when it would happen and I guess it is starting to happen right now. “I returned really well today,” he added. “I played offensive tennis and executed really well.” Michelson will face fellow American Learner Tien for a place in the quarter-finals. Tien beat compatriot Reilly Opelka 7-6 (7/3), 6-3. Fifth-seeded Holger Rune advanced with an efficient 6-2, 6-4 result over Frenchman Alexandre Muller. – APP

Top seed Gauff rallies to reach WTA Montreal fourth round

MONTREAL: World number two Coco Gauff battled through another tough three-setter Thursday, rallying from a set and a break down to beat Veronika Kudermetova and reach the fourth round of the WTA Canadian Open. The top-seeded American, who won her second Grand Slam title at Roland Garros, again struggled with her serve but held her nerve for a 4-6, 7-5, 6-2 victory over former world number nine Kudermetova. “The goal of the game is to survive and advance,” Gauff said. “It’s not my best, but it was good enough for today and that’s all I can ask for.” Gauff arrived in Montreal having lost her tournament openers at Wimbledon and Berlin in the wake of her French Open triumph. – APP

Three HEC Judokas Shortlisted for Solidarity Games

The HEC continues to play a pivotal role in developing young university athletes by offering them international exposure and competitive opportunities.

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Three talented judo players from the Higher Education Commission (HEC) have been shortlisted to represent the country in the upcoming 6th Islamic Solidarity Games, scheduled to be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia this year. According to details, the shortlisted athletes for the prestigious international event include Saifullah, Muhammad Tahir Sharif, and Muhammad Huzafa. The Pakistan Judo Federation (PJF) has formally issued letters for all three players, recognizing their selection in short list group not only as a personal achievement but also as a testament to HEC’s growing role in promoting sports at the national level. The HEC continues to play a pivotal role in developing young university athletes by offering them international exposure and competitive opportunities. Through close collaboration with various national sports federations, the Commission has been actively working to ensure that talented students from across Pakistan are provided with platforms to compete at global standards. The participation of HEC athletes in such a significant international event highlights Pakistan’s commitment to promoting youth sports and strengthening its presence in international sporting arenas.

AARI officials undergo cutting-edge training in China

ISLAMABAD: A team of officers from Ayub Agricultural Research Institute (AARI), Faisalabad is participating in a transformative 6-month training program at Southwest University of Science and Technology (SWUST), Sichuan, China, running from July 20, 2025 to January 20, 2026. The training is part of Pakistan Prime Minister’s Initiative for capacity building of 1,000 Pakistani agricultural graduates in China. AARI said on July 30. This long-term training aims to equip the participants with modern and advanced agricultural technologies including genomic editing and CRISPR Technology, High-Throughput Phenotyping, precision agriculture tools, molecular breeding approaches, plant Biotechnology techniques, smart agriculture and automation, and Big Data and AI applications in crop improvement. The 11-member team includes two senior scientists and nine scientific officers. The knowledge and hands-on skills gained through this international exposure will significantly contribute toward addressing Pakistan’s emerging agricultural challenges such as climate resilience, food security, pest and disease management, and sustainable crop productivity, AARI said. – Agencies

After stadium delays, African Nations C’ship kicks off

NAIROBI: After severe delays in stadium renovations, east Africa is finally ready to co-host the much-awaited African Nations Championship (CHAN), kicking off on Saturday. It is a historic moment for Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, whose “Pamoja” – meaning “together” in Swahili – bid two years ago gave birth to the first Confederation of African Football (CAF) tournament in the region since 1976, and the first to be jointly hosted by three countries. The CHAN tournament, which runs to August 30, acts as a precursor to the continent’s main event, the Africa Cup of Nations in 2027, also co-hosted by the three countries. – Agencies

Pakistan’s fish meal exports to China rise

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan’s exports of flours and meals of fish, used in animal feeding, to China surged by 27% in the first half of 2025, reflecting growing demand and competitiveness in the Chinese market. China Economic Net reported it quoting official data from the General Administration of Customs of the People’s Republic of China (GACC), Pakistan exported 25.13 million kilograms of fish flours and meals to China from January to June 2025, valued at \$23.75 million. This marks a significant rise compared to the same period in 2024, when the export value stood at \$18.70 million. Owais Mir, an industry insider told CEN that one of the key factors behind this growth has been Pakistan’s competitive pricing. This year, the average export price offered by Pakistan was among the lowest at just \$ 0.95 per kilogram, enhancing its appeal to Chinese importers seeking

cost-effective animal feed solutions. He further said that as per data he received that in contrast, Denmark remained one of the highest-priced suppliers, offering fish meal to China at an average price of \$ 1.88 per kilogram. Denmark’s total export volume during the period reached \$2.89 million. “With growing demand for protein-rich animal feed in China, Pakistan’s fish meal sector is expected to maintain momentum, supported by its strategic location, competitive prices, and strengthening bilateral trade ties”, he added. Industry experts note that the steady increase in Pakistan’s fish meal exports to China demonstrates strengthened agricultural and marine cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It also signals the potential for further trade growth if quality standards and sustainable sourcing continue to improve. – DNA

Imran's sons awaiting Pakistan...

