



# Islamabad POST

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**ASEAN-Pakistan enjoy excellent relations, says Ambassador of Nyanmar**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Let us cherish our traditions, Amb. Chandra**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Bruce new US deputy rep to UN**

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**Field Marshal says**

## Pak diaspora key to country's bright future

In Tampa, the COAS attended the retirement ceremony of outgoing Commander United States Central Command (Centcom), General Michael E Kurilla, and the Change of Command Ceremony marking the assumption of command by Admiral Brad Cooper

DNA / NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir engaged in high-level interactions with senior political and military leadership during his official visit to the United States, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement on Sunday. According to the military's media wing, COAS Munir is in the US on an official visit where he also met members of the Pakistani diaspora. In Tampa, the COAS attended the retirement ceremony of outgoing Commander United States Central Command (Centcom), General Michael E Kurilla, and the Change of Command Ceremony marking the assumption of command by Admiral Brad Cooper, the press release read. "[The] COAS lauded General Kurilla's exemplary leadership and his invaluable contributions to strengthening bilateral military cooperation, and extended his best wishes to Admiral Cooper, expressing confidence in continued collaboration to address shared security challenges," the statement added. The army chief also met Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dan Caine, where matters of mutual professional interest were discussed. Field Marshal invited General Caine to visit Pakistan, the military's media wing said. On the sidelines, COAS Munir also interacted with chiefs of defence from friendly nations. During an interactive session with the Pakistani diaspora, the COAS urged them to remain confident in Pakistan's bright future and to actively

contribute to attracting investments. The visit follows an earlier official trip to the United States in June, during which Field Marshal Munir met President Donald Trump over a luncheon. During the meeting, which extended to over two hours, both sides also discussed avenues for expanding bilateral cooperation in multiple domains, including trade, economic development, mines and minerals, artificial intelligence, energy, cryptocurrency, and emerging technologies. Following the army chief's visit, Pakistan and Washington have since then reached a much-awaited trade agreement as well. The trade deal was confirmed by Trump himself who took to social media, saying that the two countries will "work together on developing their massive oil reserves" and were currently "in the process of choosing the oil company" which will be leading this partnership. President Asif Ali Zardari, back in July, conferred the Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) upon Centcom commander Gen Kurilla in recognition of his exceptional services for regional peace and efforts to bolster Pakistan-US defence cooperation. During his visit, General Kurilla held detailed meetings with senior Pakistani civil and military leadership, including President Zardari and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir. The discussions encompassed regional security, military-to-military engagement, and joint efforts to combat terrorism and emerging transnational threats.



WASHINGTON: Field Marshal Asim Munir posing for a picture with the outgoing Commander United States Central Command (Centcom), General Michael E Kurilla, and the incoming Commander Admiral Brad Cooper. – DNA

### Islamabad Airport not being closed for 8 days

According to the NOTAMs issued, due to air activities ahead of Independence Day on August 14, arrival and departure flights will be suspended for only two hours

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) on Sunday dismissed "incorrect and misleading" media reports about an eight-day closure of Islamabad International Airport, clarifying the exact date and time of the planned shutdown. A statement issued by PAA Spokesperson Saifullah Khan said, "According to the NOTAMs issued, due to air activities ahead of Independence Day on August 14, arrival and departure flights will be suspended for

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### Dar, Turkish FM discuss bilateral ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar spoke with Foreign Minister of Türkiye Hakan Fidan, and both leaders reviewed Pak-Türkiye bilateral cooperation and exchanged views on current regional and international developments. "They also expressed grave concerns at the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. The DPM/FM condemned the Israeli plan for a complete military takeover, calling it a flagrant violation of

Continued on Page 06

**Landmark deal**

## Azerbaijan, US forge strategic partnership

A significant development during the visit was the US President's signing of an Executive Order extending the waiver of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act

DNA

BAKU: The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, paid an official visit to the United States of America on July 7-8, 2025, marking a new chapter in bilateral relations. During the visit, the Presidents of both countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding between

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the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the United States of America regarding the establishment of a Strategic Working Group to develop a Charter on Strategic Partnership. The initiative aims to elevate Azerbaijan-U.S. relations to the level of a strategic partnership.

## PTI: lawyers' movement against likely 27th Amend.

Current system to govern country neither legal, constitutional, nor democratic, alleges former NA speaker

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser has announced the launch of a lawyers' movement against the anticipated 27th Constitutional Amendment, calling it a major threat to democratic norms. The potential 27th Amendment came into discussions, again, despite the federal government categorically rejecting the enactment of the new constitutional tweaks last month, which were rumoured to be about provincial rights. "The PTI will also consult lawyers on the 26th Amendment," said Qaiser, ad-

Under the agreement, a Strategic Working Group will be formed to develop the Charter within six months. The focus will be on key areas of mutual interest, including regional connectivity—covering energy, trade, and transit—economic investment, artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure, defense, security, and counterterrorism. The initiative is seen as a major step toward institutionalizing practical cooperation between the two nations. A significant development during the visit was the U.S. President's signing of an Executive Order extending the waiver of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act. This amendment, long viewed as a negative legacy in bilateral ties, was lifted during President Aliyev's visit, underscoring

Continued on Page 06

addressing a press conference flanked by opposition alliance Tehreek Tahafuz Ayeen-e-Pakistan (TTAP) head Mahmood Khan Achakzai and former Sindh governor Muhammad Zubair Umar on Sunday. It is noteworthy to mention here that the Imran Khan-founded party strongly opposed the 26th constitutional tweak and staged a walkout during the voting on the amendment bill in the marathon session of the National Assembly, which passed it in October last year. He alleged that the current system to govern the country is neither legal, constitutional, nor democratic. Qaiser said that the opposition alliance

Continued on Page 06

### Briefs

#### Iran launches direct flights from Quetta

DNA

QUETTA: Iran Air has launched its inaugural direct flight between Quetta, Zahedan and Mashhad, marking the first scheduled commercial air service between the "historic cities". In a statement, Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran Mohammad Mudassir Tipu, welcomed the launch of flights, saying that it was a long-standing demand of people in the region. "I am absolutely delighted that Iran Air has started direct Quetta-Zahedan-Mashhad flights, linking three historic cities with enormous potential. These new operations will boost business, tourism, and people-to-people ties," he said.

#### Jaffer express train derails

Officials confirmed that no passengers or crew members were injured

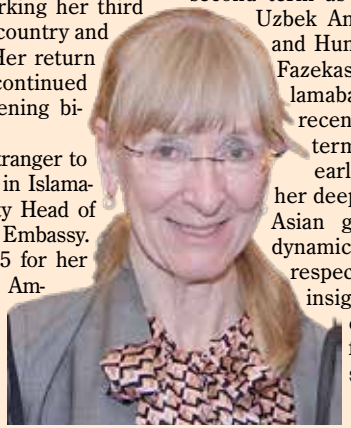
ISLAMABAD: Six bogies of the Jaffer Express train derailed following a blast near Spezand station in Quetta city, but fortunately, no injuries or deaths have been reported so far. According to railway officials, the Jaffer Express was traveling from Quetta to Peshawar at 9 o'clock when the blast occurred near Spezand station. The explosion caused four bogies to fully derail, while two others sustained damage to their wheels, private news channel reported. Despite the extent of the damage, officials confirmed that no passengers or crew members were injured in the incident. Investigations are ongoing to determine the cause of the blast and ensure the safety of future train operations along this route.

