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Pak, Malaysia enjoy excellent ties: Atta Tarar

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Mushahid launches Pak-Zindabad moot

Detailed News On Page-04



Population at top

Shehbaz urges strategic response to ongoing crises

Premier Shehbaz emphasises initiatives to empower youth, ensure employment opportunities for women

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday termed Pakistan's annual population growth rate of 2.55%, an alarming trend requiring immediate and coordinated policy action at the national level to address the issue. The prime minister chaired a high-level meeting at the Prime Minister's Office to review the challenges posed by Pakistan's rising population and to deliberate on effective strategies to manage it, a Prime Minister's Office news release said. "We need comprehensive planning to ensure our growing population, especially the youth, becomes a productive part of the economy," he stressed. "A large segment of our population comprises young people, who are the most valuable asset for our country." He emphasised that the government was taking several initiatives to empower the youth and integrate them into the country's economic mainstream. "Opportunities are being created to enable our youth to play a central role in national development," he added. Speaking on gender inclusion, PM Shehbaz underlined the critical importance of women's participation in the workforce. "Women constitute a significant portion of our human capital. We must ensure greater employment opportunities for them," he directed. The prime minister instructed the formation of a committee to develop a comprehensive and

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ECNEC approves 28 projects at federal, provincial levels

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council has approved 28 projects for energy, infrastructure, education, health, environment, administration, and public service sectors at federal and provincial levels. The approval was granted at a meeting of ECNEC in Islamabad today, with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in the chair. The Deputy Prime Minister reaffirmed the government's strong resolve to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, strengthen institutions, and lay the foundation for long-term economic resilience and prosperity.

Trump says likely to meet Putin 'very soon'

APP

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump said Wednesday he could meet with Vladimir Putin "very soon," following what the US president described as highly productive talks in Moscow between his special envoy and the Russian leader. The potential summit was discussed in a call between Trump and Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky that, according to a senior source in Kyiv, included NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte and the leaders of Britain, Germany and Finland. "There's a good chance that there will be a meeting very soon," Trump told reporters at the White House when asked when he would meet the Ukrainian and Russian leaders. He gave no indication where the meeting with Putin might take place. The New York Times and CNN, citing people familiar with the plan, said Trump plans to sit down with Putin as early as next week, and then wants a three-way meeting with the Russian leader and Zelensky. Trump's phone call with Zelensky came

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Asif says not resigning as defence minister

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Thursday refuted rumours circulating on social media that he had stepped down from his position following a controversy. Asif clarified the matter after an X user named Zubair Ali Khan, in a series of posts on the platform late Wednesday night, alleged that the defence minister had handed in his resignation over a controversy but had withdrawn it and was now unreachable. Replying to the post that levelled the allegations against him, Asif wrote: "With apologies, this gentleman has written his wishes in this tweet. Not reality." He shared a screenshot of the post thread, edited with a red stamp marking it as "FAKE". The X user, a former journalist,

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in a meeting with Sardar Ghulam Abbas and Raja Riaz. – DNA

Cementing relations

Field Marshal Asim Munir to visit US in a few days

COAS to attend retirement ceremony of US Centcom chief General Michael Kurilla

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir will travel to the United States this week, marking his second visit in less than two months, foreign media reported on Thursday. The COAS will attend the retirement ceremony of US Central Command chief General Michael Kurilla, who was noted for publicly praising Pakistan and was even awarded with Nishan-e-Imtiaz



(Military) during his recent visit to the country by President Asif Ali Zardari on July 26. No official announcement has been made so far regarding any other engagements during Field Marshal Munir's US trip. The army chief visited the US back in June, and held a rare one-on-one meeting with US President Donald Trump at the White House Cabinet Room with Secretary of State Senator Marco Rubio and US Special Representative for Middle Eastern Affairs Steve Witkoff and Islamabad's national security adviser also in attendance. The visit also came against the backdrop of the armed Pakistan-India conflict, which saw Washington brokering a ceasefire between the two nuclear-armed neighbours after New Delhi launched attacks inside Pakistan – under the pretext of targeting terrorists – which it said were responsible for the Pahalgam attack in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Continued on Page 06

Netanyahu confirms

Israel helped India in operation Sindoor

NEWS DESK

TEL AVIV: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday confirmed his country's role in providing support to India during Operation Sindoor in May, when India attacked Pakistani sites under the guise of targeting "terrorists". The nuclear-armed rivals exchanged artillery, drone and air strikes in May, after India, without evidence, blamed Pakistan for a deadly attack on tourists in occupied Kashmir's Pahalgam. The four-day confrontation

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Modi says ready to pay heavy price

"India will never compromise on the well-being of its farmers, dairy sector and fishermen," says prime minister

DNA

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday he will not compromise the interests of the country's

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Thailand and Cambodia agree to extend truce

NEWS DESK

BANGKOK: Thailand and Cambodia agreed Thursday to extend a shaky ceasefire deal that followed five days of deadly hostilities along their border last month. At least 43 people were killed in the conflict that ended last Tuesday, after a long-standing dispute over border temples boiled over into violence. A truce was brokered by Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim – chair of the ASEAN regional bloc – after cajoling by US President Donald Trump and a team of Chinese mediators. The deal dictated a ceasefire, followed by a meeting of rival regional commanders, before defence officials held three days of talks in Kuala Lumpur that concluded with a joint statement on Thursday.

Nepra reduces electricity price by Rs1.89 per unit

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) has approved a reduction of Rs1.89 per unit in electricity prices under the quarterly tariff adjustment for the period April to June 2025. The power regulatory authority forwarded its decision to the federal government for final notification, it emerged on Thursday. Once notified, the revised tariff will apply to all power distribution companies (Discos), including K-Electric consumers.

Announcement

Dr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez, Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to Pakistan, has written an insightful article on ASEAN-PAKISTAN relations. The article is published on Page 5. – Editor

Honour killing case Jirga head confesses to killing woman himself in Rawalpindi

Kalashnikov recovered on suspect's lead; licence not produced, say police

NEWS DESK

RAWALPINDI: In a harrowing revelation, the head of a jirga that sanctioned the killing of a young married woman has confessed to personally committing the murder, police officials confirmed on Wednesday. The incident, which took place in Rawalpindi's Pirwadhai area, has sparked widespread outrage after it emerged that the woman, identified as Sidra, was not only a victim of an illegal tribal court verdict, but was also brutally murdered by her own cousin, Ismatullah – the very man who headed the jirga. According to details provided in a newly registered First Information Report (FIR), the accused admitted during police interrogation that he had personally carried out the killing following a decision by the jirga.

The shocking development has shed light on the unlawful and brutal parallel justice systems that continue to operate in certain parts of the country. Police said Ismatullah forcibly took Sidra from Muzaffarabad, where she had been residing with her husband Usman, and brought her to Rawalpindi under duress. Once there, he killed her with a firearm and buried her body during the night between 16 and 17 July in a local graveyard in the Pirwadhai locality. The suspect, during his confession, also provided critical information regarding the murder weapon, leading police to recover a Kalashnikov. However, he was unable to produce a legal licence for the assault rifle. Consequently, authorities have also registered a separate case against him under the Pakistan Arms

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Uzbek envoy highlights expanding strategic ties with Pakistan

Ambassador Alisher Tukhtaev says the rail project holds transformative potential for regional trade and integration

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Alisher Tukhtaev, delivered an in-depth overview of the growing bilateral ties between Uzbekistan and Pakistan at a media briefing session held at the Uzbek Embassy in Islamabad. The event brought together representatives from Pakistan's leading media outlets, television channels, radio stations, and news agencies. In his opening remarks, Ambassador Tukhtaev emphasized that the purpose of the session was to inform the Pakistani public about the evolving and multifaceted cooperation between the two nations. He underlined that the Uzbek-Pakistani relationship is rooted in a shared history, culture, religion, and mutual respect, and is now advancing into a strategic partnership. The ambassador noted that the frequency of high-level meetings is evidence of the growing trust between both countries. He referred to the official visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Uzbekistan in February 2025 as a major milestone in bilateral relations. During the visit, several agreements were signed, and a Strategic Partnership Council was established, reflecting the two governments' commitment to elevate relations to a higher level. A major highlight of the visit was the reaffirmation of support for the Trans-Afghan Railway Project, which seeks to link Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan through a regional connectivity corridor. Ambassador Tukhtaev said this project holds transformative potential for regional trade and integration. He also pointed to several high-level engagements that have occurred on the sidelines of major international forums, including the ECO Summit in Khankendi and the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly, which further reinforced the commitment of both nations to practical cooperation. A significant development took place in June 2025, when the foreign ministers of both countries signed a Joint Action Plan during the OIC Foreign Ministers' meeting in Istanbul. The following month, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan signed a Framework Agreement in Kabul to conduct a joint feasibility study for the railway project, a crucial step towards advancing regional connectivity. Touching upon economic cooperation, the ambassador stated that Uzbekistan's GDP reached \$115.6 billion in 2024, while bilateral trade with Pakistan exceeded \$400 million. In just the first half of 2025,



trade reached \$253.7 million – a 123% increase over the same period last year – making Uzbekistan Pakistan's largest trading partner in Central Asia. Despite this growth, both sides aim to push the trade volume to \$2 billion by removing trade barriers, improving logistics, and enhancing business-to-business ties. He outlined the success of recent trade exhibitions held in Lahore, Islamabad, and Karachi under the "Made in Uzbekistan" and "Food Fest Uzbekistan" banners. These events collectively generated more than \$120 million in trade agreements and featured hundreds of Uzbek companies engaging directly with Pakistani businesses. To facilitate trade operations, Uzbekistan-Pakistan Trade Houses have been opened in Lahore and Karachi, and significant progress is being made on banking cooperation to streamline mutual payment systems. The Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) is under review, with plans to increase the number of goods covered from 17 to 100. Ambassador Tukhtaev said Uzbekistan is also looking to enhance regional connectivity through Pakistan's ports of Karachi and Gwadar, and is discussing a trilateral transit trade agreement with Afghanistan and Pakistan. A joint transport and logistics company is also being planned to improve cargo movement. On the cultural and humanitarian front, the ambassador highlighted

growing engagement in tourism, education, youth exchange, and cultural events. Uzbekistan has eased visa rules for Pakistani citizens and launched direct flights between Tashkent and Lahore in April and between Tashkent and Islamabad in June, which are expected to boost tourism, education, and business ties. He noted that Uzbekistan's participation in Pakistan's cultural landscape has grown significantly. Uzbek delegations took part in events such as the Lok Mela Festival, the Charity Bazaar, and a Nowruz celebration in Islamabad. Promotional exhibitions have also been held at venues like Centaurus Mall. He mentioned a visit by Namangan State University to Lahore, as well as the Uzbekistan-Pakistan Young Entrepreneurs Forum, which was held in June as part of Global Youth Festival activities. Several Pakistani ministers have participated in major events in Uzbekistan. The Minister for Climate Change attended the Samarkand International Forum, the Minister for National Heritage visited Samarkand for its designation as Cultural Capital of the Islamic World, and the Minister for Law and Justice took part in the Tashkent Law Spring forum. These exchanges, the ambassador said, have helped strengthen institutional and cultural cooperation. A recent highlight was the departure of 16 Pakistani bikers on the "Central Asia Tour 2025," which will cover Pakistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. This initiative is seen as a powerful symbol of people-to-people connectivity and regional friendship. In conclusion, Ambassador Tukhtaev called on Pakistani businesses and investors to take advantage of Uzbekistan's promising economic environment. He described the country as business-friendly, with an attractive tax regime, low utility costs, rich natural resources, and a strategic location at the heart of Central Asia. He also emphasized Uzbekistan's special economic zones, growing sectors like textiles and pharmaceuticals, and a skilled, youthful labor force. He urged the media to help promote Uzbekistan as a key destination for trade, investment, and tourism, and extended an open invitation to the Pakistani people to visit and explore opportunities in his country. He concluded by expressing confidence that the two countries would continue to build on their strong foundations and make further progress by the end of the year. The event concluded with a question-and-answer session and a renewed call for enhanced cooperation across political, economic, cultural, and people-to-people domains, reaffirming the robust strategic partnership between Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

Briefs

AJK PM
chairs review
meeting
on IDay

MUZAFFARABAD: The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhary Anwarul Haq chaired an extraordinary meeting in view of forthcoming independence day of the country here on Thursday.

The Meeting was attended by his cabinet including Senior Minister Col. (R) Waqar Ahmed Noor, Ministers Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Chaudhry Arshad Hussain, Principal Secretary Zafar Mahmood Khan, and other senior officials. It was decided that Independence Day will be celebrated with great enthusiasm across Azad Kashmir. All cities and towns will be decorated with the national flags of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir, while special flag-hoisting ceremonies will be held at all districts, and tehsil headquarters. A week-long series of events will mark the independence day celebrations, including academic programs, cultural activities, and sports competitions. Educational institutions will remain open on August 14 and will host seminars and symposiums highlighting the significance of the day. The main ceremony will be held in Muzaffarabad, which will be attended by political, religious, and social leaders, along with citizens from various walks of life.

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq paid tribute to the sacrifices being made in the pursuit of freedom. He called on citizens to participate actively in the national celebrations and emphasized the deep bond between Pakistan and Kashmir. – APP

99.5 percent
discontinued
prize bonds
redeemed,
NA told

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Bilal Azhar Kiyani on Thursday announced that 99.5 percent of discontinued bearer prize bonds have been successfully redeemed and the government may consider relief for the remaining 0.5 percent if a substantial number of verifiable applications are received. Responding to a query rose by MNA Ms. Aliya Kamran, Kiyani informed the National Assembly, that the decision to discontinue bearer prize bonds of Rs40,000, Rs25,000, Rs15,000 and Rs7,500 denominations was made between 2019 and 2021 as part of Pakistan's commitment to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) regime.