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“The ambassador has intimated that he is awaiting approval from the Ministry of Interior in Islamabad,” she added. Minister of State Talal Chaudhry was quick to respond, questioning Aleema’s earlier claim that Khan’s children had National Identity Cards for Overseas Pakistanis – and if so, why would they need visas. “You previously stated that the children hold NICOPs. If that is true, they do not require visas to enter Pakistan,” Chaudhry said in a post on X. “If they do need visas, that means they are not ‘Pakistani Nationals’. What is the real truth behind it all?” he asked.

National polio count rises to 18...

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major concern, the release stated. Restricted access and operational challenges in conducting house-to-house vaccinations in these areas continue to impede immunisation efforts, leaving thousands of children unvaccinated, it added. Since September 2024, the Pakistan Polio Programme has conducted six high-quality campaigns, including four nationwide initiatives, that have each reached over 45 million children. The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) plans to conduct two more nationwide and one sub-national campaign between August and December this year, alongside targeted campaigns in high-risk districts, to halt virus transmission and protect children from the disease. In response to the continued challenges, particularly in southern KP, the prime minister’s focal person on Polio Eradication and the coordinator of the NEOC recently met with the chief secretary of the province in Peshawar.

Five cops martyred in attack...

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Two of the slain policemen belonged to Rahim Yar Khan, while the remaining three hailed from Bahawalnagar district. Taking strict notice of the incident, Punjab IGP Dr Usman Anwar has summoned a report from the Regional Police Officer (RPO) Bahawalpur and issued strict instructions to the DPO Rahim Yar Khan to arrest the culprits involved in the attack on Elite Force personnel in the Katka region. Paying tribute to slain officers, Dr Anwar said their sacrifice would not be forgotten and described their martyrdom as a mark of “great courage and duty”.

Iranian President to arrive...

FROM PAGE 01
talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. This marks Dr. Pezeshkian’s first official visit to Pakistan as the President of Iran. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif last visited Iran on May 26, 2025. The visit is expected to further strengthen the brotherly relations between Pakistan and Iran.

Saim, Nawaz steer Pak to victory in first T20I against WI

Saim Ayub secures Man of the Match award for his all-round performance

DNA

WASHINGTON: Saim Ayub’s composed all-round display, backed by a decisive bowling spell from Mohammad Nawaz, helped Pakistan secure a 14-run victory over the West Indies in the opening T20I series match at Central Broward Regional Park in Florida on Friday. Chasing a challenging target of 179, the West Indies were restricted to 164-7 despite a promising start from their openers. Debutant Jewel Andrew and Johnson Charles came out all guns blazing, reaching 47 without loss by the end of the powerplay. The duo stitched together a 72-run stand and brought up their fifty partnership in the seventh over, showcasing a composed yet attacking approach. However, the game turned dramatically in the 12th over when Mohammad Nawaz dismantled the top order with three wickets in a single over, reducing the

hosts from 72-0 to 75-3. Jewel Andrew was the first to fall for 35 off 33 balls, followed by Charles who made 35 off 36. Gudakesh Motie departed for a golden duck. The collapse continued in the very next over as part-timer Saim Ayub struck with his first delivery, removing West Indies captain Shai Hope for just two runs. The home side slumped to 77-4 by the 13th over. Saim struck again soon after, dismissing Sherfane Rutherford (11 off 11), piling further pressure on the hosts. Left-arm pacer Shaheen Afridi joined the action in the 16th over, removing Roston Chase for five, leaving the West Indies at 110-6. Sufiyan Mueem also chipped in with a wicket, clean bowling Romario Shepherd (12 off 5) to deliver the seventh blow. Jason Holder fought valiantly, keeping West Indies in the hunt with a rapid 30* off just 12 deliveries, while Shamar Joseph added a useful 21. However, the required rate proved too steep, and the home

side fell short, registering their sixth consecutive T20I defeat after being whitewashed 5-0 by Australia. For Pakistan, Nawaz starred with 3/23 in his four overs, while Saim claimed 2/15. Afridi and Mueem picked up a wicket each. Earlier, Pakistan were put in to bat and got off to a steady start. Openers Sahibzada Farhan and Saim Ayub added 26

before Farhan fell for 14 off 12 to Shamar Joseph in his debut over Saim anchored the innings with composure, finding support in Fakhar Zaman, who attacked from the outset. The pair added 55 for the second wicket, taking Pakistan to 70-1 at the halfway mark. Saim brought up his fourth T20I half-century with fluent strokeplay and helped his side

breach the 100-run mark. His 57 off 38 balls, featuring five boundaries and two sixes, was cut short in the 12th over by Jason Holder, ending an 81-run stand. One run later, Fakhar (28 off 24) fell to Shamar Joseph, who finished with impressive figures of 3/35. Hassan Nawaz kept the momentum going with a brisk 24 off 18, including a four and two sixes, before falling to Akeal Hosein. Mohammad Nawaz managed 8 off 6 before Romario Shepherd dismissed him. Skipper Salman Ali Agha and Faheem Ashraf provided vital runs in the closing stages. Faheem made 15, while Agha remained unbeaten on 11. Wicketkeeper Mohammad Harris delivered the final flourish, launching the last ball for six to take Pakistan’s total to 178-7. With this win, Pakistan lead the three-match series 1-0, with the next game scheduled for Sunday.