## Rare diplomatic move Ina Lepel returns to Pak as German ambassador

Ambassador Lepel is no stranger to Pakistan. She first served in Islamabad in 2007 as the Deputy Head of Mission at the German Embassy. She then returned in 2015 for her first tenure as Germany's Ambassador to Pakistan, a position she held until 2019

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ina Lepel has arrived in Pakistan to assume her responsibilities as the new Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany – marking her third diplomatic posting in the country and second as Ambassador. Her return underlines Germany's continued commitment to strengthening bilateral ties with Pakistan. Ambassador Lepel is no stranger to Pakistan. She first served in Islamabad in 2007 as the Deputy Head of Mission at the German Embassy. She then returned in 2015 for her first tenure as Germany's Ambassador to Pakistan, a position she held until 2019. Now, in 2025, she begins a rare second ambassadorial posting in Islamabad, mak-



ing her one of the few diplomats to serve twice in the same capacity in Pakistan. With this latest appointment, Ambassador Lepel becomes the third envoy in the past three decades to return to Pakistan for a second term as ambassador. Previously, Uzbek Ambassador Arif Osmanov and Hungarian Ambassador Bela Fazekas also served twice in Islamabad. Ambassador Fazekas recently completed his second term and departed Pakistan earlier this year. Known for her deep understanding of South Asian geopolitics and regional dynamics, Ina Lepel is widely respected for her diplomatic insight and people-to-people engagement skills. Her familiarity with Pakistan and experience in

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## Rwanda seeks deeper collaboration with Pak: Amb. Fatou

EXCLUSIVE

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The High Commissioner of Rwanda to Pakistan, Ms. Fatou Harerimana, has outlined an ambitious vision for strengthening Rwanda-Pakistan relations following the recent opening of the Rwandan Embassy in Islamabad. Speaking with Daily Islamabad Post, CENTRELINE magazine, and the Diplomatic News Agency, she highlighted the vast scope of cooperation possible between the two countries and reaffirmed her commitment to building a robust bilateral partnership. Ambassador Harerimana described the opening of the embassy as a significant milestone in Rwanda's foreign policy, reflecting her country's vision to create pathways for Rwandans as well as visitors and investors from across the globe. She noted that Pakistan is a nation with strong potential and a long-standing friendship with Rwanda, both bilaterally and in multilateral forums. Looking ahead, the High Commissioner envisages deeper cooperation in sectors such as education, infrastructure, sports, information technology, artificial intelligence, gender equality, agriculture, tourism, and cultural exchange.

She also emphasized opportunities for collaboration in governance and institutional development, sharing Rwanda's experiences under its national development frameworks from Vision 2020 to Vision 2050. These frameworks aim to transition Rwanda to an upper-middle-income country by 2035 and a high-income country by 2050, focusing on inclusive and sustainable growth while ensuring a high quality of life for all citizens. Ambassador Harerimana pointed to Rwanda's innovative programs as models for

exchange, including the "Visit Rwanda" tourism initiative, the community work program Umuganda, and the cultural education platform Itorero. She also mentioned youth-led projects such as the Youth Volunteer Program and women-led initiatives like kitchen gardens that contribute to food security at the grassroots level.

While she considers all sectors as potential priorities for cooperation, she acknowledged that specific focus areas may depend on engagement with various investors and government part-

ners. She confirmed that several proposed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) between Rwanda and Pakistan are ready to be signed, and she invited Pakistani investors to explore opportunities in Rwanda. These include tax exemptions for IT and machinery, reduced utility tariffs for large factories, and streamlined land acquisition processes. Cultural diplomacy, she said, plays a vital role in building understanding between nations. Citing the example of an exhibition in Lahore in February 2025—

where Pakistanis living in Rwanda who had learned Kinyarwanda acted as interpreters—she noted how such exchanges foster mutual respect and connection.

As Rwanda's first resident High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ambassador Harerimana views her mission as building strong and friendly relations with the people and government of Pakistan while paving the way for deeper sectoral cooperation. She expressed gratitude for the warm welcome she received upon her arrival, describing Pakistan as a developed, clean country with hospitable people. Addressing youth in both countries, she urged them to seize opportunities in their homelands and remain focused on building a better future. To entrepreneurs, she extended an open invitation to visit Rwanda, highlighting its stable, business-friendly environment and its strategic position as a gateway to East African and wider global markets. Likewise, she encouraged Rwandan entrepreneurs to explore the many opportunities Pakistan offers. Finally, Ambassador Harerimana called on policymakers in both countries to work towards facilitating the free movement of people, removing existing barriers, and boosting trade opportunities, thereby creating a stronger, mutually beneficial Rwanda-Pakistan relationship.





## Briefs

## Parliament strong foundation of democracy: Nasir

KARACHI: Minister for Energy, Development, and Planning, Syed Nasir Hus-sain Shah, has said that Parliament is the strong foundation of democracy and the true voice of millions of people in Pakistan. He expressed these views while congratulating the nation and all Members of Parliament on the completion of 78 years of the institution. The Minister said that the institution, established 78 years ago, is the guarantor of the people's rights and the Constitution, and it has played a vital role in the country's political, social, and constitutional history. He said that from Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the PPP has always struggled for the supremacy of Parliament and the survival of democracy. The Provincial Minister reaffirmed that all possible measures will continue to be taken to strengthen democracy and protect the rights of the people. He added that Pakistan's journey of development and prosperity continues under the guidance of Parliament and the leadership of the PPP. Meanwhile, Minister for Energy Syed Nasir Hussain Shah paid tribute to Dr. Ruth Pfau on her 8th death anniversary, stating that she was a symbol of selfless love for humanity and sacrifice. She devoted more than half a century to the eradication of leprosy in Pakistan and, through her tireless efforts, made Pakistan one of the few countries in the world where leprosy has been completely controlled. – APP

## Sindh agrees to address transporter's concerns

KARACHI: Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon met with a delegation of transporters, led by Haji Yousuf and Jam Alam, at the Commissioner House on Sunday and both sides agreed to address Transporter's legitimate concerns. Expressing deep sorrow over the loss of lives in the recent accident, Sharjeel Memon condemned the violent incidents that followed. He assured that the provincial government would address the legitimate concerns of transporters on a priority basis. "The loss of human life is irreparable and deeply saddening for all of us," Memon said, emphasizing that violence and vandalism were not solutions to problems. "We will work with all stakeholders to resolve issues in the transport sector and ensure such incidents do not occur again." He warned that those who took the law into their own hands and incited unrest would face charges under anti-terrorism laws. The minister directed dumper owners to ensure their vehicles are equipped with cameras, trackers, valid driver licenses, and insurance coverage. He also announced the formation of a committee to assess the damages suffered by transporters. – APP

## Zakat, Ushr Committee chairman holds open court

SARGODHA: Provincial Chairman Zakat and Ushr Council, Rana Munawar Ghous Khan, held an open court (khuli kachari) on Sunday at his office Chak no 120 SB, a suburban area of Tehsil Sillanwali, to directly hear public grievances. Citizens from the area presented their complaints and problems. He personally listened to issues and directed relevant officers to resolve them on a priority basis. Several complaints were addressed on the spot, while others were marked for further action. Speaking on the occasion, he said the event was held under the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to ensure public service at people's doorstep. He highlighted that a comprehensive sanitation system is being developed across the province, and swift progress is underway to transform villages into model settlements. – APP



ISLAMABAD: A street vendor display National Flags along the road side to attract the customers during the month of Independence Day in Federal Capital. – Online

## Saif urges youth to serve humanity, value time

Barrister Saif presented the prestigious Pride of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Award to five young individuals for their outstanding contributions in their respective fields

PESHAWAR, Aug 10 (APP): Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr Muhammad Ali Saif has said that valuing time is the key to success, urging the youth to devote it to the service of humanity. He was addressing the Metrix Pakistan Youth Summit Seventh Edition as chief guest at the Hakeem Abdul Salam Library Hall in Haripur on Sunday. According to a handout, the summit brought together policymakers, industry leaders, entrepreneurs, and students to discuss youth empowerment, technology, and innovation. Organised by Metrix Pakistan in collaboration with the District Youth Office Haripur, C Suite Nexus Global, and other partners, the event drew participation from top company CEOs, members of chambers of commerce, the business community, IT professionals, and students from across the country. Barrister Dr Saif commented that obstacles encountered in the journey of progress are temporary. "Those who overcome them through continuous struggle achieve success, while those who

give up are left with regret," he opined.