He said that in each case, investors were given an initial six-month period to redeem or convert their bonds, followed by multiple extensions. In total, some bond types were granted up to nine extensions, with the final deadline expiring in December 2024. He said bond holders were provided with three redemption options: convert the bearer bonds into registered premium bonds, invest in national savings schemes, or redeem through bank accounts. – APP

PTA vows
to secure,
inclusive
digital future

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) reaffirmed its strategic vision for a secure, inclusive, and resilient Digital Pakistan on Thursday during the GSMA Digital Nation Summit 2025.

In his keynote address titled "The Regulator's Perspective: Building a Resilient Digital Ecosystem," Chairman PTA, Major General (R) Hafeez ur Rehman, outlined the Authority's forward-looking agenda.

He highlighted a major policy milestone: the alignment of government-imposed telecom charges with global standards, achieved through sustained advocacy and collaboration with government stakeholders to enhance the sector's investment potential. The Chairman emphasized the transformative impact of the Right of Way (RoW) framework, which has eliminated longstanding barriers to fibre-optic deployment, accelerating network expansion and improving nationwide service delivery. – APP

CM of Gilgit-Baltistan meets
with AKDN leaders

AKDN agreed to provide support in the early recovery, rehabilitation and green retrofitting of seven schools in Gilgit-Baltistan, solarizing and repairing solar facilities in flood affected Government health facilities, rehabilitating drinking water supply schemes, protective infrastructure and establishing eight Community Emergency Response Teams in flood affected areas



DNA

GILGIT: Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Mr Haji Gulbar Khan met with the President of Ismaili Council for Pakistan, Mr Nizar Mewawalla, the Chief Executive Officer of Serena Hotels Mr Aziz Boolani and the Chief Executive Officer of the Aga Khan Foundation, Pakistan Mr Akhtar Iqbal. The Chief Minister appreciated the Aga Khan

Development Network's longstanding contribution in sectors such as education, healthcare, disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and civil society engagement. The Chief Minister earlier presented an official letter to His Highness the Aga Khan and sought assistance in the wake of the recent floods that caused widespread devastation across Gilgit-Baltistan. The President of Ismaili Council for Pakistan, Mr Nizar Mewawalla expressed his deep sympathies with

the families in distress and assured of the co-operation and support that AKDN agencies can provide to areas affected by floods and in building the resilience of the communities. AKDN agreed to provide support in the early recovery, rehabilitation and green retrofitting of seven schools in Gilgit-Baltistan, solarizing and repairing solar facilities in flood affected Government health facilities, rehabilitating drinking water supply schemes, protective infrastructure and

establishing eight Community Emergency Response Teams in flood affected areas. Delivery of portable medical equipment and supplies to health providers will be ensured and mobile health care units will be established to provide quality care at health facilities in the affected areas. The early identification and management of 3000 undernourished children and women in flood affected areas of GB will be conducted shortly as well.

Vision of independent Pakistan born
with 1940 Resolution: Naushad

PESHAWAR: As Pakistan approaches its 78th Independence Day, a vibrant wave of patriotism has swept across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). From the scorching plains of Dera Ismail Khan to the serene valleys of Chitral, residents are decorating homes, markets, and vehicles in green and white, symbolizing their unwavering love for a nation born from sacrifice and vision. At the heart of these celebrations lies a defining moment in history ie the Pakistan Resolution of March 23, 1940. Passed in Lahore's Iqbal Park by the All-India Muslim League, this monumental declaration not only laid the foundation for a separate Muslim homeland but also ignited a political movement that culminated in the creation of Pakistan just seven years later, on August 14, 1947. In Peshawar's historic Qissa Khwani Bazaar, a lively buzz surrounds stalls laden with national flags, badges, stickers, and miniature models of iconic landmarks like Minar-e-Pakistan and Quaid-e-Azam's Residency. Children, in particular, are immersed in the spirit of Jashn-e-Azadi.

"I bought 250 badges and stickers along with a model of Minar-e-Pakistan to celebrate Independence Day with my friends in befitting manner," said 11-year-old Malaika Bibi from Nowshera at Qissa Khwani bazaar.

"We're all coming to watch the flag hoisting ceremony at Police Lines Peshawar on August 14." For many like Malaika, Pakistan's birth is not a distant memory but a cherished legacy – a reminder of the sacrifices of their forefathers who rallied behind a vision first articulated in 1940.

Pakistan Resolution was more than a political proposal but it a profound expression of identity and purpose. It called for "independent states" for Muslims in the northwestern and eastern zones of British India – a groundbreaking demand led by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Professor Dr. Muhammad Naushad Khan, former Chairman of the Pakistan Studies Department at Islamia College Peshawar, describes it as a historic awakening and proved a strong foundation for Pakistan.

"The resolution marked the culmination of decades of political struggle and religious marginalization," he explained. "It was the voice of a nation striving for freedom."

The great Quaid's leadership and the united call of the Muslim League reshaped the political landscape of South Asia. Although it was passed in Lahore, the resolution's spirit resonated powerfully across regions particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

(then NWFP), which would go on to play a decisive role in the Pakistan Movement. Following the resolution, Quaid's visits to Peshawar and other KP cities sparked unprecedented public support. Dr. Naushad recalled a momentous welcome given to founder of Pakistan on his arrival by people of KP. They decorated their homes and shops with Muslim League flags and showered rose petals on the Quaid," he said. "It was a powerful symbol of solidarity and unity for Pakistan." A defining incident from the 1940s illustrated KP's youth engagement. During a visit, the Muslim Students Federation pledged Rs. 8,000 and promised 8,000 educated volunteers for the freedom struggle a powerful statement of the region's commitment. The Muslim League later secured over 50 seats in the province, a political breakthrough that cemented KP's place in the national narrative of independence. Islamia College Peshawar occupies a special place in the history of Pakistan and in the heart of Quaid-e-Azam himself. He visited this great institution three times – in 1936, 1945, and finally in 1948 as Governor General.

"Each visit was a recognition of the College's enormous contributions to the Pakistan Movement," Dr. Naushad said. – APP

Tarar calls for
united front
against terrorism

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Thursday clarified that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has consistently received its designated share under the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, and urged lawmakers to adopt a unified stance against terrorism. Responding to a query raised by MNA Asad Qaiser in the National Assembly, Tarar clarified that one percent of the divisible pool has been regularly transferred to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for counter-terrorism efforts since the last NFC Award.

"I've personally attended ten meetings on this issue, including those with the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. There's no second opinion—the one percent NFC share has been transferred without interruption for the past 15 years," he stated. Backing figures shared by PML-N MNA Talal Chaudhry, Tarar confirmed that payments related to the merged tribal districts—following the 2018 constitutional amendment—had also been released. He added that some pending amounts were still under technical discussion.

Addressing past government policies on talks with militants, the minister said, "The negotiations with terrorists and related policies during your government's tenure are part of the public record. The consequences of those actions are also part of history. We need not debate the past today." He emphasized the importance of moving forward with national unity and urged all members of the House to resolve collectively: "Let us stand united in one voice to declare that we want a terrorism-free Pakistan—and we are all ready to make sacrifices for it." – APP

ISSI commemorates 58th ASEAN DAY with Roundtable

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad (ACI), commemorated 58th ASEAN Day with a special Roundtable titled "Pakistan and ASEAN: Partners in Peace, Progress, and Regional Prosperity".

The Roundtable brought together Heads of Mission of ASEAN member states in Islamabad, Pakistan's Ambassadors/High Commissioners posted in ASEAN capitals, and senior officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, Additional Foreign Secretary (Asia Pacific), was the Chief Guest. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI, delivered welcome remarks, while Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director CPSC, moderated the session. In his remarks, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted Pakistan's commitment to a deeper, mutually-beneficial partnership with ASEAN. He appreciated the collaboration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad (ACI) in organizing the Roundtable Dialogue. Highlighting ASEAN's transformation into a global economic powerhouse with a GDP exceeding \$4.2 trillion, he lauded its resilience, unity, and commitment to peace, stability, inclusive growth, economic integration and socio-cultural collaboration. He emphasized ASEAN's newly adopted Community Vision 2045 as a timely blueprint to address global challenges and realize the new opportunities. Ambassador Mahmood noted a 23% growth in Pakistan-ASEAN trade in 2024 and stressed the potential for synergies with CPEC and RCEP. He underscored people-to-people ties, youth engagement, and cultural interface as critical pillars of this partnership. He highlighted ISSI's contributions, including the establishment of the 'ASEAN Corner' and the special ASEAN issue of PIVOT mag-

azine. Calling ASEAN a pillar of dialogue and stability, he reiterated Pakistan's quest for a Full Dialogue Partner status and reaffirmed ISSI's commitment to advancing Pakistan-ASEAN cooperation through dedicated research, dialogue, and strategic engagement.

A special video message from H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary-General of ASEAN, acknowledged Pakistan's long-standing role as ASEAN's first Sectoral Dialogue Partner and welcomed the growing economic and institutional ties between both sides. He emphasized Pakistan's contributions to peace, development, and regional connectivity, and expressed support for deepening cooperation under the ASEAN-Pakistan Practical Cooperation Areas 2024–2028.

H.E. Mr. Wunna Han, Ambassador of Myanmar and Acting Chair of ACI, laud-

ed progress in Pakistan-ASEAN cooperation, urged continued support for ASEAN Vision 2045 and key initiatives, and shared thoughts on ways to further elevate the ASEAN-Pakistan partnership. ASEAN Heads of Missions including from Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia, shared perspectives on advancing collaboration in political, economic, security, and socio-cultural spheres. They appreciated Pakistan's continued engagement with ASEAN frameworks and reiterated support for a deeper and enhanced partnership between Pakistan and ASEAN.

Pakistan's Heads of Mission posted in ASEAN capitals made important interventions. They highlighted progress on Practical Cooperation Areas, growing bilateral engagements, and identified new

avenues for collaboration in areas such as Fintech, digital economy, sustainable development, trade, tourism, and cultural diplomacy. They emphasized the need for institutional linkages and high-level exchanges to broaden ASEAN-Pakistan ties, and expressed confidence in the potential of this partnership to contribute to regional peace and prosperity.

Chief Guest Ambassador Imran Siddiqui reiterated Pakistan's commitment to ASEAN under the Vision East Asia policy. He emphasized ASEAN's importance as a model for regional cooperation and highlighted Pakistan's diplomatic presence in nine ASEAN capitals. He noted the opportunities for deepening integration through initiatives such as CPEC, regional connectivity, capacity building, and people-centric development. Ambassador Imran Siddiqui called for

Pakistan's elevation to Full Dialogue Partner status, emphasizing: "Pakistan views its partnership with ASEAN as a convergence of strategic destiny. The time, we believe, has come to graduate this engagement to the level of Full Dialogue Partnership, an evolution justified by visions, history and aspiration."

In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG ISSI, highlighted ASEAN's remarkable journey as one of the most successful regional organizations and reaffirmed Pakistan's active engagement with ASEAN and its related forums. He expressed hope for Pakistan's elevation to Full Dialogue Partner status to further deepen bilateral cooperation. He also appreciated ISSI's role in strengthening Pakistan-ASEAN ties through research, education, and policy dialogue.

Rs 5.2 billion
released to
public sector
varsities

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has taken decisive action to address the financial crisis plaguing public sector universities by releasing Rs5,223.25 million for pension payments and quarterly grants. The funds were transferred to the Higher Education Department following an official notification from the provincial Finance Department.

The allocation includes Rs3,631 million specifically earmarked for clearing long-standing pension arrears and Rs1,592 million as the first quarterly grant for the 2025-26 fiscal year. Officials confirmed the amount has been processed as grant-in-aid under the current year's budget provisions, with strict instructions to ensure all disbursements comply with legal and financial regulations.

In its directive, the Finance Department has mandated the Higher Education Department to prioritize clearing all pending pension liabilities without delay. – APP

Over 33,000
vehicles
fined for
non-standard
number plates

ISLAMABAD: ITP has taken legal action against more than 33,000 vehicles and motorcycles during the ongoing year – marking a sharp increase from the 20,965 cases recorded over the same violation last year.

A police spokesperson told APP that the ongoing campaign targets the use of fancy or non-pattern number plates, which are in violation of official registration standards. Special enforcement squads have been deployed at strategic checkpoints across the capital, where police teams are issuing challans, impounding vehicles, and removing unauthorized plates on the spot. Chief Traffic Officer Captain (R) Syed Zeeshan Haider has directed all zonal DSPs to intensify the crackdown further and ensure firm, indiscriminate action against violators. He said strict enforcement of traffic regulations is essential to maintain road safety and ensure smooth vehicular movement across Islamabad.

He also urged citizens to register their vehicles and motorcycles in a timely manner and to use only the official number plates issued by the Excise and Taxation Department. Using unauthorized or stylized number plates, he warned, may lead to fines, impoundment, and legal proceedings. According to officials, the upward trend in enforcement reflects ITP's renewed focus on accountability, and efforts will continue in the coming months with zero tolerance for non-compliance. – APP

National Days and Armed Forces Days

AUGUST

Aug 01/China Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Switzerland National Day

Aug 01/Lebanon Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Syria Armed Forces Day

Aug 4/Bukino Faso National Day

Aug 15/DPR Korea Independence Day

Aug 15/India Independence Day

Aug 15/Poland Armed Forces Day

Aug 17 /Indonesia Independence Day

Aug 24/Ukraine Independence Day

Aug 25/Uruguay Independence Day

Aug 30 /Turkey Armed Forces Day

Aug 31/Kyrgyz Republic Independence Day

Aug 31/Malaysia National Day

Hotels & Restaurants

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133

Marriott.....051- 2826121

Monal.....0334-5421812

Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15

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Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16

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Motorway Police.9270601-20

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MH.....561116

Canth Hospital.....9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

NUML, PNRA sign MoU to strengthen academic ties

The MoU also emphasises cooperation in developing and refining the content of specialised training courses, ensuring that the curricula meet contemporary professional and industry standards

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD:The National University of Modern Languages (NUML) and the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) have entered into a strategic partnership through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at fostering collaboration in professional development, training, research, and academic exchange. The signing ceremony was held at NUML's Islamabad campus. The MoU was signed by Brigadier Shahzad Munir, Director General NUML, and Mr. Muhammad Waqas Sherani, Director General ICHR at PNRA, said a press release issued here on Thursday. The ceremony was graced by the presence of Major General (R) Shahid Mahmood Kayani, HI (M), Rector NUML, along with senior officials from both institutions. Under this MoU, NUML and PNRA have agreed to collaborate in several key areas of mutual interest. Both institutions will share professional and intellectual resources to enhance academic and regulatory capacities. This partnership aims to leverage the strengths of each organisation to support institutional development and capacity-building efforts. The MoU also emphasises cooperation in developing and refining the content of specialised training courses, ensuring that the curricula meet contemporary professional and industry standards. Furthermore, PNRA officials will be given the opportunity to enrol in a wide range of language courses offered by NUML, helping them

enhance their communication skills in various international and regional languages. In addition, the agreement facilitates PNRA's participation in the training programs conducted by NUML's Executive Development Centre (EDC), which are designed to strengthen leadership, management, and strategic skills. The MoU also opens up in-

ternship opportunities for NUML students at PNRA, allowing them to gain practical experience in a dynamic and high-impact regulatory environment. On the occasion, Rector NUML emphasised the importance of academia-regulator linkages for national progress and capacity building. He stated that the partnership

reflects NUML's commitment to expanding its academic and professional horizons through meaningful collaborations. The MoU is expected to pave the way for long-term academic enrichment, knowledge exchange, and professional growth for students, faculty members, and officials from both NUML and PNRA.