Playing XIs: West Indies: Johnson Charles, Shai Hope (C/WK), Jewel Andrew, Roston Chase, Sherfane Rutherford, Ja-

sod Holder, Romario Shepherd, Gudakesh Motie, Akeal Hosein, Shamar Joseph, Jediah Blades. Pakistan: Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub, Fakhar Zaman, Mohammad Harris (WK), Salman Agha (C), Hasan Nawaz, Mohammad Nawaz, Faheem Ashraf, Shaheen Afridi, Harris Rauf, Sufiyan Mueem. **Series schedule:** 31 July – First T20I v West Indies, Central Broward Park & Broward County Stadium, Lauderdale, USA 2 Aug – Second T20I v West Indies, Central Broward Park & Broward County Stadium, Lauderdale, USA 3 Aug – Third T20I v West Indies, Central Broward Park & Broward County Stadium, Lauderdale, USA 8 Aug – First ODI v West Indies, Brian Lara Cricket Academy, Trinidad & Tobago 10 Aug – Second ODI v West Indies, Brian Lara Cricket Academy, Trinidad & Tobago 12 Aug – Third ODI v West Indies, Brian Lara Cricket Academy, Trinidad & Tobago.



Briefs

Gold dips by Rs100 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed a decrease of Rs100 on Friday and was sold at Rs352,900 against its sale at Rs 353,000 on the previous trading day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported.

The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs 86 to Rs.302,555 from Rs 302,641 whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 Karat went down to Rs 277,342 from Rs 277,421.

The rates of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 3,900 and Rs 3,344 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$1 to \$3,302 from \$3,303 whereas silver was traded at \$36.57 against \$37.51, the Association reported—APP

Rupee gains 16 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Friday appreciated by 16 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 282.71 against the previous day's closing Rs 282.87. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 284.8 and Rs 285.3, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 1.04 to close at Rs 322.69 against the last day's closing of Rs 323.73, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen declined by 02 paise and closed at Rs 1.87, whereas a decrease of Rs 2.06 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 372.67 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 374.73.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal came down by 04 paise each to close at Rs 76.97 and Rs 75.36, respectively.—APP

New Gwadar International Airport to restore two commercial flights

GWADAR, Aug. 1 (): New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA) is set to restore two commercial flights on August 4. Currently, NGIA has been operating only one Karachi-Gwadar flight per week over the past few months.

Previously, two Karachi-Gwadar flights had been suspended. With their reactivation, three flights will now operate on Monday, Thursday, and Saturday. The restoration plan was initiated after Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) Chairman Noor ul Haq and Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Javed Anwar Ch pleaded the case during a meeting held in Islamabad on July 30, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. Recently, the government earmarked Rs. 4 billion for NGIA under the PSDP 2025–26. The total cost of the project stands at Rs. 54.98 billion, with Rs. 42.71 billion already spent. A Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) official described this as a significant stage of growth for NGIA, noting that the restoration of flight operations will boost passenger traffic. Additional commercial flights are also expected, as multiple private airlines, including Fly Jinnah, Air Sial, Airblue, and Serene Air, have submitted applications to launch services at NGIA, he added. An Air Sial representative highlighted the various benefits of NGIA, such as exemptions from landing, parking, and housing charges, making it an attractive destination for airlines seeking profitable opportunities. OGDCL Makes Oil Discovery at Chakar-1 Exploratory Well in Tando Allah Yar, Sindh ISLAMABAD, August 01, 2025: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), as the operator of the TAY Exploration License with a 95% working interest, along with its joint venture partner, Government Holdings (Private) Limited (GHPL), which holds a 5% carried interest, has announced an oil discovery at the Chakar-1 exploratory well located in the Tando Allah Yar district of Sindh. The Chakar-1 well was spudded on June 2, 2025, as an exploratory well under the Tando Allah Yar Exploration License.—APP

NAVTTC, Hazza Tech sign deal for vocational training in CPEC

Ahsan Iqbal asserted that with Uraan Pakistan as as our compass, and China's vocational model as our guide, both public sector and private sector have to play their role to transform our youth bulge into a youth boom

DNA

BEIJING: China Pakistan Economic Corridor, will create 1000 new jobs in next few years , we must act rapidly to build a workforce that is ready for modern industries, said the Minister for Planning and Development Prof Ahsan Iqbal at the Agreement signing ceremony between Hazza Institute of Technology and NAVTTC in Beijing. The Minister underscored that the next phase of CPEC focuses on Business to Business cooperation and industrialization of Pakistan. The Minister asserted that with Uraan Pakistan as as our compass, and China's vocational model as our guide, both public sector and private sector have to play their role to transform our youth bulge into a youth boom. ready to lead Pakistan into the fourth industrial revolution and ready to shape a prosperous future for Pakistan and the region . The Minister stated that the agreement is part of a transformative journey, for Pakistan's Youth which we envisage under Uraan Pakistan Program as well as China Pakistan Economic Corridor. The Journey where Pakistan and China join hands to empower young generation with future ready skills, turning demographic potential, into economic power, he added