Describing time as a form of energy, he stressed that those who value it earn the respect of the world. "Just as blood is vital for life, valuing and using time properly is essential for development," he remarked. He added that Allah Almighty had granted human beings the status of Ashraf-ul-Makhlukat (the noblest of creations) by giving them the ability to understand the value of time, along with corresponding responsibilities.

During the ceremony, Barrister Saif presented the prestigious Pride of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Award to five young individuals for their outstanding contributions in their respective fields: Asad Zargar and Fatima Faraz Hoti (both recognised for their work in climate change activism), Rehan Awan, Saad Khan, and Haris Khan (acknowledged for their influence and impact as digital content creators). Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Science, Technology and Information Technology, Dr Shafqat Ayaz, attended as guest of honour.

In his address, he said the provincial gov-

ernment was working to equip the youth with modern technology and IT skills, in line with the vision of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

"Several Citizen Facilitation Centres and Digital Connect projects are operational, and soon Haripur Digital City will be completed, which will prove to be a significant opportunity for the youth of the region," he said. Dr Ayaz added that training centres, start-up support programmes, IT parks and digital economy projects were also being established. Among the event's corporate announcements, Mooben Abdullah (Founder and CEO of Revnix) announced a new internship programme for the youth of Haripur, while Aamdad Ali (Founder and CEO of RankingGrow) pledged the creation of 50 new jobs for local talent.

The summit featured addresses from District Youth Officer Haripur Talal Saleem, Muddasir Shafique (Head of IT, Hum News), Wasim Irshad (CEO, Tangent Technologies), Kashif Ali (CEO, TechKhw), Syed Safdar Hussain Shah, Qaiser

Akash Khan, and senior business leaders from the C Suite Nexus Global network, who underscored the importance of public-private partnerships, cross-sector collaboration, and investment in technology to accelerate provincial growth. In his concluding remarks, Hassan Nisar expressed gratitude to Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif and Dr Shafqat Ayaz for their support, guidance and encouragement. He reaffirmed Metrix Pakistan's mission to bridge the gap between opportunity and talent by fostering entrepreneurship, technology adoption, and youth leadership across the province.

"This summit is more than an event; it is a movement towards an empowered and self-reliant Pakistan," he said, thanking all partners, speakers, and participants for making the Seventh Edition of the Youth Summit a success. The summit concluded with networking sessions, interactive discussions, and commitments from various stakeholders to continue supporting the province's youth in achieving their personal and professional goals. – APP

## Residents protest severe water shortages

RAWALPINDI: Despite recent heavy monsoon rains filling Khanpur and Rawal Dams, the primary water sources for Rawalpindi Cantonment areas, the residents questioned why the RCB has failed to deliver adequate water. Residents of Ward No. 9, under the jurisdiction of the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) on Sunday expressed their serious concerns over persistent water supply shortages that have disrupted daily life. The residents accused RCB officials of providing false assurances and fabricating reports to mislead senior authorities. According to residents, water supply in the area is least, with some residents claiming they receive water for only 25 minutes for the promised 45-minute supply schedule. Mohammad Ali Kazm Pasha, a local resident, told media that even a consistent alternate-day water supply schedule increased their hardships, but the RCB fails to adhere to its own schedule.

Another resident criticized the dismissive attitude of RCB officials, who reportedly told locals that water supply disruption is related to residents' in-home water pumping dysfunctionality. Residents alleged that RCB officials, submitted misleading reports with images of running taps to senior officers, falsely claiming that water supply issues had been resolved. They further claimed that complaints on the issue have led to further reductions in water supply, exacerbating the crisis. – APP

## Softened tax policy big relief to business community

LAHORE: The business community is relieved over the government's decision to soften its tax policy by reversal of several budgetary measures. Convener of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Regional Committee on Food, Shahid Imran stated this in a meeting with a delegation of food exporters here Sunday. He said that powers granted to FBR under section 37A of the sales tax act have been strictly limited and these powers will now be exercised only in serious cases of sales tax fraud of fake or flying invoices. Income tax commissioner and two nominees of recognised trade bodies will approve conduct of investigation. He was of the view that a stable and business-friendly tax regime is essential for sustaining economic growth, attracting investment and ensuring the smooth availability of essential food items at reasonable prices. Shahid Imran urged the authorities to continue consultations with the private sector to develop long-term fiscal policies that balance revenue generation with economic stability. The FPCCI top leadership led by its President Atif Ikram Sheikh will remain committed to supporting initiatives that foster sustainable growth in Pakistan's food and allied industries, he vowed. – APP

## IGP approves Rs 2.96m for treatment

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar has approved Rs 2,965,000 [Rs 2.96m] for medical treatment of children of police employees, suffering from serious illnesses in Lahore and various other districts. The financial assistance aims to ensure the best possible health welfare for families of personnel serving to protect lives and property in the province. According to the Punjab Police spokesperson, Constable Mohsin Ali was granted Rs. 1,660,000 for his daughter's cochlear implant surgery, while Constable Sikandar Saleem received Rs. 300,000 for his son's heart treatment. Head Constable Saqib Farooq was approved Rs. 275,000 for his son's heart procedure, and Constable Muhammad Arshad was provided Rs. 225,000 for his daughter's hearing treatment. ASI Ghulam Asghar was sanctioned Rs. 205,000 for his son's leg surgery, DEO Izzat-ul-Haq received Rs. 200,000 for his daughter's surgery, and Lady ASI Asmat Hameed was given Rs. 100,000 for her son's treatment. – APP

## Bugti attends 282nd Urs of Abdul Latif Bhittai

BHIT SHAH: Chief Minister of Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti made a special appearance at the 282nd annual Urs celebrations of the great Sufi saint and poet, Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai (RA). He was warmly welcomed by Sindh's Minister for Culture and Tourism, Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah, along with other dignitaries. On the occasion, Syed Zulfiqar Shah said that Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai portrayed women as role models in his poetry, and he always preached peace, love, and brotherhood. "Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto initiated numerous development projects in Bhit Shah, and Sindh has always welcomed its guests with open arms", he added. Speaking to the media, Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti said that Sindh is the land of peace and love. All the saints of the country, including Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, have always spread the message of global peace and brotherhood. By following Bhittai's unmatched poetry, we can eliminate extremism at both the national and global levels. Today, it is the need of the hour for all of us to unite and play our role in promoting peace. The path of dialogue remains open to end extremism. He said that the situation in Balochistan is not as bad as it is portrayed. Those who lay down arms and join the national mainstream are being welcomed, and job opportunities are being provided to the youth. "The killing of innocent passengers and disabled persons cannot be allowed, and the perpetrators will never be spared", he added. – APP

## HBL, SUPARCO partners for satellite-powered agri-lending solution

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark development for Pakistan's agri-lending sector, HBL Microfinance Bank (HBL MfB) and the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to introduce satellite-based agricultural analytics into the lending ecosystem. This is the first-ever partnership between a bank and SUPARCO for such a cutting-edge solution. The collaboration marks a significant milestone in leveraging space technology for climate-smart agriculture financing. Under this initiative, the two organisations will jointly execute a pilot project in Okara District, one of Punjab's key agricultural zones. The pilot will involve remote pre-loan assessments using high-resolution satellite image-

ry, crop health analytics, yield estimation, risk profiling, and a scoring engine to assess farm-level creditworthiness. A secure API and dashboard interface will enable HBL MfB to integrate this data into its loan decision-making processes, eliminating the need for manual field verification. Sharing his thoughts on the occasion, Mr. Amir Khan, President & CEO, HBL MfB, said, "We at HBL Microfinance Bank are excited to be the first micro-finance bank in Pakistan to collaborate with SUPARCO for Climate-Smart Agri Financing, under which satellite-powered analytics will be integrated into agricultural lending. As a leading micro-finance bank, HBL MfB is well-suited to drive such innovations that benefit both our clients, and the microfinance sector. This partnership aligns with our vision of improving the quality of life of our customers through innovative financial solutions, and we are thankful

to SUPARCO for partnering with us. Together, we are sowing the seeds of a smarter, data-backed future for Pakistan's agriculture sector."