SECP publishes report on healthcare ecosystem

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has released a comprehensive report titled "Healthcare Ecosystem in Pakistan." With a special focus on the role of health insurance, the report highlights the state of the healthcare ecosystem, relevant stakeholders, market dynamics, and performance, along with key challenges hindering the optimization of healthcare delivery, said a release issued here on Thursday. Despite healthcare being a priority area for the Government of Pakistan—as enshrined in Article 38 of the Constitution of Pakistan and recognized as one of the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals—Pakistan ranks among the highest in out-of-pocket expenditures, according to the WHO Global Health Expenditure Database. At 47%, Pakistan's out-of-pocket spending far exceeds that of Sri Lanka (40%), Malaysia (38%), and China and Indonesia (both at 33%). The development of the health insurance sector is one of the operational outcomes of the SECP's five-year strategic plan, "Journey to an Insured Pakistan," launched in December 2023. The report identifies various challenges and specific bottlenecks impeding the growth of the health insurance sector. – APP

Self meter reading initiative attracts over 1m users

ISLAMABAD: In a groundbreaking development aimed at enhancing transparency and customer satisfaction in electricity consumption, over one million users across Pakistan have embraced the self meter reading initiative. This progressive step is part of the government's wider efforts to tackle issues of over billing and inaccurate meter readings, leveraging digital technology to empower consumers directly. Ministry of Energy's spokesperson told Wealth Pakistan (WealthPK). The programme, called "Apna Meter Apni Reading" (translated as "My Meter, My Reading"), was launched through the Power Smart app. This innovative platform allows electricity consumers to independently submit their meter readings, which improves billing transparency and accuracy. By uploading a photo of their meter, consumers minimise the risks of errors, delayed readings, and disputes, creating a fairer billing environment. Under the leadership of Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari, landmark measures have been implemented to reform billing practices, the spokesperson said while talking to Wealth Pakistan. The app places consumers at the center by enabling them to report their readings, making it easier to address discrepancies and prevent over billing. The uptake of this digital tool has been remarkable, with more than one million electricity consumers nationwide actively using the Power Smart app. This significant adoption demonstrates increasing public trust in digital governance and a strengthened relationship between consumers and utility services. – APP

Govt secures export growth despite challenges, NA told

ISLAMABAD: The government has ensured steady growth in exports and is actively pursuing diversification through new market access agreements and promotion of non-traditional sectors, despite facing economic, energy, and law-and-order challenges in recent years. This was stated by Zulfiqar Ali Bhatti, Parliamentary Secretary for Commerce, in the National Assembly on Thursday while responding to a question raised by MNA Shazia Marri regarding the measures taken for export diversification during the last three years. He said that while various internal challenges persisted—including an energy crisis and law and order concerns—Pakistan's exports did not decline, but rather witnessed a nearly 10 percent increase over the previous year. "This reflects resilience and consistent efforts to expand trade avenues," he said. He added that the government has signed several key agreements, including new transit and trade agreements with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and other regional partners, which are expected to further broaden export markets. "There are many developments underway, and a comprehensive discussion on all trade facilitation initiatives would require extended time," he noted. Acknowledging the reply, Shazia Marri said she agreed that some improvement had occurred, but maintained that the pace of diversification and tangible outcomes remained limited. She urged the government to clarify what concrete gains had been achieved so far through these measures, especially in terms of sectoral expansion and new markets. – APP

Anti-encroachment operation to be stepped up

ISLAMABAD: An important meeting was held at the CDA headquarters under the chairmanship of Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa. The meeting was attended by Member Admin and Estate Talat Mahmood, Member Planning Dr. Khalid Hafiz, Member Environment Esfandiyar Baloch, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon, DG Building Control Faisal Naeem, Deputy DG Enforcement and Director DMA Dr. Anum Fatima, Director ICT Rabia Aurangzeb, and other senior officers. During the meeting, it was apprised that, in line with the direction of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and the leadership of Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, a vigorous campaign against illegal constructions

and encroachments is ongoing in various sectors of Islamabad. The meeting was briefed that, in addition to reclaiming over 60 kanals of estate land from illegal occupants in the Saidpur area, strict operations were also carried out against encroachments and illegal constructions along GT Road. Furthermore, strong actions were taken against encroachments on the Expressway, Srinagar Highway, Tarnol and other areas. Chairman CDA directed that the campaign against encroachments and illegal constructions be further intensified across all sectors of Islamabad. Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, said that while the CDA is taking indiscriminate action against all illegal encroach-

ments in accordance with the law, it has been decided that a permanent monitoring system will be established to prevent re-encroachment on lands cleared during the anti-encroachment campaign. This system will include regular drone footage of the relevant areas as well as the use of Google Earth for surveillance. He instructed that legal actions against all encroachments and illegal constructions in Islamabad be expedited. Additionally, to permanently eliminate illegal encroachments, comprehensive planning should be done for eco-friendly tree plantations and optimal utilization of the reclaimed spaces to help transform Islamabad into an encroachment-free, beautiful and model capital in the future. – DNA

Entomologist launches anti-dengue operation

WAH CANTT: On the instructions of Assistant Commissioner (AC) Taxila, Maria Javed, an anti-dengue operation was launched in the cantonment area by Tehsil Entomologist, Mian Israr Ali. He was accompanied by Tehsil Health Inspector, Shahid Iqbal, Health Inspector, Bilal Ahmad, Supervisor, Yasir Qayyum, and Adnan Khan. The purpose of this special campaign was to prevent the possible spread of the dengue virus and to protect public health. The team visited various wards of the cantonment area as part of the inspection drive. During the operation, dengue larvae were found at several sites including Jan Timber Works, Malik Iron Steel, Allah Tawakkal Engineering, Fayyaz Kamani Maker, Afrahim Auto Mechanic, and Haji Abdul Ghani Old Engine Works. Upon discovery, immediate spraying was conducted at the affected sites and all six spots were sealed on the spot to prevent further spread of the virus. – APP

Media urged to champion blue economy awareness

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has urged for highlighting Pakistan's blue economy and its importance for livelihoods and climate resilience. Addressing a 30-member delegation of the Sindh Parliamentary Reporters Association, the minister encouraged the media to move beyond conventional coverage of shipping and trade. He called for greater focus on issues such as aquaculture, sustainable fisheries, mangrove restoration, and community-led coastal protection projects. The Sindh Parliamentary Reporters Association delegation, currently on a study tour of the capital led by its Secretary General Akram Baloch and Tahir Sadiqui, senior staff reporter at Dawn and Secretary Gym Club of the Karachi Press Club, visited the Ministry of Maritime Affairs at the invitation of Federal Minister Junaid Anwar Chaudhry. Junaid Chaudhry said port cities, particularly Karachi, are at the forefronts of both maritime economic potential and the risks posed by climate change. Rising sea levels, coastal erosion and increasingly frequent extreme weather events threaten infrastructure, livelihoods and local economies, he said. The federal minister stressed that these urban and coastal hubs can only secure their future by embedding climate resilience into growth strategies centered on the blue economy. This, he explained, is not limited to maritime commerce but includes the sustainable management of marine resources for the benefit of communities and biodiversity. The minister urged journalists to tell

the human stories of Pakistan's maritime sector from small-scale fishers working in coastal creeks to port labourers and logistics workers linking local realities to national and global audiences. Highlighting government initiatives, Junaid Chaudhry pointed to efforts to expand aquaculture along the Sindh and Balochistan coasts, modernize fishing fleets for efficiency and sustainability and accelerate mangrove plantation drives. Pakistan's mangrove forests, he noted, rank among the largest in the world. They protect coasts from storm surges, store carbon and sustain marine life that underpins the fisheries industry. He emphasized that partnerships with international organizations were strengthening fisheries management as part of a long-term vision to make Karachi and other port cities models of sustainable maritime development. This vision balances economic growth with environmental care. He urged the reporters to adopt a solutions-focused approach, showcasing positive examples such as fishing cooperatives improving incomes through eco-friendly practices or communities protected by restored mangroves. Such stories, he said, can help mobilize public and policy support for blue economy goals. The minister announced that the Ministry of Maritime Affairs would support capacity-building initiatives to promote informed and impactful maritime journalism. Delegates from the Sindh Parliamentary Reporters Association welcomed the proposals for specialized training in maritime reporting and improved access to sector-specific data. – APP

SSP holds khuli Kachehri

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Muhammad Shoaib Khan on Thursday held a Khuli Kachehri (open court) in the Saddar Zone to listen to public complaints and issue on-the-spot directives. A public relations officer told APP that the event was attended by SP Saddar Zone Kazim Naqvi, SDPOs, SHO's, and a large number of citizens from the area. He said that SSP Shoaib Khan listened to the grievances of complainants in detail and instructed officers to take immediate action for their resolution. He made it clear that there would be zero tolerance for delays in addressing the concerns of the public. He said that strict action must be taken against those involved in drug trafficking and the illegal arms trade, adding that affected citizens should be provided timely relief without any discrimination. – APP

CJP vows to strengthen district Judiciary

ISLAMABAD: President District Bar Association Karachi Amir Warraich, and Abdul Rehman Korai called on the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi, here at the Supreme Court Branch Registry on Thursday. Sohail Ahmed Mashori, Additional Resident Secretary, Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP), was also present on the occasion. The Chief Justice said that the district judiciary remains central to the ongoing priority agenda, as it serves as the primary forum for interface public to access justice. He emphasized the need for equipping the district courts with modern infrastructure and institutional support to enhance the overall effectiveness of the justice sector. He further noted that the Government was actively engaged in addressing the infrastructural requirements of the judiciary in line with contemporary standards. Given Karachi's status as the economic hub of Pakistan, he underscored the urgency of establishing a judicial infrastructure that can meet the city's expanding legal and commercial demands. To improve coordination and implementation of reforms, CJP said the Additional Resident Secretary in each province to serve as a liaison entity with the district judiciary. This initiative aims to bridge the gaps through meaningful collaboration between the bench and bar. – APP

Jazz invests Rs 25b, records 17.7% growth in H1

ISLAMABAD: Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital operator, invested Rs. 25.5 billion in the first half of 2025 and recorded a robust 17.7% growth, reflecting its strong commitment to accelerating Pakistan's digital transformation. The investment focuses on expanding 4G coverage, scaling digital platforms, and accelerating financial inclusion, ensuring that millions of Pakistanis benefit from affordable, high-quality digital services. Jazz delivered another strong quarter, with 2Q25 revenue up 15.3% year-on-year in local currency, driven by resilient telecom operations and 35.7% digital revenue growth, which contributed 28.1% of total revenue versus 23.9% last year. EBITDA rose 5.4% with a 41.6% margin, underscoring Jazz's shift to a ServiceCo, while capex of PKR 16 billion highlighted its commitment to strengthening Pakistan's

digital infrastructure. With over 21 million monthly active users, Pakistan's leading digital financial service, JazzCash, processed a gross transaction value of PKR 11.7 trillion during the last twelve months as of Q2 2025. Its extensive network-comprising 367,000 active merchants and nearly 107,000 active agents, has facilitated considerable digitalisation of society, with over 140,000 digital loans issued daily. "Our second quarter results reflect not only strong financial performance but also our commitment to Pakistan's digital future," said Amir Ibrahim, CEO of Jazz. "In the first half of the year, we accelerated investments in 4G, digital platforms, and financial inclusion, while optimising our portfolio through initiatives like the Deodar transaction. These steps are laying the foundation for a more inclusive and

future-ready economy, where connectivity and capability work together to improve the lives of millions of Pakistanis." During the quarter, Jazz's total subscribers reached 73.9 million, including 54.6 million 4G users, up 15.3% year-on-year, with 4G penetration rising to 73.9%. VoLTE users reached 32 million, while VoWiFi daily active users stood at 5.22 million, enabling seamless, high-quality calling even without cellular coverage. Multiplay customers grew 29.2% year-on-year and now represent 36.4% of the base, generating over 3.2x the ARPU of voice-only users. Jazz's digital platforms continued to grow strongly. Tamasha recorded over 12 million MAUs in the second quarter, after peaking at 17 million in April during major cricket tournaments. SIMOSA – Jazz's SIMCare, lifestyle and social app reached 21.2 million MAUs, while FikrFree, Jazz's insurtech

app, reached 9.8 million active policies along with 2.2 million MAUs, reinforcing the app's early traction. In line with its asset-light strategy, Jazz completed the transfer of its tower assets via Deodar to Engro Connect, a transaction that supports long-term operational efficiency and allows the company to focus on scaling its digital ecosystem. Jazz is Pakistan's leading ServiceCo—an integrated digital services company serving over 100 million users through a portfolio spanning fintech (JazzCash), entertainment (Tamasha), digital self-care (SIMOSA), insurtech (FikrFree), enterprise cloud solutions (Garaj), and gaming (GameNow). This evolution reflects Jazz's strategic shift from connectivity to capability, enabling platforms that improve the lives and livelihoods of Pakistanis through the power of technology. – APP