The Minister stressed that With two third of our population under 30 years, Pakistan has the population with youngest workforce which is our greatest advantage but in an age shaped by Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Big data, and green technology, traditional jobs are fading while new opportunities demand entirely new skills. He added that the forth industrial revolution rewards nations that are best in skills, innovation and adaptability. If we fail



to prepare, we risk losing a generation. but if we act boldly, pakistan can leap into a new era of industrialisation and prosperity. Minister said that Under Uraan Pakistan Program for National Economic Transformation Plan, Youth skill development is a strategic pillar of our 5Es framework. He stated that NAVTEC has already trained 1.5 million young pakistans placing 70% in productive jobs increasing graduates incomes by 30%. Minister said that China's own rise from the agrarian society to technological power house was fueled by massive investment in vocational

education and future skills, he added that we have to bring that proven model to Pakistan. He further stressed that We hope to create and establish more centers of vocational excellence modeled on Chinese institutes embedded at AI and smart technologies in training to meet fourth industrial revolution demands expand programs in renewable energy, IT, robotics, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, and advanced manufacturing training more youth in next few years. Minister said that every rupee we invest in skills returns three rupees to our economy. but more importantly it re-

turns hope, dignity and self reliance by young men and women. Moreover, The purpose of the Agreement between Hazza Institute of Technology and NAVTTC is to Collaborate for Vocational, Technical & Professional trainings and cultural exchange between Pakistan and China ; Jointly promote technological innovation and market expansion in areas of Vocational & Technical training, Technology transfer, student & faculty exchange programs and Develop a sustainable manpower supply chain for Chinese employers having projects in China and Globally.

Jam, Henny discuss trade, logistics, investment ties

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan met with outgoing Dutch Ambassador Henny Fokel de Vries for a comprehensive farewell meeting that focused on strengthening bilateral trade, investment, logistics cooperation and cultural understanding between Pakistan and the Netherlands. The discussion centered on advancing the trade ties and unlocking potential in sectors such as agriculture, green energy, and digital services, said a release issued here on Friday. The minister highlighted Pakistan's strategic location near Africa, Central Asia, and the Gulf, offering connectivity and market access advantages. He also shared the government's progress toward finalizing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the GCC, which would give Pakistani businesses entry into 12 key markets. Ambassador Vries acknowledged growing Dutch corporate interest in Pakistan despite past challenges. She noted that Dutch firms such as FrieslandCampina remain committed to long-term operations in Pakistan. In response, Minister Jam Kamal reaffirmed the government's focus on improving the ease of doing business, building investor confidence, and facilitating faster policy support for foreign companies. He emphasized that Pakistan values companies contributing to employment, innovation, and export diversification. The two sides also discussed Pakistan's logistics modernization efforts and opportunities for Dutch expertise in port infrastructure, supply chain efficiency, and agriculture-based industrial innovation. Minister Kamal further proposed launching a trade roadshow across the Netherlands, Germany, and Belgium to attract European investment and expand market presence. The growing role of Dutch-Pakistani entrepreneurs in connecting both economies was also appreciated, with Ambassador Vries noting that second- and third-generation diaspora members are increasingly engaged in bilateral business ventures. She praised Pakistan's youthful entrepreneurial energy and suggested more consistent branding of the country's potential to European audiences. The meeting concluded with warm sentiments and a symbolic gesture from the Minister. As a parting gift, he presented Ambassador Vries with a handmade mud pot crafted by local artisans, highlighting Pakistan's rich cultural heritage. The Ambassador, moved by the thoughtful gift, admired its extraordinary lightness and artistry, calling it a reminder of Pakistan's deep-rooted traditions and elegant simplicity. Both sides expressed optimism about the future of Pakistan-Netherlands relations and agreed on the importance of continuous engagement through diplomacy, business, and people-to-people connections.—DNA

SAPM, Uzbek envoy discuss bilateral coop

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Friday held a meeting with the Ambassador of Uzbekistan Alisher Tukhtaev and discussed the forthcoming visit to Uzbekistan and avenues for enhancing bilateral cooperation. During the meeting, both sides deliberated on strengthening ties in light of the Prime Minister's vision and directives, emphasizing enhanced trade, investment, and mutual collaboration, said a news release. Discussions also covered potential agreements aimed at deepening economic relations between the two countries. Key areas of focus included trade cooperation, B2B engagements and the establishment of a warehouse in Peshawar to support logistics and commerce. They also explored collaboration in various sectors such as industry, agriculture, transport, mining and minerals Haroon highlighted the potential for joint ventures in the tractor and mining industries, and stressed the importance of identifying new opportunities to achieve the \$2 billion trade target with Uzbekistan. He further shared plans for delegations from both countries to hold meetings in sectors including Information Technology, e-commerce, and banking.—DNA