Mr. Zafar Iqbal, Member (SAR), SUPARCO, remarked, "SUPARCO proudly remains at the forefront of applying satellite technology for national development. This collaboration with HBL Microfinance Bank is a proud moment for us as we bring our Agricultural Geographic Information System into the financial sector for the very first time. We are confident that our analytics and insights will not only strengthen lending processes but also contribute meaningfully to agricultural productivity and rural uplift." The next phase of the partnership includes post-loan satellite monitoring, enabling the Bank to track crop activity and raise early alerts in case of anomalies, ushering in a new era of risk management and lending transparency.

## Doors to Ghandhara Civilization swing open in KP's grand IDay gesture

*In celebration of Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, the KP Department of Archaeology and Museums has thrown open the doors of its historic treasures of Ghandhara art to the public*

PESHAWAR: For 11-year-old Palwasha Bibi, stepping into globe's lone Gandhara Art Peshawar Museum felt like traveling through time where every ancient sculpture whispered stories from a forgotten world. Her blue eyes lit up as she wandered through the towering statues of the Lord Buddha, mesmerized by the ancient stories carved into stones. For the first time in her life, she stood face-to-face with the heritage she had only read about and it was all free, courtesy of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's Independence Day initiative. In celebration of Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, the KP Department of Archaeology and Museums has thrown open the doors of its historic treasures of Ghandhara art to the public. From August 1st to 14th, entry to all provincial museums and archaeological sites across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is completely free, sparking a wave of excitement among locals, students, tourists, archaeologists and culture enthusiasts. Among the sites welcoming visitors are the famed Peshawar museum and city museum Sethi House, Pushkalavati museum in Charsadda, Mardan museum, Dir museum, Chakdara archaeological museum, Saidu

Sharif museum Swat, Kalasha Dur museum in Chitral, and Bannu museum. Additionally, a host of archaeological marvels including Takhti-Bhai, Jamal Garhi, Shabaz Garhi, Butkara-I, Saidu Sharif Stupa, Ashoka Rock Edicts in Mansehra, Ranigat in Buner, and others are welcoming visitors free of charge. These sites collectively offer a journey through time, highlighting KP's unique place in the ancient world, particularly its link to the Gandhara civilization, Buddhism, and early Islamic history. At the heart of this cultural resurgence is the Peshawar museum, a home to one of the world's largest collections of Gandhara art, with over 30,000 artifacts displayed across beautifully restored galleries. Its recent renovations, carried out by the Department of Archaeology, have not only preserved its colonial-era architecture but also modernized its facilities to enhance the visitors' experience. Built in 1906 in memory of Queen Victoria, the museum itself is an architectural blend of British and Mughal architecture styles. Today, it draws both domestic and international visitors, including scholars, diplomats, and Buddhist monks.

"This museum is not just a building; it's a window into our Gandhara civilization," said Bakhtzada Khan, Assistant Director at the Department of Archaeology and Museums. "Its restoration has transformed it into a vibrant destination where history comes alive." The museum's Buddha gallery and Buddha Savatta gallery are particular highlights, showcasing biographical panels that trace the life of Lord Buddha especially his birth, renunciation, enlightenment, and teachings. These stories, carved with exquisite detail, were especially meaningful to young Palwasha, who described the experience as "stepping into history." "Seeing the rare artifacts and statues of Lord Buddha made me feel like I was part of those ancient times," Palwasha said, her voice filled with wonder. Her reflections echo the sentiments of many visitors who are rediscovering the richness of their regional heritage. While the independent day celebrations mark a renewed interest in cultural tourism, there is a growing call for the use of digital platforms to project KP's heritage to a global audience. "We should showcase these treasures abroad through digital me-

dia," Palwasha suggested while making video of Lord Bhuddha statue. "It will attract more tourists and help people around the world learn about our rich history." Her suggestion aligns with emerging global trends, where museums and heritage sites use virtual tours, augmented reality, and social media campaigns to extend their reach beyond physical boundaries. Experts believed embracing digital transformation can unlock new opportunities for KP's museums and increase foreign exchange. "Digital storytelling can connect us with international communities and bring in heritage lovers who may never physically visit," said an archaeologist at the museum. As night falls, the Peshawar museum takes on a magical aura. Its façade glows with soft, colourful lights, attracting evening visitors and photography enthusiasts. Inside, the galleries also feature displays beyond Gandhara including traditional Waziristan tribal attire, primitive cooking tools, weapons from the freedom struggle, and relics from various historical epochs. This multidimensional experience has turned the museum into a living cultural space, not just a relic of the past. – APP



These stalls are a treasure trove of white and green goodies, featuring everything including masks, badges, wristbands, ponytails, key chains, bangles, and caps, catering to the growing demand for patriotic merchandise. Parents and kids alike are flocking to these stalls, eager to get into the holiday spirit. Sarah, a proud mother of two visited one of the stalls in Islamabad said. – APP

held on August 10, 1947, in Karachi—was a powerful reflection of the democratic vision of Pakistan's founding fathers. He noted that the session marked the practical realization of the people's collective aspirations. The Speaker underscored that Parliament not only represents 250 million citizens but also bears the core responsibility of ensuring public welfare. He highlighted that since 2015, Pakistan's Parliament has held the distinction of being the world's first legislature to operate entirely on solar energy. Transparency and reform initiatives, he said, are being actively pursued to enhance the House's performance, while modern technologies are being introduced to ensure timely and accessible public information.



## Briefs

NAB recovers  
record  
Rs 547b

## DNA

LAHORE: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has achieved record-breaking recoveries in the first half of 2025, reclaiming Rs 547 billion in looted national wealth and compensating thousands of fraud victims. The figures were revealed in NAB's mid-year performance report, issued here on Saturday. Under the vision and guidance of Chairman NAB, the Bureau is working tirelessly against corruption and committed to safeguarding public interests.

According to the report, NAB recovered Rs456 billion between April and June alone. It also restored movable and immovable properties worth Rs532 billion to various federal and provincial ministries, departments, and financial institutions. During the same period, Rs12,611 victims of different fraud cases received their misappropriated funds back.

Regional offices played a major role in these achievements. NAB Lahore recovered eight properties worth Rs3.9 billion in the Pak-Arab Housing Case, to be liquidated for distribution among 2,500 victims, and disbursed Rs3.2 billion in the fifth installment of the Eden Housing Case to 11,880 victims. NAB Rawalpindi retrieved 51 kanals of prime land in Islamabad's Sector E-11, valued at Rs29 billion, for the Capital Development Authority (CDA), and secured Rs3 billion in the B4U Ponzi scheme case, earmarked for 17,214 victims.