Briefs

Pak enjoys lowest tariff rates among regional rivals, NA told

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Commerce Zulfiqar Ali Bhatti on Thursday said the United States has not imposed punitive tariffs on Pakistani exports, contrary to earlier concerns, as Pakistan currently enjoys one of the lowest tariff rates among regional competitors, including India. He was responding to a question raised by MNA Tahira Aurangzeb, who had inquired whether Pakistan was expected to suffer a loss of one billion dollars following the imposition of new trade tariffs by the United States, and what steps the government was taking to mitigate the impact, particularly on local industry and manufacturing. Bhatti clarified that the concern was based on a time when the US tariffs had not yet been finalized. "Thankfully, today the situation has changed. Where once there was a 25% tariff on Indian goods, Pakistan's direct tariff has now been reduced to one of the lowest in the region," he said. He attributed this positive outcome to the collective diplomatic efforts of the Prime Minister, Finance Minister, Minister for Commerce, and SIFC. – APP

Ship Carrying 4,000 Tons of MOP Fertilizer docks at Gwadar Port

ISLAMABAD: A vessel carrying 4,000 tons of Muriate of Potash (MOP) fertilizer has docked at Gwadar Port, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. The commercial ship, owned by The Truong an Water Transport Company Limited, delivered raw MOP materials destined for Agven's fertilizer factory, operating in the Gwadar North Free Zone since 2023. Once processed, packed, and branded at the Agven facility, the 4,000 tons of MOP will be exported to both domestic markets in Pakistan and international destinations. Agven's Director of Operations, Mr. Sharjeel, told Gwadar Pro that under its export license, this marks the first time the North Free Zone factory will process raw MOP—a premium-grade fertilizer known for enhancing crop quality by increasing resistance to diseases and pests. – APP

Mushahid Hussain launches 'Pak Zindabad' conferences

The Pakistan Zindabad conferences will be held during a week-long celebration of Independence Day in Karachi, including at Hamdard University and Urdu University, among others. These events are being organized by Idara Nazria Pakistan, which is the premier non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting the Vision and Ideology of the Founders of Pakistan, of which Senator Mushahid Hussain is Vice Chairman

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushahid Hussain Said has said that 'Pakistan's momentous defeat of India in May has helped politically reshape South Asia and revived Pakistani Nationalism. Inaugurating an Exhibition of unique photographs of the Pakistan Movement at the Karachi Arts Council, Senator Mushahid also launched the first of a series of 'Pakistan Zindabad' conferences in Karachi, birthplace of the Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, to celebrate Independence Day of Pakistan. The Pakistan Zindabad conferences will be held during a week-long celebration of Independence Day in Karachi, including at Hamdard University and Urdu University, among others. These events are being organized by Idara Nazria Pakistan, which is the premier non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting the Vision and Ideology of the Founders of Pakistan, of which Senator Mushahid Hussain is the Vice Chairman. The Consul General of Turkey,



Dr Cemal Sangu, was the Chief Guest while Begum Sadia Rashed, daughter of Hakim Muhammad Said, and President of Hamdard Foundation, and Ahmed Shah, President of Karachi Arts Council,

were Guests of Honour. In his speech, Senator Mushahid paid tributes to the vision and leadership of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Allama Iqbal, Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Madar e Mil-

lat Fatima Jinnah and Quaid e Millat Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan. He said the defeat of India showed that size did not equal strength and that the Pakistani Nation was united in their determination to

rally around their valiant Armed Forces to defend the Motherland. He said as a consequence of the failure of Indian aggression, India's hubris, arrogance and desire of hegemony had suffered an irreparable setback. He then cited two reasons for inviting the Turkish diplomat as the Chief Guest: to thank Turkey for its unflinching support to Pakistan during the conflict with India and to acknowledge the respect that the Quaid e Azam had for the Founder of Modern Turkey, Ghazi Mustafa Kamal Atatürk. Speaking to the audience of youth, women, students, teachers and political activists, Senator Mushahid cautioned against 'Two Dangers of Negativism': 'a mindset of defeatism and a mindset of ingratitude, because both result in pessimism and loss of hope'. Shields were distributed among the guest speakers and the event began with the singing of the National Anthem and the popular anthem of the Pakistan Movement eulogizing the leadership of the Quaid e Azam: 'Millat ka Pasban hai Muhammad Ali Jinnah'.

Accused involved in stealing WASA pipes caught

RAWALPINDI: A WASA Rawalpindi team on Thursday caught an accused involved in stealing supply pipes and handed him over to police along with the junk dealer. According to a WASA spokesman, the accused Muhammad Abbas in collusion with junk dealer Zar Syed had been stealing pipes from the main line of Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) from Khanna Pul to Karal Chowk for the last one week. Due to the pipe theft, the supply of water to Gulzar Quaid, Faisal Colony and Mangral Town was affected, he added. Taking notice of the complaints, WASA Managing Director Muhammad Saleem Ashraf formed special teams, which caught the thief Muhammad Abbas red-handed. He along with the junk dealer was handed over to the police, which registered a case against the two. – Agencies

Business community hails govt's move to restrict FBR arrest powers

ISLAMABAD: Economic Policy and Business Development (EPBD) Chairman Gohar Ejaz on Thursday welcomed the issuance of STGO by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), which outlines a detailed procedure for investigation prior to the arrest of any businessman. Gohar Ejaz termed the government's decision of making it mandatory for tax officials to consult at least two representatives of the business community before initiating investigations that could lead to arrests in tax fraud cases as a victory for taxpayers of the country. He also gave credit to Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for safeguarding the respect and honour of the business community from the draconian powers granted to FBR in the Finance Act 2025. "As announced in the meeting on July 21, 2025 with business leaders, Field Marshal Asim Munir has safeguarded the respect and honour of the business community from the draconian powers granted to the FBR in the Finance Act 2025, following a presentation by the leadership of FPCCI – Dr. Gohar Ejaz, SM Tanveer, the President of FPCCI, and the presidents of 18 chambers, including Karachi, Lahore, Quetta, Sarhad, Faisalabad, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Rahim Yar Khan, and Sialkot," a press release quoted Gohar Ejaz as saying. – APP

Federal government taking concrete steps to promote tech-based learning

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education and Professional Training Farah Naz on Thursday said the Ministry is undertaking concrete, multi-sectoral initiatives to align Pakistan's education system with rapid technological advancements, particularly in the fields of artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics, and computer programming. Responding to a question raised by MNA Ms. Zahra Wadood Fatemi during the National Assembly session, she said the Higher Education Commission (HEC) has already made courses on artificial intelligence and machine learning mandatory in undergraduate programs from 2023. "We are monitoring progress and will provide feedback on improvements made in public sector institutions," she added. She also emphasized that several departments, including HEC, NAVTTC, and FDE, are working together on these initiatives. "If further implementation is required, there is no hesitation from the Ministry," she assured. Highlighting disparities, Zahra Fatemi raised concerns about whether these advancements are visible in government schools or only in private institutions. "If real improvement was happening in public

schools, parents wouldn't be forced to send their children to expensive private institutions," she said, urging the Ministry to clarify which schools have benefited from the reforms. Dr. Shazia Sobia, through a supplementary question, asked whether any formal nominations or time frames were set for the reforms. She also inquired about the legal status of a private international institute operating on government land under NAVTTC. In response, Farah Naz clarified that the issue was under litigation, with a stay order currently in place, and the Ministry is appointing an acting director general at FB. On another note, MNA Romina Khurshid Alam drew attention to the financial crisis facing universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly the University of Peshawar, and urged the federal government to consider a one-time special grant. "Despite the post-18th Amendment setup, the federal education ministry must intervene to save historic institutions like Peshawar University," she stated. Farah Naz acknowledged the concern, noting that the University of Peshawar had received Rs. 650 million in 2022. She said the request for additional funding would be considered in coordination with the Finance Division. – APP

NA Speaker strongly condemns Mastung blast

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, on Thursday strongly condemned the cowardly terrorist attack near a security forces' vehicle in Mastung, which claimed the lives of several brave personnel. Expressing profound grief and sorrow over the tragic loss, the Speaker paid heartfelt tribute to the martyred soldiers—Major Rizwan Tahir, Naik Ibn Ameen, and Lance Naik Muhammad Younis—who embraced martyrdom in the line of duty. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq extended his condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families, stating, "I stand in solidarity with the families of the martyrs in their hour of grief." He reaffirmed that such cowardly acts of terrorism cannot shake the resolve of the nation. "The sacrifices of our martyrs will not go in vain," he said, adding that the entire nation takes pride in its courageous sons. Speaker Ayaz Sadiq lauded the unwavering efforts of Pakistan's security forces in combating terrorism, describing their operations as commendable and vital to national security. – APP

Pakistan's Women's Garment exports to China see 18% Growth

The total export value of men's and women's garments and T-shirts from Pakistan to China in H1 2025 reached \$23.19 million, driven by steadily rising demand for high-quality cotton apparel. Pakistan's T-shirt exports to China totaled \$8.3 million, with cotton T-shirts (HS Code: 61091000) alone accounting for \$8.25 million

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's garment exports to China recorded robust growth in the first half of 2025, with women's wear shipments rising 18% year-on-year to reach \$5.17 million, according to the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC). From January to June 2025, Pakistan exported women's garments worth \$5.17 million to China, up from \$4.39 million during the same period last year. Notably, exports of women's or girls' cotton trousers and breeches (HS Code: 62046200) surged to \$6.19 million, a significant increase from \$3.36 million in H1 2024. Similarly, cotton knitted or crocheted trousers for women (HS Code: 61046200) climbed to \$1.90 million, compared to \$1.03 million last year, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. Meanwhile, Pakistan's men's garment exports also maintained strong momentum, exceeding \$9.65 million in the first half of 2025. Exports of men's or boys' cotton trousers, knitted or crocheted (HS Code: 61034200), rose to \$5.65 million, up from \$5 million during the same period in 2024. The total export value of men's and women's garments and T-shirts from Pakistan to China in H1 2025 reached \$23.19 million, driven by steadily rising demand for high-quality cotton apparel. Pakistan's T-shirt exports to China totaled \$8.3 million, with cotton T-shirts (HS Code: 61091000) alone accounting for \$8.25 million—highlighting Pakistan's competitive edge in quality and pricing in the Chinese market. – DNA



MULTAN: A special award is being presented to Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani by Main Salman Mubarak on behalf of Award Roots International. – DNA

Pakistani students from Confucius Institute tour Xinjiang

As a student from Gilgit-Baltistan and living near the Khunjerab Pass, Anusha Baig said she has seen how China has helped Pakistan—especially Gilgit-Baltistan—develop, which has brought true friendship between the two peoples in her mind

ISLAMABAD: "Every second here felt like home. The diversity of Xinjiang, its beautiful landscapes, and the spirit of harmony among different communities left a lasting impact on me," said Anusha Baig and Abdullah Jalal, who are visiting Xinjiang among the thirteen Pakistani students from the Confucius Institute jointly established by Xinjiang Agricultural University (XJAU) and the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF). From July 28 to August 6, the students visited Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Museum, Xinjiang Art Museum, Xinjiang In-

ternational Grand Bazaar, and Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Science and Technology Museum, etc., attended lessons of Chinese language and Chinese society overview, and experienced Chinese calligraphy, Chinese tea art, Peking Opera mask making, Tai Chi, and Chinese paper-cutting. From August 7 to 10, they will continue their tour in Beijing, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday. "From bustling markets to peaceful mosques, every corner of Xinjiang tells a story of harmony and tradition. This trip gave me

a deeper understanding of China's ethnic diversity and development, especially how Xinjiang blends modern progress with cultural preservation," Hamza Shabbir told CEN. Talking about why they chose to learn Mandarin, "as an Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering student, I understand how China's hub status in manufacturing makes this language vital," Anusha Baig said. "With China's growing influence in global trade, communication, and education, mastering the language is a smart investment," Qamar Waheed said. As a student from Gilgit-Bal-

tistan and living near the Khunjerab Pass, Anusha Baig said she has seen how China has helped Pakistan—especially Gilgit-Baltistan—develop, which has brought true friendship between the two peoples in her mind. "I've witnessed the impact of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in my hometown. Many employment opportunities, better infrastructure, and roads have been created. Diamer Basha Dam is under construction, and now the dream of travelling from Gilgit to Gwadar Port and the Arabian Sea Trading Hub is becoming a reality," she underscored. – Agencies

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TAPI Gas Project in Limbo Amid Regional Tensions

THE much-anticipated Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project, once hailed as a beacon of regional energy cooperation and economic integration, finds itself in a state of indefinite limbo. Recent escalations in tensions between Pakistan and India have dealt a serious blow to the feasibility of this already challenged venture, further compounding the difficulties posed by the ongoing instability in Afghanistan.

TAPI, designed to transport natural gas from Turkmenistan's Galkynysh gas field to India through Afghanistan and Pakistan, was envisioned as a win-win proposition for all parties. For energy-starved South Asian nations, particularly Pakistan and India, the pipeline promised a steady and reliable source of natural gas to fuel economic growth. For Afghanistan, it offered a potential economic lifeline through transit fees and job creation. However, regional geopolitics have once again overshadowed economic logic. The recent military flare-up between Pakistan and India has exacerbated an already strained relationship. In the current environment of mutual mistrust and hostility, any collaborative economic initiative involving both countries is unlikely to progress. Pakistan's security and strategic concerns regarding India's involvement in the TAPI project are understandable, especially when national interests are at stake. As long as India remains part of the project framework, Islamabad is unlikely to proceed with full commitment.

Moreover, the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan poses an even more critical threat to the project. Despite initial optimism following the Taliban's return to power, the country continues to struggle with internal instability, terrorism, and lack of international recognition. These conditions render the safe construction and operation of a cross-country pipeline virtually impossible. No serious investor or stakeholder can be expected to take risks in a region fraught with such uncertainty.