US, Australia hold joint military exercise

SYDNEY: The joint US and Australian military exercise Talisman Sabre extended across 500 kilometers of remote northern coast in Papua New Guinea this week, Australian officials said, the first time the war games have been taken to another country. Talisman Sabre exercises in Australia last month involved 40,000 troops from 19 countries. For the Papua New Guinea component, US, Australian and PNG forces are conducting disaster recovery and survival exercises through seven regions of PNG, moving through terrain from Wewak to Lae that saw fierce fighting between Japan and the US in World War Two. The PNG activities test "combined capabilities across sea, land, air, cyber, and space operations," a US Embassy spokesperson said in a statement. The Talisman Sabre closing ceremony will be held on Monday in the PNG city of Lae. The US military gained access to Lae's major seaport under a 2023 defense deal with PNG, signed after China struck a security pact with neighboring Solomon Islands. The PNG defense agreement will "enhance security and prosperity for both nations," the US embassy spokesperson added. Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister James Marape met the US undersecretary for defense policy, Elbridge Colby, in Washington last month to discuss regional security challenges, with Marape raising "the importance of defending Papua New Guinea's sovereignty," said the embassy spokesperson. Colby has reportedly pressed US allies Australia and Japan to clarify what role they would play if the US and China went to war over Taiwan. China has been a major infrastructure lender to PNG, and Marape's office did not respond to a Reuters request for comment. Another key PNG site listed in the US defense agreement is the Lombrum Naval Base, which PNG's Defense Minister Billy Joseph recently said will be officially handed over by Australia in a ceremony later this month, after a multi-million dollar renovation.—APP

Flash floods kill three in Vietnam, nine missing

HANOI: Flash floods struck Vietnam's mountainous north overnight, killing at least three people while nine others are missing, disaster authorities said Friday. Heavy rain of up to 30 centimeters triggered the floods in the provinces of Son La, Phu Tho, Tuyen Quang and especially Dien Bien, isolating several communities. The ministry of agriculture said three people were killed while a search is ongoing for nine others in Dien Bien province's Tia Dinh and Xia Dung communes. State media quoted local authorities as saying rain was heavy from 3:00 am, triggering flash floods from upstream. Several villages became flooded and remained inaccessible by Friday afternoon. Last weekend, flash floods claimed five lives in Son La province, inundating crops and washing away poultry and cattle.—APP

ICCI, FCCI chiefs discuss prevailing economic challenges

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark development aimed at strengthening Pakistan's economic framework, a high-level meeting was held between Rehan Naseem Bharara, President of Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI), and Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) during the former's visit to ICCI. During the meeting, the two presidents discussed the prevailing economic challenges, with a special focus on business-related issues, exports, and foreign investment. They jointly agreed to collaborate closely for the formulation of business-friendly and export-oriented policies, vital for boosting the country's foreign exchange reserves and ensuring sustainable economic growth. Both leaders emphasized the importance of the government taking the business community on board in the policymaking process. They stressed the need for long-term, result-oriented, and workable strategies to steer Pakistan out of its current economic difficulties and build a stronger, investment-driven economy. President ICCI Nasir Mansoor Qureshi briefed the visiting FCCI President about various initiatives taken by ICCI to promote economic activity, including the Chamber's efforts to establish a state-of-the-art expo center in Islamabad to host exhibitions and international trade events. He also shared insights into the ICCI's recent successful business outreach visits to Qatar and Bangladesh, aimed at enhancing trade ties, promoting investment opportunities, and showcasing Pakistan's economic potential. President FCCI Rehan Naseem Bharara lauded ICCI's contributions as the leading chamber of the federal capital, particularly its policy advocacy, outreach efforts, and dedication to transforming Islamabad into a business hub for international investors. The leaders expressed hope that inter-chamber collaboration would serve as a model for unified The leaders expressed hope that inter-chamber collaboration would serve as a model for unified action to strengthen Pakistan's economic resilience and global competitiveness. The meeting was also attended by ICCI Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, former Senior Vice President Naveed Malik, former Vice Presidents Ashfaq Chhattaha and Fahim Khan, and Executive Member Najib Ellahi Malik.—DNA

Chinese delegation visits Pak to expand maritime, energy coop

The initiative serves as a vital platform connecting the industrial and business communities of both countries, giving Pakistani industries direct access to key Chinese trade bodies and fostering deeper commercial cooperation, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday

ISLAMABAD: Senior officials from the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce (ACFIC) and Precise Development (HK) Ltd is currently here on a five-day official visit aimed at signing multiple agreements in the maritime, energy, and other key sectors across the country. The visiting delegation led by Yi Jiang, Director at ACFIC, and David Chu, CEO of Precise Development (HK) Ltd held high-level meetings with several senior Pakistani officials, including Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar, Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, and Federal Minister for Energy Awaiz Leghari. In discussions with the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, the two sides reached a consensus on launching advanced shipbuilding and repair facilities at Pakistan's major ports. Plans were also explored for developing specialized industrial zones in port areas to support export-led manufacturing. Additionally, both parties discussed robust technology transfer initiatives, including systems for port management, ship design,

and other maritime technologies. The meeting reaffirmed a mutual commitment to deepening cooperation in maritime industries, with both countries agreeing to identify specific investment projects for near-term implementation. The establishment of technical working groups was proposed to ensure timely progress and to translate strategic discussions into concrete outcomes benefiting both economies. During talks with Rana Mashhood, the two sides underscored strengthening economic collaboration through business-to-business (B2B) partnerships. The delegation emphasized its interest in investing across various sectors in Pakistan, particularly in industrial development and emerging technologies. One significant area of interest was the setup of Chinese manufacturing units in Pakistan. The parties also expressed a shared eagerness to collaborate on forward-looking initiatives involving blockchain technology and cryptocurrency systems—aligning both countries with global digital transformation trends.