Islamabad  
to host Int'l  
industrial  
expo in Oct

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), in collaboration with the Capital Development Authority (CDA), will organize an International Industrial Expo at Shakarparian Ground in October 2025. The landmark decision was finalized during a meeting between ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi and CDA Chairman & Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa.

The meeting was also attended by senior officials, including Member Planning Dr. Khalid Hafeez, DG Planning Dr. Zafar Iqbal, DG Building Control & Housing Faisal Naeem, DG Resource Shakeel Ahmed, and Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon. The concept for the expo, proposed by ICCI President Qureshi, aims to showcase Pakistan's vast business and investment potential to boost both local and foreign investments. Chairman Randhawa lauded the initiative and pledged full CDA support to implement it in letter and spirit.

Asim credited  
with investor  
confidence

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Leading business figures have praised recent amendments to tax laws while calling for deeper structural reforms to reduce operational costs that continue hampering industrial competitiveness.

United Business Group North Zone Vice Chairman Ch. Javed Iqbal welcomed the removal of provisions that previously empowered lower-grade tax officials to arrest businessmen without adequate oversight, which was essential for rebuilding trust between entrepreneurs and regulatory authorities. The business leader credited Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir's leadership approach for addressing systemic challenges that have long plagued Pakistan's commercial environment. Munir's strategy of balancing national security imperatives with economic development priorities has generated renewed confidence among investors and stakeholders. The military's commitment to both defending Pakistan's sovereignty and supporting economic reforms has restored national pride and business confidence, Ch. Javed Iqbal told the business community during his address.

Strengthening trade ties with  
Pakistan is top priority: Envoy

Development Projects of Melody Market, Saidpur Village, and Srinagar Highway to Be Completed Soon – Discussion with Business Delegation of Melody Market



## SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov, has said that Azerbaijan considers Pakistan a brotherly nation, and promoting cooperation at both public and trade levels is among Azerbaijan's top priorities. He added that work on the development projects of Melody Market, Saidpur Village, and Srinagar Highway is progressing rapidly and will soon be completed, delivering benefits to the public. These projects will enhance tourism and further strengthen the excellent bilateral relations between the two countries. The Azerbaijan-Pakistan people-to-people friendship will be further deepened, and all ongoing projects will be completed

within the set timelines.

He was speaking during a meeting with a representative delegation from the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Melody Market Business Community at the Azerbaijan Embassy in Islamabad. The delegation included: Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General, UBG, Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Senior Vice President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, Azhar Iqbal, President, Melody Market, Masood Ahmed Siddiqui, Aftab Ahmed, Mudassir Fayaz, Bilal Khan, Zahid Butt. The delegation expressed heartfelt gratitude to Ambassador Khazar Farhadov, noting that the Government of Azerbaijan—especially President Ilham Aliyev—has taken commendable practical steps to strengthen ties with Pakistan's business community

and support the development of commercial hubs like Melody Market.

They also appreciated the steps taken to transform Srinagar Highway and Saidpur Village into model areas. The delegation requested the Ambassador to ensure swift completion of development work in Melody Market. In response, the Ambassador emphasized that special attention would be given to the Melody Food Mall, encouraging the establishment of reputable food outlets. This, he said, would boost commercial activity in the market and bring immense benefits to the business community. Zafar Bakhtawari stated that the fraternal, diplomatic, and economic ties between Azerbaijan and Pakistan are growing stronger by the day. He re-

marked, "Azerbaijan stands with Pakistan in every difficult time."

These three projects are a gift from Azerbaijan's top leadership to the people of Pakistan, and we are pleased that Azerbaijan is not only supporting major national projects but also contributing to urban development and market uplift.

Abdul Rehman Siddiqui also thanked the Ambassador and said that Azerbaijan's interest in improving Melody Market is highly encouraging and will mark the beginning of a new era of direct cooperation between the business communities of both countries. Azhar Iqbal added that the support of the Ambassador of Azerbaijan is a source of great encouragement, and they are hopeful for the timely completion of these development projects.

Pak's Dental exports to  
China Climb 4% in H1

*The growth reflects broader momentum in bilateral medical trade, with Pakistan's overall exports of medical and surgical instruments to China reaching \$5.56 mln, alongside veterinary instruments (\$3.24 ml) and ophthalmic equipment (\$155,465).*

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exports of dental instruments and appliances to China grew by 4% year-on-year in the first half of 2025, reaching \$2 million, China Economic Net reported quoting trade data from the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC). This marks a steady increase from \$1.93 million during the same period last year. According to the data, shipments totaled 205,840 kilograms, highlighting Pakistan's competitive edge with an average price of \$0.47 per kilogram—among the most cost-efficient in the market.

The growth reflects broader momentum in bilateral medical trade, with Pakistan's overall exports of medical and surgical instruments to China reaching \$5.56 million, alongside veterinary instruments (\$3.24 million) and ophthalmic equipment (\$155,465). Ghulam Qadir, Trade and Investment Counsellor at the Pakistan Em-

bassy in Beijing, said the uptick is partly driven by millions of dollars in strategic partnerships formalized between Pakistani and Chinese firms in January 2025.

These agreements, facilitated through Beijing's B2B medical conferences, prioritized tariff reductions of 3%–5% under the China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement and enhanced supply chain integration.

Experts believe that Pakistan's Sialkot manufacturing hub—ranked as the world's fifth-largest medical equipment center—leveraged its low production costs and EU-standard compliance to meet China's demand for high-volume consumables. Ambassador Khalil Hashmi emphasized Pakistan's "strategic connectivity and raw material reserves" as pivotal to sustaining this growth. It is worth noting that the HEALTH ASIA 2025 expo in Karachi (October 23–25) will serve as a crucial platform for Pakistani manufacturers to engage more than 500 Asian buyers and explore joint ventures in high-value niches.

Pak faces escalating mental health  
crisis, warns Health Minister

ISLAMABAD: Sindh Health Minister Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho on Saturday highlighted the urgency of public awareness in the first-ever national mental health campaign, calling attention to the need for ethical standards and improvements in delivery systems such as Tele-Tabeeb (1123).

In an exclusive video message with a local news channel, she urged the public to contact Tele-Tabeeb (1123), where experts are available to provide guidance and support for mental health concerns. "We are working to ensure that help is accessible to everyone. I encourage people to reach out trained experts are available to listen, support and guide you. Let us break the silence and stigma around mental health and build a healthier, more compassionate society together," she added. She thanked the collaborative partners, including the Health Ministry and the Brit-

ish Asian Trust for their support.

She noted that the discussions focused on the importance of integrating the Mental Health Code of Ethics into existing health programs and the curricula for mental health professionals. Dr Azra emphasized the vital role of mental health in overall well-being, highlighted the urgent need for ethical guidelines and addressed the persistent gaps in service delivery systems. She emphasized that mental health is an escalating crisis, driven by increasing cases and a lack of strong societal support. She urged for joint efforts to tackle the growing mental health crisis. Emphasizing that no single institution can address the issue alone, she called on government agencies, healthcare providers, educational institutions, media, civil society organizations and communities to work together. – DNA

"US views Pakistan as stabilizing  
actor in the Region

## MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: "For the US, Pakistan is a security guarantor and a stabilizing force in the region", says Mr Naad e Ali, a Middle Eastern expert based in Washington D.C. He was speaking at a roundtable discussion hosted by Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad. Mr Ali discussed how Pakistan gained strategic relevance in the eyes of President Trump. "President Trump praises the countries having strategic clarity", he mentioned. Mr Ali argued that after the 12-day Iran-Israel war, the regime change objective of the US was transformed into containing Iran's ideological reach and change regime's behaviour. He further elaborated that any instability inside Iran would have a rippling effect on Pakistani side of Balochistan where the US was keen to explore rare earth minerals. Predicting the future US-Iran talks, Mr Ali argued that Pakistan could assume the role of a bridge builder in bringing Iran to the negotiating table. Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Dr Samrez Salik highlighted Pakistan's soft power engagement with Iran and its consistent role in de-es-

calating regional conflicts. He emphasized the importance of maintaining cordial ties with Iran suggested that Pakistan's long-term strategic interests lie in regional stability. Maj. Gen (R) Samrez highlighted that Iran's defiance of the US was the longest standoff by a regional actor against the superpower in modern history. Furthermore, drawing lessons from the past, he argued that Pakistan had a long-history of mediating between the rival and over the years its role had matured. He also suggested that Iran had to rethink about its regional policy vis-vis India due to latter's close association with Israel.