Adding to the complexity is Turkmenistan's insistence on keeping India within the project to ensure maximum commercial viability. While the economic rationale is clear—India offers the largest potential market among TAPI participants—this insistence appears to be delaying progress. In light of the changing geopolitical landscape, Turkmenistan may need to reassess its approach. Prioritizing a phased implementation—focusing first on Pakistan and Afghanistan—could be a more practical path forward. While the TAPI gas pipeline remains a potentially transformative project, its success hinges on improved regional security and pragmatic diplomacy. Unless tensions between Pakistan and India ease, and Afghanistan stabilizes, TAPI is unlikely to move beyond paper. It is time for stakeholders to re-evaluate their strategies and seek phased, flexible alternatives that reflect ground realities.



G-14 –a victim of red-tap apathy and land mafia

THE Islamabad Post's recent report on the status of Sector G-14 lays bare the shameful saga of neglect, corruption, and systemic failure that has plagued this sector since its announcement in 2004. After over two decades, the promise of a developed and livable residential area remains largely unfulfilled. What should have been a bustling, well-planned sector in the capital has instead become a painful symbol of state failure and the unchecked rise of land mafias. The heart of the issue lies in Sub-Sector G-14/1, which remains illegally occupied. Despite repeated promises from the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) and other relevant bodies, no concrete action has been taken to clear the encroachments. The modus operandi is as old as it is vile: opportunists, often backed by local thugs and corrupt officials, erect illegal structures on government-allocated land. Once established, they demand exorbitant compensation for vacating the premises, in many cases threatening or violently resisting any attempt at eviction. Shockingly, the report alleges that these activities occur in connivance with officials of the Housing Authority—those meant to protect the public interest.

Development work has commenced in sub-sectors G-14/2, 3, and 4, but that is no consolation for thousands of allottees of G-14/1 who have waited patiently—some for nearly 20 years—to build a home. Tragically, many have passed away waiting for their plots to materialize into homes. This is not merely a matter of bureaucratic inefficiency; it is a human rights failure. These people were promised land through legal and official channels, paid their dues, and upheld their end of the bargain. The state has not.

It is unacceptable that a sector in the capital of Pakistan remains in the grip of illegality and impunity. The land mafia operates openly, secure in the knowledge that the system either fears or favors them. This cannot continue. The Supreme Court of Pakistan and senior government officials must take immediate and decisive action. Land encroachments should be dealt with swiftly, and those found complicit within the Housing Authority must face disciplinary and criminal consequences. Furthermore, the government must expedite the development of the remaining parts of G-14, ensure fair compensation to legal allottees for the delay, and establish a transparent mechanism for oversight to prevent such failures in the future. Urban planning and public trust in state institutions cannot be held hostage by criminal elements and their bureaucratic accomplices.

G-14 must not be allowed to become a cautionary tale of how public housing initiatives fall prey to corruption and neglect. Instead, it must be transformed into an example of justice restored and promises fulfilled. The allottees deserve no less. How many more have to die waiting for the home they were promised before action is taken?

Deepening ASEAN-Pakistan ties” a Philippine perspective

Dr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez



Turning Dialogue into Action: Since I assumed my post in Islamabad earlier this year, the Philippine Embassy has worked closely with other ASEAN missions to help turn ASEAN–Pakistan cooperation from aspiration into action. On the economic front, we have initiated high-level dialogues between ASEAN diplomats and Pakistani institutions such as the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry. These engagements have explored opportunities in Halal certification harmonization, agri-tech innovation, and post-harvest technologies

AS ASEAN celebrates its 58th founding anniversary this year, it is timely to reflect on how this Southeast Asian regional bloc—home to over 680 million people and the world's fifth-largest economy—is engaging with countries beyond its immediate neighborhood. One of the most promising of these partnerships is with Pakistan. Since becoming ASEAN's Sectoral Dialogue Partner in 1993, Pakistan has consistently demonstrated its commitment to stronger engagement. This was formalized through the 2019 ASEAN–Pakistan Sectoral Dialogue Relations Framework, which set out clear goals for cooperation across trade, education, people-to-people exchanges, among others. The Philippines, as a founding member of ASEAN, places great importance on this ASEAN-Pakistan relationship. In an increasingly interconnected Indo-Pacific region, traditional security concerns are now compounded by climate risks, economic shifts, and digital disruption. Strengthening ASEAN–Pakistan ties is essential to ensuring a more stable and prosperous regional order.

Turning Dialogue into Action: Since I assumed my post in Islamabad earlier this year, the Philippine Embassy has worked closely with other ASEAN missions to help turn ASEAN–Pakistan cooperation from aspiration into action. On the economic front, we have initiated high-level dialogues between ASEAN diplomats and Pakistani institutions such as the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry. These engagements have explored opportunities in Halal certification harmonization, agri-tech innovation, and post-harvest technologies. In December 2024, Pakistan offered to export up to one million metric tons of rice

annually to the Philippines—potentially covering a quarter of our national rice import needs. This proposal highlights how practical, mutually beneficial trade ties can address food security on one end and market access on the other. We have also promoted two-way trade through events like the 2025 Health, Engineering and Minerals Show (HEMS) in Lahore, where Philippine business leaders connected with their Pakistani counterparts in industries ranging from pharmaceuticals and surgical tools to automotive parts and minerals.

Building Bridges Beyond Business: But economic ties are only part of the picture. Lasting partnerships are built on understanding and shared values. That is why we have invested in cultural diplomacy and academic exchange—bringing ASEAN to audiences in Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi through film screenings, lectures, and forums on regional cooperation. One such event, organized in collaboration with COMSATS and the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies, featured a lecture on ASEAN's unique model of consensus-building and inclusivity—values that resonate strongly with Pakistan's own aspirations for regional peace and development.

In partnership with NUST and COMSATS, we have hosted dialogues on ASEAN's political and economic integration, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. These engagements are aimed not only at policy professionals, but also at Pakistan's future leaders—its students and young scholars.

To support long-term academic exchange, we helped establish the ASEAN Corner at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), offering curated resources on ASEAN diplomacy and integration, including materials contributed directly by the Philippines.

Moving Forward, Together: Mobility is another critical part of people-to-people diplomacy. In 2024, the Philippine Embassy in Islamabad processed more than 2,000 temporary visitor visas. In just the first half of 2025, that figure has already been matched—showing a growing appetite for exchange between our nations. Looking ahead, the Philippines is committed to supporting the deepening of ASEAN–Pakistan cooperation through several key initiatives:

- **Strengthening university partnerships and youth programs such as ASEAN Study Circles;**
- **Issuing joint statements and communiqués that highlight ASEAN's relevance to Pakistan's evolving foreign policy priorities;**
- **Sustaining policy dialogues with think tanks like the Institute of Strategic Studies–Islamabad (ISSI) to address shared concerns in climate change, regional security, and digital transformation.**

A Shared Future in the Indo-Pacific: The ASEAN–Pakistan relationship is not merely a diplomatic formality. It is a platform for practical collaboration in a rapidly changing Indo-Pacific region. As we navigate challenges that no country can solve alone—whether it is climate vulnerability, economic uncertainty, or cyber threats—there is great value in investing in partnerships that prioritize cooperation, inclusion, and mutual respect. The Philippines remains fully committed to working with Pakistan and our fellow ASEAN members to build a peaceful, resilient, and forward-looking regional community. As we mark ASEAN Day this year, let us walk together as partners in building a future that benefits us all.

The writer is the Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to Pakistan

Belgium Breaks the Siege: Airdrops Aid into Gaza

Qamar Bashir



Until this moment, humanitarian aid into Gaza was often paralyzed by bureaucracy, stalled at Israeli-controlled checkpoints, or denied outright under the pretext of security. Belgium changed that narrative. Operating through Jordan's logistical support but acting on its own sovereign judgment, it broke a decades-old deadlock.

ON August 3, 2025, the Belgian Air Force conducted a humanitarian act that reverberated far beyond the skies of Gaza. In coordination with Jordan, Belgium airdropped 15 tonnes of urgently needed food and medical supplies to the besieged Palestinian territory, followed by another 16 tonnes the next day. This was not a routine delivery, nor a symbolic gesture wrapped in diplomatic language. It was a deliberate and defiant intervention into one of the most militarized and politically contentious airspaces on earth—controlled by Israel and monitored by the United States.

Until this moment, humanitarian aid into Gaza was often paralyzed by bureaucracy, stalled at Israeli-controlled checkpoints, or denied outright under the pretext of security. Belgium changed that narrative. Operating through Jordan's logistical support but acting on its own sovereign judgment, it broke a decades-old deadlock. In doing so, it risked not only its aircraft but its diplomatic credibility, confronting two global powers that have maintained a tight grip over any movement into or out of the Palestinian enclave. What followed was equally remarkable. Belgium's courage ignited a wave of international solidarity. France soon launched its own airdrops, delivering more than 40 tonnes of supplies. Spain, Germany, and Italy committed to logistical and material support. Canada conducted its own airdrop, independently delivering 21,600 pounds of food and medical cargo. Jordan, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates served as regional facilitators. The United Kingdom publicly announced its intention to follow suit, while Saudi Arabia began preparing for participation. In total, more than a dozen countries are either actively engaged in the operation or finalizing their plans.

Unlike previous gestures of concern, these acts are concrete. They do not depend on negotiated corridors or Israel's discretionary approval. These are real packages of food and medicine dropped into a war zone without diplomatic clearance from Tel Aviv or Washington. They signal a moral awakening and a tectonic shift in how global powers respond to humanitarian crises under occupation. For decades, Israel has claimed that unauthorized de-

liveries into Gaza violate its sovereignty. The United States has echoed that sentiment, shielding Israel from international accountability. But with Belgium and other European democracies taking independent action, that consensus is fracturing. The long-standing Israeli-American control over humanitarian access is being directly challenged—not with resolutions or rhetorical statements, but with aircraft and parachutes. Even within the United States, signs of dissent are emerging. Public frustration is mounting as Americans question why their tax dollars fund weapons but not food. Congress, typically unified in approving military aid to Israel, is now confronted by images of European nations acting with the kind of moral clarity once associated with the U.S. itself.

The implications are profound. Once humanitarian aid becomes unstoppable, the siege itself becomes indefensible. As more nations bypass traditional channels and deliver relief directly, Israel's blockade narrative loses legitimacy. Likewise, the United States finds itself increasingly isolated—continuing to defend an ally accused of systematic war crimes while its own reputation as a defender of international law continues to erode. And yet, the most glaring absence remains the Islamic world. While Muslim-majority nations have issued strong verbal condemnations and convened emergency meetings, few have matched Belgium's direct action. It is a painful paradox that Christian-majority countries like Belgium, France, and Spain have taken the lead in delivering life-saving aid to starving Muslim civilians. Their planes reached Gaza's skies before many Muslim leaders could even finalize their joint communiqués.

But it is not too late for the Muslim world to assert its relevance. A unified humanitarian airlift—coordinated among Türkiye, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Qatar, and Egypt—could amplify the momentum initiated by Belgium. Simultaneously, Muslim countries could introduce targeted economic sanctions against both Israel and the United States until a ceasefire is implemented and the blockade is lifted.

The numbers are compelling. According to 2024 trade data, Muslim countries imported approxi-

mately \$290 billion in goods and services from the United States and \$23 billion from Israel. In return, they exported roughly \$190 billion to the U.S. and \$15 billion to Israel. That translates to a total bilateral trade volume of \$480 billion with the United States and \$38 billion with Israel. Even a partial embargo on strategic goods—oil, consumer products, or financial services—could produce seismic pressure. Reallocating trade toward nations supporting humanitarian initiatives would not only reward ethical diplomacy but also establish new global economic alliances rooted in justice. Such measures could be complemented with preferential trade agreements. Belgium, for example, could be granted Most Favored Nation (MFN) status among Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states. Similar incentives could be offered to France, Spain, and any country demonstrating moral courage in the face of international inertia. What Belgium has demonstrated is that one does not need to be a superpower to be a leader. By defying silence and cowardice, it reminded the world that aid does not require authorization when people are starving. It showed that neutrality in the face of oppression is complicity. And most importantly, it proved that humanity can still pierce through the clouds of political paralysis. The West may label its ongoing military support to Israel as strategy, but history will remember it as sanctioned cruelty. No child dying from hunger is a combatant. No woman in a bombed-out hospital is a threat to national security. The slow starvation of civilians is not collateral damage—it is deliberate and systematic. In a moment where domination has become policy, Belgium chose dignity. In skies long filled with drones, it dropped bread. In an arena shaped by fear, it delivered courage. The time for statements is over. The time for action is now. History will ask: who came when Gaza starved? And Belgium will answer: we did.

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

Briefs

Shehbaz urges strategic response..

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effective national policy, in close collaboration with provincial governments. "A unified and strategic response is the need of the hour," he asserted, calling for a coordinated federal-provincial framework to tackle population-related issues. He also stressed the importance of launching a nationwide awareness campaign to educate citizens about the implications of unchecked population growth, especially in the context of sustainable economic development.

During the meeting, Premier Shehbaz was briefed on various proposals and recommendations to manage population growth. Officials stressed that any long-term solution would require active provincial collaboration and public engagement at the grass-roots level. The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Education Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf, Federal Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar, along with senior officials from relevant institutions.

Jirga head confesses to killing...

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Ordinance for illegal possession of weapons. Sidra's murder has drawn condemnation from human rights organizations and citizens alike, who are calling for swift justice and a crackdown on informal justice systems such as jirgas, which continue to operate outside the bounds of law and often issue punishments that violate fundamental human rights. Police sources say investigations are ongoing, and further arrests may follow as law enforcement seeks to determine the role of other jirga members in the heinous crime. Authorities have vowed to pursue the case vigorously and ensure that those responsible for this brutal act are brought to justice.

Field Marshal Asim Munir to visit US...

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India's attacks prompted Pakistan to launch Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos after downing six Indian Air Force fighter jets, including three Rafales, in response to Indian unprovoked aggression. The 87-hour-long conflict — which included cross-border strikes by both countries — left 40 civilians and 13 armed forces personnel martyred in Pakistan. The huddle, apart from discussing the then-worsening Iran conflict, also saw COAS praising Trump's "constructive and result-oriented role" in facilitating a ceasefire with India.