The meeting concluded with a joint agreement to maintain momentum through continued dialogue and by forming sector-specific working groups. Targeted areas for future cooperation include manufacturing, energy, the digital economy, and youth capacity-building. The initiative aims to enhance bilateral economic ties while empowering Pakistan's youth to contribute meaningfully to national development. The Chinese representatives lauded Pakistan's efforts in creating a conducive environment for foreign investment and emphasized the significance of sustained economic growth through cross-border collaboration. This visit follows an earlier trip by the ACFIC delegation in May, during which the 'Pakistan-China Industrial Entrepreneur Bridge' was launched. The initiative serves as a vital platform connecting the industrial and business communities of both countries, giving Pakistani industries direct access to key Chinese trade bodies and fostering deeper commercial cooperation, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday.—DNA

Lebanon says four killed in Israeli strikes

BEIRUT: A series of Israeli air strikes killed four people in south and east Lebanon, the health ministry said Friday, referring to strikes that occurred the previous evening.

"The series of strikes launched by the Israeli enemy Thursday evening led to the death of four people," the Lebanese health ministry said. The Israeli military said Thursday that it had targeted Hezbollah "infrastructure that was used for producing and storing strategic weapons" in south Lebanon and the eastern Bekaa Valley. Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz described one of the targets as Hezbollah's "biggest precision missile manufacturing site." More than a year of hostilities — including two months of all-out war between Israel and Hezbollah which largely ended with a November ceasefire — left the militant group badly weakened. Israel has nonetheless kept up near-daily air strikes in Lebanon despite the ceasefire, and has threatened to continue them until the group has been disarmed.

"Any attempt by the terrorist organization to recover, re-establish or threaten will be met with relentless intensity," Katz said on Thursday. Under the terms of the truce, Hezbollah was to withdraw its fighters north of the Litani river, about 30 kilometers (20 miles) from the Israeli border. Israel was meant to withdraw all its troops from Lebanon, but has kept them in five areas it deems strategic.—APP

Dodik vows to defy political ban, write to Trump

SARAJEVO: The separatist president of the Serb part of Bosnia vowed to defy a court ruling banning him from political office for six years on Friday and said he would seek help from both Russia and US President Donald Trump. Milorad Dodik was responding to a ruling by Bosnia's appeals court upholding a sentence handed down to him for defying the orders of the international peace envoy, whose role is to prevent multi-ethnic Bosnia sliding back into civil war. Dodik told reporters he would continue to go to work. "I do not accept the verdict," he told reporters. "I will seek help from Russia and I will write a letter to the US administration." He said he would ask his associates not to communicate with ambassadors from the European Union, which has a peacekeeping force in Bosnia to ensure stability that has deployed reserve forces over the crisis.—APP

Six new arrests over Serbian train station disaster

BELGRADE: Six people, including a former minister, were arrested in Serbia on Friday over a train station disaster in which 16 people died. The concrete canopy of the newly renovated station in the northern city of Novi Sad collapsed on November 1, 2024 and was widely blamed on corruption and poor oversight. It sparked a wave of student-led protests and led to the resignation of prime minister Milos Vucovic and the fall of his government. The public prosecutor's office in Novi Sad opened an investigation into the accident and deaths. In February, the public prosecutor's office for organized crime opened another probe into the corruption aspect of the case and Friday's arrests were linked to this. The six, all suspected of abuse of office, include former construction, transport and infrastructure minister Tomislav Momirovic as well as former acting director of the state-run Serbian Railway Infrastructure company Nebojsa Surlan, prosecutors said. They said nine other people, including former transport minister Goran Vesic who was among the first to resign after the accident, were being sought. According to the Novars news site, Vesic was hospitalized and underwent emergency surgery on Friday.—APP

Briefs

FPCCI
President
proposes
measures
to achieve
tax target

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Atif Ikram Sheikh, has welcomed the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) achievement of its July tax target, calling it a positive indicator for the fiscal year ahead.

In a statement, Atif Ikram Sheikh expressed hope that the government would successfully meet the annual tax collection target. However, he emphasized that achieving this goal sustainably would require expanding the tax net rather than merely increasing tax rates. He cautioned that while raising tax rates might help meet short-term targets, it does not contribute to broadening the tax base. "Without increasing the number of taxpayers, it will be impossible to achieve a sustainable tax-to-GDP ratio," he added.

The FPCCI chief suggested that reducing tax rates on businesses and exporters could help stimulate economic activity, leading to increased revenue in the long run. "Lowering the tax burden on industries will encourage production, which will, in turn, boost overall tax collection," he explained.

Atif Ikram Sheikh also noted that rationalizing tax rates would discourage tax evasion and bring more individuals and businesses into the formal economy. He urged the government to work closely with the business community to implement a tax policy that promotes growth, encourages compliance, and supports long-term economic stability.

SHC suspends
ombudsman
order to
remove
K-Electric
CEO

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Friday suspended the provincial ombudsman's order to remove K-Electric (KE) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Moonis Alvi from service after he was found guilty of harassing a female colleague.