Earlier, in his remarks, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, mentioned Iran's nuclear capability was declared for peaceful purposes. "It is Pakistan's long-standing and principled stance of supporting Iran's right to peaceful nuclear technology", Amb Jauhar stressed. He also emphasized that the revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was essential. Amb Jauhar praised Pakistan's role of responsible diplomacy, adding that Islamabad once again acted as a stabilizing and mediating force in the regional crisis.

MDCAT  
exam 2025  
to be held  
on October  
5: PMDC

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council on Saturday has announced that the year 2025 Medical and Dental Colleges Admission Test (MDCAT) will be conducted on Oct 5, 2025. According to PMDC spokesperson, the MDCAT exam is going to be conducted by universities nominated by the federal and provincial authorities, not by PMDC. However, PMDC as a regulator has developed a uniform syllabus for MDCAT in consultation with all stakeholders, including federal and provincial authorities, he added. He clarified that there is no 80 perfect increase in MDCAT examination fee as only Rs 1000 has been added to the previous year's fee which was Rs 8000.

Urumqi resumes  
fresh seafood imports  
from Pakistan

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Urumqi Tianshan International Airport has received its first shipment of fresh seafood imports from Pakistan in two years, signaling the reopening of its designated inspection site for inbound aquatic products, China Economic Net reported. The 1,292-kilogram consignment—including black pomfret, prawns, hairtail, and grouper—arrived on China Southern Airlines flight CZ6008 from Islamabad. The shipment follows two months of coordination among importers, customs, and airport authorities.

Previously, seafood sold in Xinjiang was mainly transported from China's coastal regions, adding time and cost.

Direct air shipments now shorten transit times, helping preserve freshness and reduce expenses for importers.

Customs officials at Tianshan Airport facilitated rapid clearance by coordinating with stakeholders in advance, streamlining inspections, and ensuring compliance at all checkpoints. Pakistan's deep-sea fisheries offer high-quality seafood that is increasingly popular with Chinese consumers. The reopening of Urumqi's cold chain infrastructure marks a step forward in regional trade connectivity.

Xinjiang Airport Group plans to expand its capabilities by applying for official designation to import edible aquatic animals. Leveraging the airport's extensive network across Asia, Europe, and Africa, it aims to bring fresh global products—such as cherries, lobsters, and salmon—directly to local consumers' tables, according to the group.

CDA and MCI  
organise  
cycling  
competition

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: On the directions of Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, sports wing of CDA and DMA, MCI jointly organized an exciting cycling competition in Islamabad today, at blue area, Islamabad aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle, environmental sustainability, and the vision of a cleaner, greener capital city.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from professional cyclists, amateur riders, and citizens of all age groups, reflecting the growing public interest in cycling as a mode of recreation, sport, and eco-friendly transport.

Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa while addressing as chief guest emphasized the importance of cycling in the development of a healthy, sustainable, and modern federal capital. He said that cycling not only offers significant health benefits but also helps reduce traffic congestion, minimize pollution, and encourage the use of non-motorized transport.

Bahria  
University  
holds 21st  
convocation

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Bahria University Karachi Campus and Institute of Professional Psychology along with Pakistan Navy School of Logistics, held its 21st Convocation. Chief of the Naval Staff and Pro-Chancellor of Bahria University, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, graced the event as the Chief Guest and conferred degrees upon graduates.

Addressing the ceremony Admiral Naveed Ashraf urged graduates to view life as a continuous journey of learning, remain steadfast in their goals and face challenges with resilience. He emphasized that integrity, dedication and a strong work ethic would define their legacy and bring honour to their families, professions and alma mater.

Earlier, in his welcome remarks, Rector Bahria University, Vice Admiral Asif Khaliq (Retd), reaffirmed the University's commitment to academic excellence and holistic development. He expressed confidence that Bahria graduates are well-prepared not only to excel in their chosen careers but also to lead with integrity and contribute positively to society.

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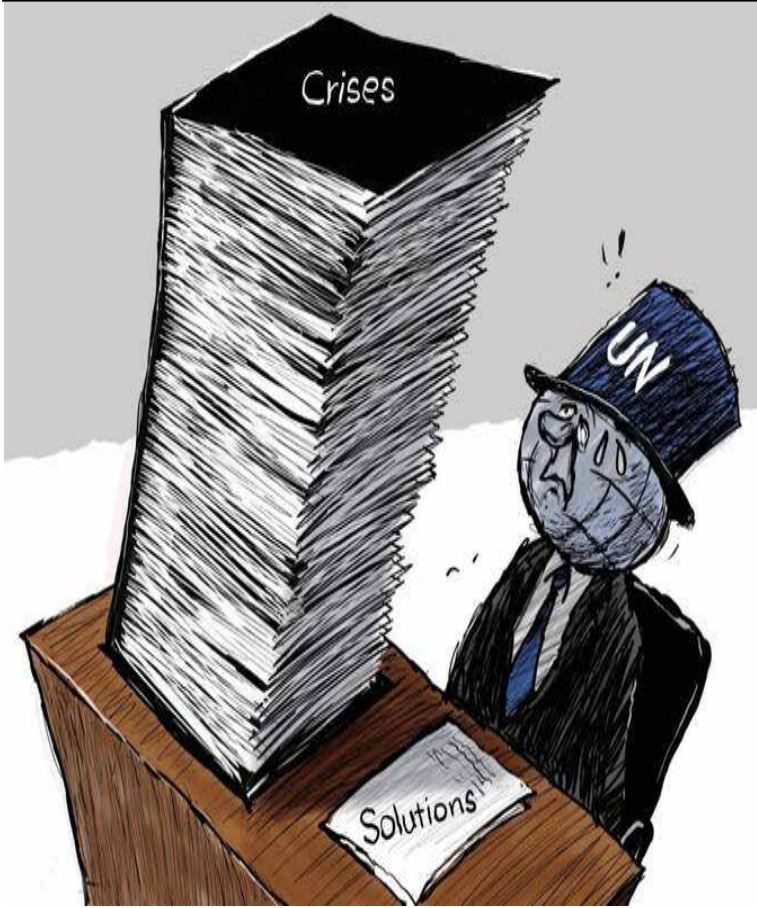
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## Azerbaijan, Armenia seal historic peace deal: Ilham Aliyev's statesmanship shines

IN what many are calling a historic turning point for the South Caucasus, Azerbaijan and Armenia have signed a landmark peace agreement, facilitated by US President Donald Trump, officially bringing an end to over three decades of conflict. The ceremony showcased stark contrasts in the demeanor and delivery of the two leaders — with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev drawing particular praise for his confidence, openness, and statesmanlike composure. For 35 years, Azerbaijan and Armenia have been locked in a bitter dispute, marked by periodic escalations, devastating wars, and the loss of thousands of lives on both sides. Generations have grown up knowing little other than hostility and mistrust. Yet, as the pens met the paper, there was a sense — albeit tentative — that a new chapter was opening. Observers could not help but note the body language of both leaders. President Ilham Aliyev appeared calm, relaxed, and confident — radiating an air of assurance that the agreement would hold. His speech, delivered extempore without notes, reflected a tone of sincerity and directness. Speaking from the heart, he emphasized the need to “turn the page of history” and work together for a future of stability and shared prosperity.