Israel helped India in operation Sindoor

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came to an end when US President Donald Trump announced a surprise ceasefire. In a post on X, Netanyahu announced that he met the Indian ambassador to Israel, JP Singh, in Jerusalem today, where the pair "discussed strengthening and expanding cooperation between Israel and India, particularly in the fields of security and economics". "Afterward, I held a meeting with a group of senior journalists from India and answered their questions," the Israeli leader wrote. According to Indian television channel NDTV, Netanyahu confirmed the use of Israeli weapons during India's military operations in May, including the deployment of HAPY drones and the Barak-8 missile, which is jointly developed with India.

Prendergast shines as Pak falter in T20I series opener

Chasing a target of 143, Pakistan faltered in their pursuit and managed only 131 for 9 in 20 overs

DNA

DUBLIN: Ireland's Orla Prendergast delivered a match-winning all-round performance, scoring 29 runs and picking up three wickets to lead Ireland to an 11-run win over Pakistan in the opening T20I of the three-match series at Clontarf Cricket Club on Wednesday. Chasing a target of 143, Pakistan faltered in their pursuit and managed only 131 for 9 in 20 overs, falling short despite a promising effort from the middle order. Natalia Pervaiz top-scored for the visitors with a brisk 39 off 23 balls, while Rameen Shamim chipped in with a 20-ball 27, but the rest of the batting lineup failed to offer sustained resistance.

Besides them, top-order batter Sidra Amin (15), Aliya Riaz and skipper Fatima Sana, 14 each, could amass double figures as the rest were outclassed by a disciplined bowling performance by Ireland.

Prendergast was the pick of the bowlers for Ireland, taking three wickets for just 28 runs, followed by Jane Maguire with two,



while Ava Canning, Cara Murray and Lara McBride made one scalp apiece. Put into bat first, Ireland's batting unit unfolded on a modest 142 in 19.4 overs. The home side got off to a shaky start to their innings as their captain Gaby Lewis

(one) was cleaned up by Pakistan counterpart Sana in the third over with just 18 runs on the board. Following the early stutter, Hunter was joined by Orla Prendergast in the middle, and together they raised an anchoring 45 runs for the second wicket until

the opener eventually fell victim to Nashra Sandhu in the ninth over.

Hunter remained the top-scorer for Ireland with a 30-ball 37, featuring five fours.

Prendergast followed suit two overs later as she was dismissed by Rameen Shamim in the 13th over after scoring 29 off 26 deliveries with the help of three boundaries. Middle-order batter Leah Paul then knitted a one-sided 25-run partnership for the fourth wicket with Laura Delany until getting dismissed by Sadia Iqbal. She scored 29 off 18 deliveries with the help of four fours. Paul's dismissal sparked a match-defining collapse, which saw Ireland lose wickets at an alarming rate until eventually being bowled out on 142 with two balls left. Skipper Fatima Sana was the standout bowler for Pakistan as she picked up four wickets for just 26 runs in her four overs, while Sadia, Nashra, Rameen and Diana Baig made one scalp apiece. The 11-run victory helped Ireland to secure a 1-0 lead in three-match series against Pakistan, while also extending their unbeaten streak to eight games in the shortest format.

Modi says ready to pay heavy price

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farmers even if he has to pay a heavy price for it, in his first comments after US President Donald Trump's salvo of a 50% tariff on Indian goods. Trump announced an additional 25% tariff on the South Asian nation on Thursday, taking the total levy on Indian goods being exported to the US to 50% — among the highest levied on any US trading partner. "For us, our farmers' welfare is supreme," Modi said in a function in New Delhi. "India will never compromise on the well-being of its farmers, dairy sector and fishermen. And I know personally I will have to pay a heavy price for it," he said. Trade talks between India and the United States collapsed after five rounds of negotiations over disagreement on opening India's vast farm and dairy sectors and stopping Russian oil purchases. Modi did not directly refer to the US tariffs or trade talks.

The new tariff, effective from Aug. 28, was to penalise India for its purchase of Russian oil, Trump has said. India's foreign ministry has said the decision was "extremely unfortunate," and that "India will take all necessary steps to protect its national interests." The US is yet to announce any similar tariff for China, which is the biggest buyer of Russian oil. Experts have said China has been spared so far as it has a bargaining chip with the US over its reserves of rare earth minerals and other such commodities, which India lacks. "The US tariff hike lacks logic," Damu Ravi, secretary of economic relations in India's foreign ministry, told reporters.

Trump says likely to meet Putin 'very soon'

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after US envoy Steve Witkoff met Russian leadership in Moscow earlier in the day for talks described by the Kremlin as "productive" — with Trump's deadline looming to impose fresh sanctions over Russia's war in Ukraine. "Great progress was made!" Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform, adding that afterward he had briefed some European allies. "Everyone agrees this War must come to a close, and we will work towards that in the days and weeks to come," he said. Minutes later, however, a senior US official said that "secondary sanctions" were still expected to be implemented in two days' time. Trump, who had boasted he could end the conflict within 24 hours of taking office, has given Russia until Friday to make progress towards peace or face new penalties. Three rounds of Russia-Ukraine talks in Istanbul have failed to make headway on a ceasefire, with the two sides far apart in their demands. Russia has escalated drone and missile attacks against its neighbor, a US and European Union ally, to a record high and accelerated its advance on the ground. "A quite useful and constructive conversation took place," Putin's aide Yuri Ushakov told journalists, including AFP, after the three-hour meeting with Witkoff. The two men exchanged "signals" on their positions, Ushakov said, without elaborating.

Asif says not resigning as defence minister

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had alleged that the minister resigned due to "intensified controversy regarding the arrest of the additional deputy commissioner revenue (ADCR) of Sialkot a few days ago on charges of alleged financial corruption". The rumours spread after Asif said that a large portion of Pakistan's bureaucracy was seeking shelter and citizenship in Portugal with billions in hand. "More than half of the bureaucracy of our dear homeland has already acquired property in Portugal and is preparing to obtain citizenship," Asif said in a post on Tuesday. He added that politicians "eat the leftovers and make a fuss, with neither plots nor foreign citizenship because they have to contest elections".

Osaka books WTA Montreal title clash with Canadian teen Mboko

Mboko saved a match point in a thrilling 1-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7/4) victory over former Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina

MONTREAL: Four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka and Canadian teen sensation Victoria Mboko booked a championship showdown with gritty semi-final wins on Wednesday in the WTA Canadian Open in Montreal.

Japan's Osaka, chasing her first tour-level title since the 2021 Australian Open, saved a pair of set points in the second-set tiebreaker to polish off a 6-2, 7-6 (9/7) victory over Denmark's Clara Tauson — who was coming off victories over Wimbledon champion Iga Swiatek and Australian Open winner Madison Keys.

Mboko saved a match point in a thrilling 1-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7/4) victory over former Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina. The 18-year-old wild card fed off the energy of the crowd, crediting ecstatic supporters with carrying her through after a tumble left her with a sore right wrist in the third set of her first tour-level

semi-final. Mboko, who ousted top-seeded French Open champion Coco Gauff in the fourth round, didn't let it stop her. After going down an early break in the third set she refused to go quietly, loading up on her forehand fending off a match point as she broke Rybakina in the 10th game to level the set. A couple of untimely double faults helped ninth-seeded Rybakina break back for a 6-5 lead, but the ninth seed from Kazakhstan was broken at love in the next game, setting the stage for tiebreaker drama.

"After I had that fall I wasn't in the greatest spirits, but I'm happy that I kept my composure and I was kind of patient in the right moments," said Mboko, who won the last three points of a decider she called "stressful". "Anything can happen," an exhausted Mboko beamed as the crowd's cheers rained down on her. "Unfortunately I fell, but I had everyone

supporting me and pushing me." Mboko started the season ranked outside the top 300 but had worked her way up to 85th coming into the week by grinding away in lower-level tournaments. She is assured of breaking into the top 40 no matter the result against Osaka, a former world number one who has struggled to find consistency since returning from maternity leave in 2024. She has looked re-energized this week after a coaching shakeup and rolled through the first set against Tauson. But Tauson twice regained a break in the second set as she pushed it to the tiebreaker where she had chances to level the match after taking a 6-4 lead. Unable to convert her set points, the Dane saved one match point to make it 7-7, but Osaka won the next two to seal the victory and reach her first final in a WTA 1000 level event since Miami in 2022. — Agencies

Sharjah Cricket Stadium to host international matches

SHARJAH: The Emirates Cricket Board has finished making all the arrangements for a series of international cricket matches featuring the UAE, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. These matches will take place from 29th August to 7th September at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium. This tournament is an opportunity for these teams to prepare for the upcoming Asian Cup, which the UAE will host in September 2025. The event will include some of the best cricket teams from Asia, helping the participating teams gain valuable experience and improve their skills and fitness for the competition ahead. The upcoming Asian Cup is expected to draw a huge crowd, both at the stadiums and through live broadcasts on sports channels, thanks to the popularity of football across Asia. One of the most thrilling parts of the tournament is the traditional rivalry between India and Pakistan. Meanwhile, the UAE is looking to perform well and compete with some of the best teams in Asia, building on its recent improvements in the sport. — APP

Drinking coffee at night may lead to risky behavior

BAKU: A new study from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) has found that caffeine consumed at night can increase impulsive behavior particularly in females. Published in the journal iScience, the research was led by UTEP biologists Erick Saldes, Paul Sabandal, and Professor Kyung-An Han. The team used fruit flies (*Drosophila melanogaster*) to study how caffeine affects behavior. Fruit flies are commonly used in scientific research because of their genetic similarities to humans.

"Caffeine is the most widely used psychoactive substance, with about 85% of adults in the U.S. using it regularly," said Sabandal. "We wanted to see if certain factors like the time of day or sex—change how caffeine affects behavior."

Researchers added caffeine to the flies' diets under various conditions, including different doses, day versus night intake, and sleep deprivation. They then tested impulsivity by seeing how well flies could suppress movement when exposed to strong airflow, something flies normally avoid.

"We found that flies given caffeine at night were less able to stop moving in response to the airflow," said Saldes. "They behaved more recklessly, even when facing unpleasant conditions." Interestingly, caffeine had no such effect when consumed during the day.

The researchers also noted that female flies showed much more impulsive behavior than males, even though both had similar levels of caffeine in their systems. Since flies don't have human hormones like estrogen, scientists believe other biological factors are behind the increased sensitivity in females. Professor Han said understanding these factors may help explain how nighttime caffeine affects people differently based on sex and body rhythms.

The findings could have real-world implications for shift workers, healthcare professionals, and military personnel who often rely on caffeine at night—especially women.

The research was carried out in UTEP's Department of Biological Sciences, where Han's lab studies how the brain controls learning, memory, addiction, and other behaviors. — Agencies

Cricket Talent Hunt Program gains momentum as trials kick off

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to unearth fresh talent, the Prime Minister Youth Program's Cricket Talent Hunt Program is gaining momentum, with trials being held in various cities across Pakistan. The initiative aims to identify and nurture young cricketers talent nationwide, providing a platform for aspiring cricketers to showcase their skills and compete for coveted spots in top-tier teams. In collaboration with Lahore Qalandars, the program will scout for exceptional young cricketers who can represent Pakistan on the international stage.

According to officials, the trials have been conducted in major venues across the country, catering to both male and female categories. The talent hunt promises to inject fresh talent into Pakistan's cricketing landscape, fostering a new generation of cricket stars. Finalists will be included in the Player Development Program, offering training, grooming, and exposure at national and international levels.

This grassroots development initiative is expected to unearth hidden gems and provide them with the necessary support to excel in the sport. With its focus on nurturing young talent, the Prime Minister Youth Program's cricket talent hunt initiative is set to shape the future of Pakistani cricket. By providing opportunities for talented youngsters from diverse backgrounds, the program aims to promote inclusivity and excellence in cricket. As the trials progress, cricket enthusiasts are eagerly awaiting the emergence of new talent that will don the national jersey with pride. — Agencies

Khachanov topples Zverev to book ATP Toronto title clash with Shelton

TORONTO: Karen Khachanov rallied to defeat top seed Alexander Zverev and book an ATP Toronto Masters title clash with Ben Shelton, who beat second seeded Taylor Fritz on Wednesday. Khachanov fought back from 3-1 down in the final-set tiebreaker to beat Zverev 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (7/4). Shelton, seeded fourth, hammered Fritz 6-4, 6-3 in the first All-American Masters 1000 semifinal in 15 years to book the fifth, and most important, ATP final of his career. Russia's Khachanov, seeded 11th, had lost two previous semi-finals in Canada. But he dug deep to advance, saving a match point as he levelled the deciding set at 6-6, with world number three Zverev hammering a backhand into the top tape of the net. The German committed 44 unforced errors in the nearly three-hour defeat while Khachanov had 29 winners and 34 unforced errors.

"I had to work out this match, dig deep and try my best," Khachanov said. "It was very demanding physically and mentally. "We've had a lot of matches and I'm happy to beat him after losing some easy ones," added Khachanov, who fell to Zverev in the Tokyo Olympic singles final. "Today was a tough one - I was match point down.

"I'm just happy things went on my side at the end." Khachanov said it got tense at the end. "When you reach the final tiebreak, you have to play your best. You can't waste time and energy with negative thoughts or you won't succeed. You never know what will happen but you have to give it a try." Khachanov will be playing his first final of the season after semi-final defeats in Barcelona and Halle. Shelton and Fritz had to wait out a brief delay when a problem with the electronic line calling system emerged as they took the court. But that was barely a blip for 22-year-



old Shelton, the world number seven, who had beaten Alex de Minaur in the quarter-finals and with the win over Fritz notched his first back-to-back victories over top 10 opponents. US Open finalist Fritz had to save four break points in the third game of the match and was broken in the ninth game to leave Shelton to serve for the set.