The court announced the verdict on a plea filed by the K-Electric CEO seeking to overturn the Sindh Provincial Ombudsman order. The development comes a day after the Sindh ombudsman for protection against harassment of women at workplaces ordered Alvi's removal from service instantly, along with a penalty of Rs2.5 million.

The power company's former chief marketing and communication officer had filed a complaint, accusing CEO Alvi, Chief People Officer Rizwan Dalia, Chief of Security Col (ret'd) Wahid Asghar and Member of the Board of Directors and Chairman of the Board HR Committee Khalid Rafi of "causing harassment, intimidation and mental agony". The K-Electric CEO appeared before the court today alongside his lawyer, Barrister Abid Zuberi.

UK-Pakistan E-visa launch to
forge deeper connections

Jane Marriott elaborates on how the simple online form enables applicants to submit their personal details and necessary documents with just a few clicks. Once submitted, the system automatically processes the application, significantly speeding up approval times and reducing the complexity of the visa process

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD, U.K. High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ms. Jane Marriott marked the launch of the UK-Pak e-visa system as a major development in bilateral relations, underscoring how the streamlined process will benefit Pakistani students and workers while reinforcing the UK and Pakistan's commitment to mutual growth and opportunity. In an exclusive conversation with a local news channel on Friday, Jane Marriott highlighted the ease and convenience of the new UK-Pak e-visa system for Pakistani students and workers. She explained that the process eliminates the need for long waits or in-person visits, allowing applicants to complete the entire procedure online. "The new system will offer a seamless application process, making it easier for individuals to apply from the comfort of their homes," she said. She further elaborated on how the simple online form enables applicants to submit their personal details and necessary documents with just a few clicks. Once submitted, the system automatically processes the application, significantly speeding up approval times and reducing the complexity of the visa process. "This will make the entire experience more accessible and efficient for everyone," Marriott added.

The U.K. High Commissioner also emphasized that the e-visa system would not only benefit applicants by saving time and effort but would also strengthen the ties between the UK and Pakistan. Responding to a query, Ms. Jane Marriott also mentioned the UK Chevening Scholarship, a fully funded program that offers Pakistani students the chance to study at top UK universities. She highlighted that applications for this year open on August 5th, providing an incredible opportunity for those looking to enhance



their academic and professional future.

Ms. Marriott emphasized that the Chevening Scholarship is a significant opportunity for young Pakistani talent, enabling them to gain world-class education and become part of a global network of leaders, ultimately strengthening ties between the UK and Pakistan. To another query, Ms. Jane Marriott spoke about the ongoing state dialogue between the UK and Pakistan, emphasizing the tangible impact of their growing trade relationship. She highlighted that both nations are committed to expanding their economic cooperation, with future plans for direct flights that will further strengthen business and tourism links. "This new E-visa facility is just the beginning. In the future, we aim to extend it to facilitate easier travel for business professionals and tourists alike, creating more opportunities for bilateral growth," she noted. Ms. Marriott also pointed to the potential for increased imports and exports between the two countries, particularly in key sectors like textiles. She specifically mentioned the rising demand for high-quality Pakistani products, such as bed sheets, in the UK market. "Pakistan's textile industry has the capacity to meet international standards and the growing quality of products like bed sheets is a prime example of the trade potential," she explained, adding that improving trade infrastructure would help both countries benefit economically. Looking ahead, Ms. Marriott stressed that these developments such as direct flights and the expansion of the E-visa system are part of a broader strategy to make doing business between the UK and Pakistan easier and more efficient. With these changes, both nations are set to experience a boost in trade, tourism, and investment, contributing to a stronger and more prosperous partnership, she concluded.

CM Gandapur vows to
'expose' India following

"India has always been involved in terrorism in Pakistan and the region," says KP CM

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has vowed to expose India's role in sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan and the region, a day after New Delhi submitted his recent remarks to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as evidence against Islamabad.

The Indian government has used Gandapur's statement to back its allegations that Islamabad supports terrorist elements, officials of the global anti-money laundering watchdog confirmed.

"We arrest the Taliban, but our own institutions get them released, claiming they are their people" — a statement that drew criticism at home and is now being used by New Delhi to push for Pakistan's re-listing on FATF's grey list. In a statement, the KP CM said India submitted his statement to the global anti-money laundering watchdog "out of the context". "India has always been involved in terrorism in Pakistan and the region," the KP CM said, adding that he was writing a letter to FATF to

expose Indian actions in Kashmir. He said the people and forces of Pakistan were making unprecedented sacrifices to uproot terrorism from the country. "My message to Modi [Indian prime minister] is that we are united to defend Pakistan," Gandapur said, warning that India was attempting to get Pakistan grey-listed again by "constructing a false narrative." Indian authorities have argued that this public admission by a provincial chief minister shows that Pakistan's institutions continue to aid and protect terrorist elements. The FATF officials said India framed the statement as a formal "charge sheet" against Pakistan, particularly highlighting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a region gravely affected by terrorism and militancy.

Pakistan was taken off the FATF grey list in 2022, giving it a clean bill of health on terrorist financing and boosting its reputation among lenders — essential for Pakistan's crisis-hit economy. The FATF's grey list — in which Pakistan was placed from 2018-2022 — places a country under increased monitoring until it has rectified identified flaws in its financial system.