In a symbolic gesture, Aliyev openly extended his hand in friendship to Armenia, signaling a willingness to move beyond decades of hostility. The Azerbaijani leader's words carried both a sense of closure and a forward-looking vision, making it clear that this was more than a strategic move — it was, in his view, a moral obligation to the people of both nations. By contrast, Armenian Prime Minister read from a prepared text, his delivery careful and deliberate. While the speech acknowledged the importance of peace and the sacrifices of the past, its measured tone and cautious phrasing conveyed lingering skepticism. Some analysts interpreted this as a reflection of internal political pressures back home, where the peace deal may face scrutiny from factions wary of compromise. In a surprising moment of levity and candor, Aliyev suggested that both Azerbaijan and Armenia should submit a joint plea to the Nobel Peace Committee to award the Nobel Peace Prize to U.S. President Donald



Trump. The comment drew a mix of smiles and raised eyebrows in the audience, but it underscored Aliyev's willingness to break from the strictly formal script often seen at such events. Whether in jest or sincerity, the remark reinforced his image as a leader unafraid to speak plainly. Both leaders acknowledged the heavy toll the conflict has taken — countless precious lives lost, communities shattered, and decades of economic potential squandered. For many families, the agreement offers the first real hope of reuniting with loved ones or returning to long-abandoned homes. Aliyev was unequivocal in his assurance that the peace deal would hold, stressing that the United States was acting as the guarantor. This, he said, should dispel any doubts about the agreement's longevity. “We have strong international backing for this accord,” he noted, “and we have the will to make it work.” The peace agreement has been met with widespread approval from the international community. In Islamabad, Prime Minister of Pakistan warmly welcomed the development, calling it “a good step toward lasting stability in the South Caucasus.” Pakistan has long been a close ally of Azerbaijan and has notably refrained from recognizing Armenia — a diplomatic stance rooted in solidarity with Baku. From the European Union to the United Nations, statements poured in praising the courage of both sides to negotiate and compromise. Many see the deal as a potential model for resolving other long-standing regional disputes, provided both nations can follow through with confidence-building measures in the months ahead.

The peace accord is expected to open new economic opportunities for the entire region. Trade routes that were blocked for decades could be revived, attracting foreign investment and boosting infrastructure development. The South Caucasus, situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, has long been recognized for its strategic value. Stability could allow it to fulfill its role as a key energy and transport corridor. Aliyev expressed optimism about this economic potential, noting that co-operation could lift living standards on both sides of the border. “Peace is not only the absence of war,” he said, “it is the creation of conditions where our people can prosper together.”

While the signing of the peace deal marks a dramatic shift, it is only the beginning of a long process of reconciliation. Centuries-old grievances, national narratives, and political opposition could still test the agreement's resilience. However, the symbolism of Aliyev's open-handed approach and Armenia's willingness to come to the table is hard to ignore. The road ahead will require trust, patience, and political courage. Yet, as both leaders stood side by side — one speaking freely from the heart, the other reading carefully from prepared notes — the world saw two men attempting, in their own ways, to bridge a gulf that once seemed unbridgeable. If the spirit of the agreement holds, the people of Azerbaijan and Armenia may one day look back on this moment not merely as the day their leaders signed a treaty, but as the day they dared to imagine a shared future.

# The Widening gap between Washington and New Delhi

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Herein lies the deeper question; is the diplomatic chill merely about oil, or does it reflect Washington's growing unease with India's role in BRICS, its economic alignment with the Global South, and its potential to challenge the global supremacy of the U.S. dollar? India, along with China, Brazil, Russia, and South Africa, has been promoting alternative payment mechanisms in BRICS, including cross-border trade in national currencies and potential expansion...

SINCE the early 2000s, the Indo-American relationship has largely been characterized by increasing strategic convergence, particularly in the domains of defense cooperation, trade, and shared concerns about the rise of China. However, during the presidency of Donald J. Trump (2017–2021), this relationship saw several unexpected dips, moments of diplomatic chill, and public expressions of dissatisfaction, especially from the American side. Contrary to the earlier fanfare about the natural alliance between the world's largest democracies, the Trump administration's posture toward India was often marked by cold pragmatism and visible discontent. This departure from the optimistic tones of the Obama era merits detailed examination.

President Trump, known for his transactional foreign policy, publicly voiced his frustration with India on multiple occasions. One of the earliest signs of this came on January 2, 2018, when Trump tweeted his tough on Pakistan, stating that the United States had “foolishly given Pakistan more than 33 billion dollars in aid over the last 15 years” and received “nothing but lies and deceit”. While this tweet was directed at Islamabad, it implicitly signaled a shift in Washington's South Asia policy—one that placed pressure on regional allies, including India, to demonstrate their worth in tangible, deliverable terms.

Trump's dissatisfaction with India became more explicit during trade negotiations. On June 5, 2019, the U.S. formally terminated India's designation as a beneficiary developing country under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), affecting \$5.6 billion in Indian exports. The U.S. Trade Representative's office stated India had failed to provide “equitable and reasonable access to its markets”. Despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public bonhomie with Trump, especially at the “Howdy Modi” event in Houston on September 22, 2019, where Trump and Modi shared a stage before a crowd of over 50,000, the unresolved issues beneath the surface remained. Trump's speech praised India's democracy and economic rise, but in follow-up interviews and policy actions, trade friction continued without resolution.

On the defense front, while India signed key agreements such as Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) in September 6, 2018 and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) in 27 October 2020, it irked Washington by proceeding with the purchase of the Russian S-400 missile system, valued at over \$5 billion. Despite repeated warnings from U.S. officials, including then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo during his June 2019 visit to New Delhi, India showed no signs of backing

down. Pompeo warned that India risked sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) if it proceeded with the deal. Further unease emerged over India's reluctance to directly align with American strategic goals in Asia. Washington expected India to play a stronger role in the Indo-Pacific alliance. The Trump administration's 2017 National Security Strategy named India as a key partner, yet U.S. strategists grew frustrated with India's cautious approach. Despite participating in Quad meetings (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) and the Malabar naval exercises, India hesitated to escalate tensions with China beyond controlled diplomatic means, especially during the Doklam standoff in 2017 and the Galwan Valley clash in June 2020.

An episode that particularly strained trust was President Trump's claim on July 22, 2019, during a joint press conference with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan at the White House, that Prime Minister Modi had asked him to mediate on Kashmir. Trump said, “I was with Prime Minister Modi two weeks ago, and he actually said, ‘Would you like to be a mediator or arbitrator?’”. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs immediately issued a denial, reiterating that “no such request was made,” and that Kashmir was strictly a bilateral issue. Trump's overtures toward Pakistan further complicated the Indo-U.S. relationship. After starting his presidency with a sharp rebuke of Islamabad, the tone shifted significantly by mid-2019, particularly as Pakistan facilitated U.S.-Taliban peace talks in Afghanistan. During Khan's visit to Washington in July 2019, Trump publicly thanked Pakistan for its “tremendous help” and emphasized a “very good relationship” going forward. This contrasted with the expectation in New Delhi that Washington would align more firmly with India post-Uri and Pulwama episodes.

India's continued engagement with Russia remained a consistent source of tension, even beyond Trump's presidency. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Biden administration and its NATO allies swiftly imposed severe sanctions on Moscow and expected global partners—including India—to join the Western consensus. However, New Delhi maintained a balanced, non-aligned stance. India abstained from several UN resolutions condemning Russia and continued to engage with Moscow diplomatically and economically.