Shelton seized a second break for a 3-2 lead in the second, landing a perfect lob over Fritz's head and held at love for a 5-3 lead. He closed out the masterclass in with another break, Fritz mangling his racquet over his knee after he double faulted on match point.

"I'm happy with my level and how I executed," Shelton said. "I've seen so many big improvements in my game this week. That's what I'm most happy about, how I'm executing, how little I'm hesitating, how I'm returning. "Beating two top 10 guys back-to-back is huge for me. "I felt I had the ball on a string," he added. "I'm excited to play like this, hitting the ball and expecting it to go in." — DNA

Fitness Club Haripur clinches All Pakistan Oyama Challenge Cup

The All Pakistan Oyama Challenge Cup featured the best talent from across the country, and our athletes proved that they have the skills and determination to excel at the highest level," said Amazai Khan

PESHAWAR: Fitness Club Haripur made history at the All Pakistan Oyama Challenge Cup 2025 by delivering an outstanding performance and lifting the championship trophy. The mega event, held in Islamabad, brought together top full-contact karate fighters from across the country, and Fitness Club Haripur emerged as a dominant force.

The club's athletes showcased exceptional skills and determination, securing five gold medals across different weight categories. The medal winners included

Mushtaq Shabab, Zakir Haider, Aman Shah, Isra Khan, and Shahroz, who impressed the audience with their technical ability and fighting spirit.

Dedicating their victories to their coaches, the athletes expressed deep gratitude to Amazai Khan and Irshad Khan for their relentless efforts and guidance, which played a pivotal role in achieving this success.

Speaking to the media, qualified coaches Amazai Khan and Irshad Khan praised their players for their hard work and discipline, highlighting the significance of this

achievement. The All Pakistan Oyama Challenge Cup featured the best talent from across the country, and our athletes proved that they have the skills and determination to excel at the highest level," said Amazai Khan. "At Fitness Club Haripur, our mission is to polish the natural talent of our youth and prepare them for national and international arenas, he added

The coaches also credited Chief of Full Contact Karate Pakistan, Arshad Jan, for his continuous support and encouragement, which has been instrumental in the

club's success. It is because of his backing and the commitment of our team that Fitness Club Haripur continues to deliver outstanding results at every major competition," Amazai Khan remarked.

The Oyama Challenge Cup is regarded as one of the most competitive full-contact karate championships in Pakistan, attracting elite fighters from all over the country. Fitness Club Haripur's remarkable victory is being hailed as a significant achievement for the club and for the entire Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. — Agencies

Briefs

Rupee gains 12 paise against US Dollar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Thursday appreciated by 12 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 282.55 against the previous day's closing Rs 282.67. 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 and Rs 285, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs 3.15 to close at Rs 330.31 against the last day's closing of Rs 327.16, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen gained 01 paise and closed at Rs 1.92, whereas an increase of Rs 2.44 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 377.99 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 375.55.

Gold price ups by Rs2,900 per tola

ISLAMABAD, Aug 7 (AP-P): The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed an increase of Rs2,900 on Thursday and was sold at Rs362,200 against its sale at Rs359,300 on the previous trading day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also increased by Rs 2,487 to Rs,310,528 from Rs 308,041 whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 Karat went up by 2,280 to Rs 284,661 from Rs 282,381. The rates of per tola and ten gram silver increased by Rs49 and Rs42 to Rs4,059 and Rs 3,479 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$29 to \$3,395 from \$3,366 whereas silver increased \$0.49 to \$38.26 against \$37.77, the Association reported. – APP

Investor protection as key to eco stability

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Thursday said reviving investor confidence is essential to achieving sustainable economic stability. Chairing a meeting of the sub-committees on Investment Protection and Repatriation of Investment, he highlighted the importance of creating a secure and attractive environment for both local and foreign investors, said a news release. "We must provide strong legal and institutional protection to investors in order to encourage investment in Pakistan," he said. These efforts reflect the government's continued commitment to facilitating economic growth and building investor trust through legislative and policy reforms. The sub-committees put forward several key proposals, including amendments to the Income Tax Ordinance 2001, reforms in the Protection of Economic Reforms Act, 1992, and revisions to the General Clauses Act, 1897. The meeting was attended by the PM Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal, representatives from various Chambers of Commerce, and other key stakeholders. – APP

Indonesia, New Zealand sign MoU to boost agri trade

JAKARTA: Indonesian Minister of Agriculture Andi Amran Sulaiman and New Zealand's Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Trade and Investment Todd McClay signed a memorandum of understanding here on Thursday to strengthen bilateral trade in agricultural commodities. "This collaboration is highly strategic amid the current global trade situation, which is full of challenges and uncertainty," said Sulaiman. The minister added that Indonesia has offered key export commodities to its southern neighbor, including crude palm oil, rubber, cocoa, and coffee, emphasizing that the partnership represents a mutually beneficial step forward, especially in light of increasingly complex and uncertain global trade and economic conditions. – APP

OGRA conducts seminar on lube oil sector in Pakistan

The audience included OGRA licensees for Lube, Blending, Reclamation, Grease / Transformer Oil Plants

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) conducted Seminar in Karachi on Lube Oil Sector in Pakistan to enhance awareness regarding Blending/Reclamation process, base oil, HSE & Waste Disposal with a vision to build relationship with Pakistan Lubricant manufacturing sector and to share latest techniques. The event was graced with participation of OGRA Authority members who delivered their thoughts with audience and some industry experts were also invited to deliver their presentations. The audience included OGRA licensees for Lube, Blending, Reclamation, Grease / Transformer Oil Plants. Mr. Masroor Khan, Chairman OGRA participated through zoom link and highlighted the importance of innovation in industry and informed that OGRA is focusing on Safety and Dig-



itization of the sector. Mr. Zain ul Abideen Qureshi, Member (Oil) appreciat-

ed the initiative of OGRA team and welcomed all the participants and said that

the seminar is based on awareness about regulatory regime regarding Lube Oil

Sector and encouraged the stakeholders to bring productivity and

efficiency with innovation in the sector. The industry sector experts included Mr. Shahbaz Ali, DGM (Operations), National Refinery Limited, Mr. Kunwar Mubeen Ahmad, "Lubricant Expert", Syed Ehsan Shahrukh, Manager Industrial Sites, Safety & Hygiene, Parco Gunvor Limited (Formerly Total Parco Pakistan Limited), Mr. Muhammad Sajid, General Manager (Karachi-Operations), Hydrocarbon Development of Pakistan and Dr. Mohsina Zubair Director (Lab/NEQS), Pakistan Environment Protection Authority (Pak-EPA) who delivered their presentations on different topics. The topics included the brief overview of conventional blending methods and modern blending technologies with current reclamation systems and Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) in Lube Blending plants with Role of Hydrocarbon Institute of Pakistan (HDIP).

Switzerland to hold 'extraordinary meeting' on US tariffs

GENEVA: Switzerland will hold an extraordinary meeting Thursday after top officials failed to convince the government of US President Donald Trump in Washington not to impose 39 percent tariffs on Swiss goods. The rate is one of the highest imposed on countries trading with the United States and jeopardises entire sectors of the export-heavy Swiss economy, notably watchmaking and industrial machinery, but also chocolate and cheese. "Tariffs: After its delegation returns from the USA, the Federal Council will hold an extraordinary meeting in the early afternoon. A statement will follow after the meeting," the government posted on X. Swiss President Karin Keller-Sutter and Economy Minister Guy Parmelin had gone to the United States but were only able to meet US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and not Trump. After the meeting on Wednesday, Keller-Sutter spoke only of "a very friendly and open exchange on common issues." Switzerland has been hit particularly hard by the new US tariffs on products from dozens of economies, which came into effect Thursday. Competitors of Swiss companies in the EU will only see their products taxed at 15 percent, and those from the United Kingdom at just 10 percent. The wave of US tariffs taking effect Thursday does not cover sectors that are being separately targeted by US investigations, such as pharmaceuticals, a key sector for Switzerland. This threatens tens of thousands of jobs in the Alpine country. Trump justified his action – which took Swiss authorities by complete surprise – by the fact that Switzerland has a trade surplus of several tens of billions of dollars with the United States. – Agencies

Third-hottest July on record wreaks climate havoc

PARIS: The third-hottest July worldwide ended a string of record-breaking temperatures, but many regions were devastated by extreme weather amplified by global warming, the European climate monitoring service said Thursday. Heavy rains flooded Pakistan and northern China; Canada, Scotland and Greece struggled to tame wildfires intensified by persistent drought; and many nations in Asia and Scandinavia recorded new average highs for the month. "Two years after the hottest July on record, the recent streak of global temperature records is over," Carlo Buono-



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan meets AFSGTA delegation, assures full government support for boosting Pakistan's gems and jewelry exports. – DNA

Qureshi underscores Pakistan and Qatar economic relationship

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), has underscored the importance of forging stronger economic ties between Pakistan and Qatar, with a particular focus on enhancing bilateral trade, encouraging joint investments, and leveraging private sector cooperation to foster sustainable commercial growth. He made these remarks during an exclusive interview here in Islamabad, following the recent successful conclusion of the Pakistan-Qatar Business Expo 2025 in Doha. The landmark event was organized under the banner of ICCI and witnessed the robust participation of ICCI

Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, Executive Members of the Chamber, and a large delegation of prominent business leaders from diverse sectors. President Qureshi praised the time-tested, fraternal relations between Pakistan and Qatar, especially in the economic domain, and noted that the bilateral trade volume stood at an impressive QR 12.7 billion in 2024. He described this figure as a clear indicator of the deepening economic engagement and emphasized the vast potential for further expanding these ties. To a question, the ICCI President highlighted the critical role of the private sector in driving regional and international cooper-

ation. He urged entrepreneurs and investors on both sides to capitalize on emerging opportunities and build strategic partnerships in key areas including energy, infrastructure, manufacturing, and services. Commenting on Qatar's dynamic business landscape, he cited the country's modern infrastructure, investor-friendly environment, and stable regulatory frameworks as compelling reasons for Pakistani businesses to explore joint ventures and investment projects in the Qatari market. Calling the Expo a "testament to ICCI's unwavering commitment to trade diplomacy," President Qureshi reaffirmed the Chamber's resolve to promote foreign direct investment and foster long-term commercial

collaboration with the Gulf region in the best economic interests of the country. He emphasized that ICCI is actively working to establish institutional linkages aimed at facilitating future joint ventures and sustained economic engagement with friendly nations. He described the Expo as a resounding success, drawing widespread acclaim from stakeholders on both sides for its role in enhancing business-to-business and people-to-people connectivity. The strong presence of key Pakistani and Qatari business leaders, he noted, not only demonstrated the mutual interest in expanding trade but also highlighted ICCI's role as a catalyst for regional economic integration.

UAE participates in commemoration of 78th anniversary of Pak's IDay

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates participates in the commemoration of the 78th anniversary of Pakistan's Independence Day through a public event at the Dubai Exhibition Centre in Expo City Dubai, scheduled for August 10. The event will be attended by Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, alongside Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the UAE, with the presence of diplomats, economic representatives, and notable social figures from the Pakistani community in the country. This event, organised by "Emirates Loves Pakistan" – a platform dedicated to sharing inspiring content that highlights the success stories and contributions of the Pakistani community in the UAE, in collaboration with the Pakistan Association in Dubai, with support from Dubai Police, is intended to facilitate the participation of the Pakistani community in the UAE in marking their national Independence Day. The occasion will feature activities reflecting the cultural heritage, arts, and folklore of Pakistan, as well as acknowledging the historical relations and diplomatic ties between the two nations. The program includes events to highlight Pakistan's traditions, the contributions of the Pakistani community to the UAE's sustainable development, and a recognition of their achievements. The event, expected to draw approximately 60,000 attendees, will include a ceremony to acknowledge distinguished members of the Pakistani community in the UAE, accompanied by cultural performances, artistic exhibitions, musical presentations, and traditional folklore activities. These are designed to represent the diversity of Pakistani culture and cater to a broad audience. – APP

UAE President arrives in Moscow

DUBAI: UAE President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan arrived in Moscow on Thursday for an official visit to the Russian Federation. As the President's plane entered Russian airspace, it was greeted and escorted by Russian military jets. An official reception was held at Vnukovo Airport, where the national anthems of the UAE and Russia were played. An honor guard was present as Sheikh Mohamed was greeted by senior Russian officials. Sheikh Mohamed is accompanied by a high-level delegation that includes a number of senior UAE officials. – APP

Qatar, UK urge immediate ceasefire in Gaza

DUBAI: Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim Al-Thani and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer stressed the urgent need for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza during a phone call on Wednesday, according to Qatar News Agency. They also called for the swift delivery of humanitarian aid to the besieged Strip. Both leaders voiced concern over the worsening situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. They emphasized the importance of protecting civilians and addressing the humanitarian crisis. The call also touched on bilateral relations. Sheikh Tamim and Starmer discussed ways to strengthen cooperation between Qatar and the United Kingdom across various sectors. – Agencies

Jordan evacuates 83 citizens from Syria's Sweida

DUBAI: The Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates announced on Wednesday the evacuation of 83 Jordanian citizens Swede governorate in southern Syria, state news agencies Petra and SANA reported. The evacuees were transported via Syrian Red Crescent buses and entered Jordan through the Nassib/Jaber border crossing, in coordination with the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates. The operation was part of joint efforts between Jordanian national institutions and Syrian authorities to ensure the safety and timely return of Jordanian nationals, Jordanian ministry spokesperson, Sufian Qudah, said. Jordan also facilitated the evacuation of 112 people from Sweida last week. – Agencies

Germany to extend border controls in migration crackdown

BERLIN: Germany will push on with temporary border controls beyond a September deadline as it cracks down on irregular immigration, Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt said Thursday. Berlin also plans to deport more rejected asylum seekers with criminal records to Taliban-run Afghanistan and to war-scarred Syria, Dobrindt said in a podcast with media outlet Table.Today. Germany's conservative Chancellor Friedrich Merz has vowed a tough crackdown on irregular immigration, saying this is the only way to stem rising support for the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party. A spate of deadly attacks blamed on asylum seekers and other foreign nationals fueled public fears during the campaign for the February election, in which the AfD scored a record 20 percent. "We will continue to maintain the border controls" beyond the September 15 deadline, Dobrindt said about the measures first launched last year under the previous government of Olaf Scholz and extended by six months in March. "We are in agreement with our European partners that this is a necessary measure until the (EU) external border protection system is fully operational," he said. Members of Europe's Schengen area are allowed to temporarily reintroduce border controls for up to two years in response to serious threats such as terrorism or large-scale unauthorized migration. – Agencies