Tariff agreement with
US opens new avenues
for Pakistan exports

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan says tariff agreement with the US has opened new avenues for Pakistani exports. Announcing the successful conclusion of tariff-related discussions with the United States, a statement released by the Finance Ministry today stated that a tariff of nineteen percent will be applicable for Pakistani exports to the U.S. market.

The Finance Ministry noted that this decision reflects a balanced and forward-looking approach by the U.S. authorities, keeping Pakistan competitive relative to other South and Southeast Asian countries. In particular, this tariff level is expected to support Pakistan's export potential, especially in key sectors such as textiles, which remain the backbone of the country's export economy.

The Ministry of Finance, in close coordination with relevant stakeholders, believes that the current tariff arrangement pre-

sents a significant opportunity to expand Pakistan's footprint in the U.S. market. The Finance Ministry said it is now essential for Pakistani exporters and trade bodies to adopt an aggressive and focused marketing strategy to capitalize on this development.

The Finance Ministry emphasized that in addition to textiles, there is substantial potential for growth in other sectors, and the government is committed to facilitating exporters through policy support, market intelligence and trade promotion initiatives.

The Finance Ministry expressed Pakistan's keen interest in furthering positive engagement and close cooperation with the United States in the areas of investment, artificial intelligence, cryptocurrency, mines & minerals, energy, and other emerging sectors. It stated Pakistan will continue to engage closely with President Trump and the U.S. administration to promote the shared goals of economic development and mutual prosperity.

US Tariff Deal to boost
Pakistani exports,
says Finance Ministry

The ministry expressed the hope to further positive engagements and close cooperation with the US in the areas of investment, artificial intelligence, cryptocurrency, mines & minerals, energy, and other emerging sectors

ISLAMABAD: The new tariff agreement with the United States is expected to enhance market access, strengthen trade flows, and boost Pakistani exports in various sectors, thereby contributing to economic growth, the Finance Ministry said here Friday. In a press statement, the ministry expressed satisfaction over the successful conclusion of tariff-related discussions with the United States, adding that, as a result of these talks, a 19% tariff will be applicable to Pakistani exports entering the U.S. market.

"This decision reflects a balanced and forward-looking approach by the U.S. authorities, keeping Pakistan competitive relative to other South and Southeast Asian countries," it said. In particular, this tariff level is expected to support Pakistan's export potential, especially in key sectors such as textiles, which remain the backbone of the country's export economy. "The Ministry of Finance, in close coordination with relevant stakeholders, believes that the current tariff arrangement presents a significant opportunity to expand Pakistan's footprint in the U.S. market," the statement said adding that it was essential for Pakistani exporters and trade bodies to adopt an aggressive and focused marketing strategy to capitalize on this development.

In addition to textiles, there was substantial potential for growth in other sectors, it said, adding the government was committed to facilitating exporters through policy support, market intelligence, and trade promotion initiatives. The ministry expressed the hope to further positive engagements and close cooperation with the United States in the areas of investment, artificial intelligence, cryptocurrency, mines & minerals, energy, and other emerging sectors. "Pakistan will continue to engage closely with President Trump and the U.S. administration to promote the shared goals of economic development and mutual prosperity," it added. The ministry appreciated the constructive engagement of the US authorities and acknowledged the valuable role played by country's team including Ministry of Commerce, Mission in Washington DC and other public and private sectors stakeholders. — APP

Petrol price
drops by
Rs 7.54
per litre

Diesel price increases by Rs1.48 per litre for next fortnight: Finance Division

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has slashed petrol price by Rs7.54 for the next fortnight, effective August 1, the Finance Division said on Thursday.

In a notification, the Finance Division said that after the decrease, the petrol price has been lowered to Rs264.61 per litre. Meanwhile, the rate of diesel was increased by Rs1.48 per litre, pushing the price of the petroleum product to Rs285.83 per litre, the notification added.

The decision was taken following a review of prevailing international market trends and upon the recommendations of Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority and relevant ministries, a statement from the division said.

In the previous fortnight, the price of petrol increased by Rs5.36 per litre, while the price of diesel rose by Rs11.37 per litre. Petrol powers small vehicles, rickshaws, and bikes, making price hikes especially hard on middle- and lower-income households who depend on it for daily commuting.

Israel
evacuating
its citizens
from Gulf
countries

NEWS DESK

TEL AVIV: Israel is evacuating most of its diplomatic mission staff in the United Arab Emirates after Israel's National Security Council sharpened its travel warning for Israelis staying in the Gulf country.

The UAE's Israeli and Jewish community has grown more visible since 2020, when the UAE became the most prominent Arab state in 30 years to establish formal ties with Israel under a US-brokered agreement dubbed the Abraham Accords.

"We are emphasising this travel warning given our understanding that terrorist organisations (the Iranians, Hamas, Hezbollah and Global Jihad) are increasing their efforts to harm Israel", the NSC said in a statement. "They are driven by heightened motivation to exact revenge following Operation Rising Lion, in addition to the anti-Israel and pro-Palestinian incitement which has intensified."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services Regulations and Coordination Syed Mustafa Kamal called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad. — DNA