UK pensioner, student held for backing Palestine action

Palestine Action was proscribed as a terrorist group in the UK after activists broke into a Royal Air Force base at Brize Norton in England in June this year, causing £7 million (\$9.38 million) of damage to two military aircraft

LONDON: Pensioner Marji Mansfield never imagined she would end up suspected of terrorism for protesting against the banning of a pro-Palestinian group. But the British grandmother was arrested on July 5 for joining a demonstration in support of Palestine Action just days after it was added to the UK government's list of proscribed organisations. "It's a terrible shock to be accused of potentially being a terrorist," said Mansfield, 68, who described herself as a "proud grandmother" of seven. She "was never politically interested," the former banking consultant from the southern town of Chichester told AFP. "I just worked hard, raised my family, lived an ordinary life." In early July, the UK government

banned Palestine Action under the UK's Terrorism Act, after activists broke into an air force base in England and damaged two aircraft. Since then, the campaign group Defend Our Juries has organised protests around the country to challenge the ban, described as "disproportionate" by the United Nations rights chief. More than 200 people have been arrested, according to Tim Crosland, a member of Defend Our Juries. They risk prison sentences of up to 14 years. A new demonstration in support of the group, which was founded in 2020, is planned on Saturday in London. Organisers expect at least 500 people to turn up, and police have warned all demonstrators

could face arrest. People "don't know what the nature of this group is," interior minister Yvette Cooper has said, claiming that "this is not a non-violent group". But Palestine Action co-founder Huda Ammori has launched a court bid to overturn the ban and a hearing is set for November. Some 52 scholars, including well-known authors Tariq Ali and Naomi Klein, backed the bid in an open letter published in Thursday's Guardian, calling the ban an attack on "fundamental freedoms of expression, association, assembly and protest." Jeremy Shipman, 71, Judit Murray, 71, and Fiona Maclean, 53, were charged under section 13 of the Terrorism Act 2000. They will appear at

Westminster Magistrates Court on Sept. 16. Palestine Action was proscribed as a terrorist group in the UK after activists broke into a Royal Air Force base at Brize Norton in England in June this year, causing £7 million (\$9.38 million) of damage to two military aircraft. Support for or membership of a banned group in the UK is a criminal offense punishable by up to 14 years in prison. Despite the ban, the group is challenging its terrorism designation after the High Court ruled on July 30 it should be reviewed. Around 500 people, meanwhile, are set to attend a demonstration in support of Palestine Action in London on Saturday. It follows previous demonstrations after the group's proscrip-

tion in London, Manchester and several other major UK cities, at which more than 200 people were arrested. The group Defend Our Juries, which is helping to organize the protest, said attendees would hold placards reading "I oppose genocide, I support Palestine Action." A spokesperson for Defend Our Juries said: "Defend Our Juries has confirmed that 500-plus people have committed to holding 'I oppose genocide, I support Palestine Action' signs on Saturday in central London, as part of the Lift the Ban campaign, to end the proscription of Palestine Action. "Since the threshold for the conditional commitment requirement has been reached, the action will go ahead as planned." – Agencies

Briefs

PSX crosses 146,000 threshold as investor optimism holds firm

KSE-100 Index climbs to intraday high of 146,081.02 points, gaining 992.53 points, or 0.68%

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The stock market continued its upward momentum on Thursday, with session gains driven by investor confidence in improving macroeconomic fundamentals and strong corporate earnings. The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index climbed to an intraday high of 146,081.02 points, gaining 992.53 points, or 0.68%, while touching a low of 145,250.17 points, up 161.68 points, or 0.11%, from the previous close of 145,088.49. "Continued optimism for improving macros and improving corporate results are driving sentiment," said Ahfaz Mustafa, CEO of Ismail Iqbal Securities.

In the fixed income market, the government raised Rs370 billion through the auction of market Treasury bills (T-bills) on Wednesday – below the target of Rs400 billion and against maturities worth Rs544 billion. The auction saw yields rise between five to 30 basis points (bps) across all tenors, signalling investor caution following the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) recent decision to hold interest rates steady. The cut-off yield for the one-month T-bill rose 5bps to 10.8996%, while the three-month paper increased by 15bps to 10.8502%. The six-month T-bill yield stood at 10.8739%, up 17bps from the previous auction.

Pak will not suffer \$1bn loss due to US tariff: minister tells NA

Reduction in tariff will lead to increase in the sales of Pakistani products in US market, NA told

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will not suffer a loss of \$1 billion due to the imposition of 19% tariff by the United States, Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan informed the National Assembly on Thursday. In his response submitted to the lower house of parliament, the commerce minister said the US has slashed the tariff on Pakistani goods from 29% to 19%. The reduction in tariff will lead to increase in the sales of Pakistani products in the US market and likely to boost Pakistan's textile exports, he maintained. The response came as Trump's higher tariff rates of 10% to 50% on dozens of trading partners including Pakistan kicked in on Thursday, testing his strategy for shrinking US trade deficits without massive disruptions to global supply chains, higher inflation and stiff retaliation from trading partners.

Pak, Malaysia ties from cordial to excellent: Atta

The Ambassador also underscored the positive impact of the MTCP, which has benefited more than 37,000 participants from 144 countries since its inception in 1980, including over 800 Pakistani professionals across diverse sectors



SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The High Commission of Malaysia in Islamabad successfully hosted the 3C Forum: Culture, Cuisines & Connections on Wednesday, 6 August 2025, as part of its ongoing efforts to foster people-to-people ties and promote cultural diplomacy between Malaysia and Pakistan. The event was graced by Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting of Pakistan, and officiated by Ambassador Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan. The forum brought together a diverse and distinguished gathering of Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) alumni, graduates of Malaysian universities, senior government officials, media professionals, members of academia, and heads of diplomatic missions, including representatives from ASEAN countries. In his keynote address, Ambassador Dato' Azhar Mazlan highlighted the strategic importance of alumni networks in shaping long-term partnerships in diplomacy, education, and development. He reaffirmed Malaysia's commitment to being a centre of excellence in higher education and technical training, emphasizing Malaysia's global standing in key sectors such as Islamic finance, halal industry, aerospace, and semiconductors. The Ambassador also un-

derscored the positive impact of the MTCP, which has benefited more than 37,000 participants from 144 countries since its inception in 1980, including over 800 Pakistani professionals across diverse sectors.

Federal Minister Attaullah Tarar reflected on his personal visit to Malaysia, praising the country's vibrant culture, hospitality, and development. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further enhancing bilateral cooperation in the areas of trade, education, tourism, and technology. He also referenced the fruitful Official Visit of Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim to Pakistan in October 2024, and expressed optimism for the upcoming Official Visit of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to Malaysia later this year. Minister Tarar highlighted the need to utilize platforms like the MTCP and alumni networks to transform shared goodwill into meaningful and practical collaboration, particularly in areas like TVET, digital economy, and high-tech partnerships.

A key feature of the forum was a panel discussion with MTCP alumni and Malaysian university graduates, who shared their experiences in Malaysia and the ways in which they are now contributing to Pakistan's development. The interactive Q&A session fostered vibrant discussion and exchange of ideas among participants. The event concluded with a networking high tea, featuring a selection of authentic



Malaysian cuisine, creating a warm atmosphere for dialogue and future collaboration. The 3C Forum served as a vital platform to deepen cultural exchange, expand alum-

ni engagement, and further strengthen the enduring friendship between Malaysia and Pakistan through the shared values of culture, education, and connection.

UN chief calls for eradication of nuclear weapons for world peace

The world changed forever 80 years ago this Wednesday when the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima during the Second World War

UNITED NATIONS: With the risk of nuclear conflict growing, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said that the organization remains committed to a world free of atomic weapons. "Let's work to eradicate the threat of nuclear weapons by eradicating the weapons themselves," the UN chief said in a message, delivered by Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu, to the Peace Memorial ceremony on the eightieth anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, in Japan, on Wednesday.

"Trust is eroding. Geopolitical divisions are widening. And the very weapons that brought such devastation to Hiroshima and Nagasaki are once again being treated as tools of coercion," he said. "Yet," he added, "there are signs of hope." Last year, the Japanese organization Nihon Hidankyo – which represents the survivors of the Nagasaki and Hiroshima bombings – was awarded the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize for its tireless work in raising awareness about this critical issue, it was pointed out.

"And in the Pact for the Future, adopted last year, countries recommitted to a world free of nuclear weapons,"

the secretary-general added. The world changed forever 80 years ago this Wednesday when the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima during the Second World War. While the city has been rebuilt, nuclear conflict remains a global threat, Ms. Nakamitsu said in remarks, on behalf of the UN chief, at the Peace Memorial building. It was the only structure left standing near the hypocentre of the bomb, which marked the first use of an atomic weapon in war. Survivors, family members and representatives from international organizations and 120 countries were among the approximately 55,000 people who attended the ceremony, according to the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. "On this 80th anniversary, we remember those who perished. We stand with the families who carry their memory," Guterres said. He paid tribute to the hibakusha – the term for those who survived Hiroshima and the atomic bombing of Nagasaki three days later – "whose voices have become a moral force for peace." "While their numbers grow smaller each year, their testimony – and their eternal message of peace – will never leave us," he said. – Agencies

Non-state actors should not get WMD

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has called for a non-discriminatory, objective, and criteria-based approach to support efforts aimed at effectively preventing non-State actors from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD). "Instead of advancing political objectives masked as non-proliferation concerns – on a selective basis – efforts should focus on collective interests to promote global and regional strategic stability," Pakistani delegate Syed Atif Raza told the UN Security Council on Wednesday. "Non-proliferation is a shared global objective; it must be promoted within the framework of the principles of the UN Charter," Raza, a counsellor at the Pakistan Mission to the UN, said at a briefing on the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), which monitors and supports efforts aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons (WMD) and their means of delivery to non-state actors. Pakistan attaches the highest importance to global non-proliferation norms and the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 1540, he said, pointing out that it had implemented its obligations under that resolution and established a robust command and control system; a rigorous mechanism to regulate the transfer of sensitive goods and technologies and to ensure their safety and security at all stages; and a export control regime at par with the highest international standards.

Two Ghana ministers killed in helicopter crash

ACCRA: Ghana's defence and environment ministers were killed in a military helicopter crash Wednesday, the presidency said, after the air force chopper carrying three crew and five passengers came down in a forest in the south.

Television station Joy News broadcast cell phone footage from the crash scene showing smouldering wreckage in a heavily forested area earlier in the day, before it was revealed that ministers Edward Omane Boamah and Ibrahim Murtala Muhammad were among the dead.

Boamah became President John Mahama's defence minister shortly after Mahama's swearing-in in January. Muhammed, 50, was serving as the minister of environment, science and technology. He had been scheduled to attend the UN talks currently underway in Geneva aimed at hammering out a landmark global treaty on combating the scourge of plastic pollution. Ghanaian media reported that the helicopter was on its way to an event on illegal mining – a major environmental issue in the west African country. Everyone on board was killed in the accident in the southern Ashanti region, authorities said. – Agencies

Higher US tariffs take effect on dozens of economies

WASHINGTON: Higher US tariffs came into effect for dozens of economies Thursday, drastically raising the stakes in President Donald Trump's wide-ranging efforts to reshape global trade. As an executive order signed last week by Trump took effect, US duties rose from 10 percent to levels between 15 percent and 41 percent for a list of trading partners. Many products from economies like the European Union, Japan and South Korea now face a 15-percent tariff, even with deals struck with Washington to avert steeper threatened levies. But others like India face a 25-percent duty – to be doubled in three weeks – while Syria, Myanmar and Laos face staggering levels at either 40 percent or 41 percent. The latest tariff wave of "reciprocal" duties, aimed at addressing trade practices Washington deems unfair, broadens the measures Trump has imposed since returning to the presidency. But these higher tariffs do not apply to sector-specific imports that are separately targeted, such as steel, autos, pharmaceuticals and chips.

Trump said Wednesday he planned a 100-percent tariff on semiconductors – though Taipei said chipmaking giant TSMC would be exempt as it has US factories. Even so, companies and industry groups warn that the new levies will severely hurt smaller American businesses. Economists caution that they could fuel inflation and weigh on growth in the longer haul. While some experts argue that the effects on prices will be one-off, others believe the jury is still out. – Agencies

Naval Chief Admiral Naveed Ashraf undertakes official visit to Azerbaijan

Upon his arrival at the Azerbaijan Naval Forces Headquarters, Admiral Naveed Ashraf was presented with a Guard of Honour



RAWALPINDI: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf is on an official visit to Azerbaijan, where he held important meetings with the top military leadership to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation. Upon his arrival at the Azerbaijan Naval Forces

Headquarters, Admiral Naveed Ashraf was presented with a Guard of Honour. During his visit, the Naval Chief met with Commander of the Azerbaijan Naval Forces, First Grade Captain Shahin Mammadov.

The two sides held detailed discussions on matters of mutual interest, including bilateral naval cooperation and regional maritime security. Admiral Ashraf emphasized the importance of strengthening ties between the two naval forces through joint exercises and training exchange programmes. The Naval Chief was also given a comprehensive briefing on the operational readiness, training, and ongoing activities of the Azerbaijan Navy. Additionally, he witnessed a live demonstration by the Azerbaijan Navy's Special Operations Forces, showcasing their tactical capabilities and preparedness.

Admiral Naveed Ashraf also called on the Chief of the General Staff of the Azerbaijan Army, Colonel General Karim Valiyev. The meeting focused on issues of mutual interest and opportunities for enhanced military collaboration. The visit by the Chief of the Naval Staff is expected to further solidify defence relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, particularly in the maritime domain. – Agencies

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