A key point of contention was India's increased import of Russian crude oil at discounted rates. While the West moved to isolate Russia economically, India ramped up its purchases, citing national energy security and consumer price stability. By late 2022, Russia had become India's largest oil supplier, surpassing Iraq and Saudi Arabia. This drew criticism

from American and European officials, but India defended its position firmly. At a press briefing in Washington in April 2022, Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, when questioned about oil purchases, replied, “If you're looking at energy purchases from Russia, I would suggest your attention be focused on Europe... We do buy some energy, which is necessary for our energy security.”

Herein lies the deeper question; is the diplomatic chill merely about oil, or does it reflect Washington's growing unease with India's role in BRICS, its economic alignment with the Global South, and its potential to challenge the global supremacy of the U.S. dollar? India, along with China, Brazil, Russia, and South Africa, has been promoting alternative payment mechanisms in BRICS, including cross-border trade in national currencies and potential expansion of a non-dollar reserve structure. For the United States, which depends on the dollar's role as the global reserve currency to maintain its economic leverage and sanction regime, this trend is strategically alarming. While India is not overtly antagonistic toward the West, its pursuit of financial multipolarity—symbolized by energy payments to Russia in rupees and participation in non-dollar settlements—directly challenges the architecture of U.S.-led economic dominance. From Washington's view, such developments may explain not only its pressure on New Delhi but also its lukewarm attitude, even during periods of public cordiality.

This episode underscores a long-standing Indian doctrine; multi-alignment rather than alliance dependency. It also reveals the enduring misalignment in expectations between Washington and New Delhi. While the U.S. wants India to stand firmly in the Western camp—against both China and Russia—India views its own interests through a prism of regional balance, strategic autonomy, and economic necessity. American impatience, whether under Trump or Biden, could not alter this fundamental reality.

In retrospect, the Trump-Modi era presented a paradox; public displays of camaraderie concealed policy-level disconnects. The friendship was real, but conditional. Trump wanted India to “buy more, do more, align more.” But from the American perspective, India did not seem to be meeting American expectations.

Thus, the chill in Indo-American relations during Trump's presidency—and even beyond—was not the result of any single rupture, but of unmet expectations, clashing diplomatic styles, and divergent national interests. If anything, it served to remind both nations that a strategic partnership requires more than smiles and slogans—it requires trust, respect for each other's red lines, and above all, realistic expectations.

## Trump's War on America

Qamar Bashir



The impact is already visible. In California, ICE raids in 2025 disrupted a \$49 billion agricultural economy, cutting 20–40 % of the workforce, leading to \$3–\$7 billion in crop losses and pushing produce prices up by 5–12 % nationwide. These costs cascade through every grocery store and restaurant in America. With inflation now at 2.7 % as of June 2025—up from post-pandemic lows—families are cutting back on necessities...

PRESIDENT Donald Trump has done what no American president dared to do: declare war on the very states that make up the United States. In a stunning policy shift, his administration issued an executive directive conditioning federal disaster relief and aid—worth over \$1.9 billion—on whether states comply with his unwavering support for Israel. FEMA grant guidelines quietly added that any state imposing restrictions or even symbolic boycotts on Israeli-linked industries could lose critical disaster funding—upending the core of federalism by making disaster survival dependent on foreign policy alignment with a foreign state. This shocking decision wasn't just condemned by legal scholars—it sent waves through legacy media and exploded across social platforms. Constitutional experts called it an unprecedented violation of the separation between federal and state powers, while commentators accused the administration of weaponizing disaster aid as political blackmail. In a nation where trust in federal institutions is already fragile, this move struck at the very idea of independent state governance. What Trump has done is not a show of strength—it is the crossing of every constitutional boundary the American people can tolerate. Intellectuals and journalists are now speaking openly about the pervasive influence of AIPAC and other pro-Israel lobbies—now contributing well over \$100 million annually in lobbying and campaign support. It is no longer fringe to suggest that lawmakers are compromised—claims intensified by allegations tied to the unsealed Epstein files and whispers of foreign intelligence leverage over U.S. decision-making.

But Trump's betrayal does not end there. He has also declared war on the most vulnerable Americans—those depending on healthcare, Social Security, and disaster aid. The so-called One Big Beautiful Bill, enacted in July 2025, slashes Medicaid by nearly \$1 trillion, cuts hundreds of billions from SNAP, and imposes strict work-reporting mandates. These cuts threaten healthcare access for more than 10 million people and push already struggling rural hospitals toward collapse—particularly in states like Oklahoma, Alabama, and West Virginia. Then came the tariff tsunami. Under Trump's economic nationalism, sweeping duties—ranging from 15 % to 55 %, especially on Chinese goods—now apply to imports from nearly 70 countries, including close allies. Canada faces 35 % tariffs, Brazil and Switzerland up to 50 %, India 25 %, and China some of the heaviest penalties in history. The average import tax rate has surged to 19 %, the highest since

the Great Depression. The result: the typical American household is now losing between \$2,400 and \$3,800 a year in purchasing power—higher grocery bills, pricier clothes, more expensive electronics, and costlier cars.

Tariffs are not a tax on foreign exporters—they are a tax on Americans. Importers pay them first, then pass them on to distributors and retailers, who pass them on to consumers. Research shows that 60 % of the tariff burden falls directly on U.S. households, squeezing the middle class and deepening economic inequality. The markets know the truth. On August 1, the Dow Jones dropped 542 points, the S&P 500 fell 1.6 %, and the Nasdaq plunged 2.2%—spooked by weak job growth, rising prices, and fears of foreign retaliation. America's small businesses, farms, and neighborhood retailers face shrinking margins while multinational corporations with offshore operations remain largely shielded.

But Trump's war isn't only economic. It's also demographic. He has targeted immigrants—the unspoken backbone of America's agriculture, construction, and service sectors. These laborers feed the nation, build its homes, and staff its restaurants—jobs native-born Americans often refuse. Undocumented workers make up 40 % of crop farm laborers nationally and over 75 % in California. Mass deportations could shrink the U.S. labor force by 4–6 %, slashing GDP by as much as \$5 trillion over the next decade. Agriculture and hospitality output could fall nearly 9 %, while retail and manufacturing lose \$65–\$74 billion annually. The impact is already visible. In California, ICE raids in 2025 disrupted a \$49 billion agricultural economy, cutting 20–40 % of the workforce, leading to \$3–\$7 billion in crop losses and pushing produce prices up by 5–12 % nationwide. These costs cascade through every grocery store and restaurant in America. With inflation now at 2.7 % as of June 2025—up from post-pandemic lows—families are cutting back on necessities, not luxuries. The result will be fewer college enrollments, reduced healthcare access, and a generation of disenfranchised youth.

And while the world races toward a clean-energy future, Trump is dragging America back into its polluted past. His expansion of oil drilling, coal mining, and nuclear projects—coupled with rollbacks on renewables—will carry staggering costs. Climate-fueled disasters already average \$149 billion in annual losses—up 50 % from the previous decade. In just the first half of 2025, wildfires and severe storms caused \$131 billion in total damages, with \$80 billion insured. Last

year alone, climate-related disasters cost the U.S. nearly \$1 trillion. Beyond disasters, fossil fuel pollution costs the economy \$790 billion annually in lost productivity, healthcare, and premature deaths—about 5 % of GDP. By doubling down on outdated energy, Trump is not just warming the planet—he's cooking the economy.

Instead of bolstering U.S. global economic power, Trump is accelerating the unraveling of the dollar-based financial order. Central banks' share of dollar reserves has fallen from around 70 % two decades ago to 57 % by late 2024. BRICS nations are increasingly settling trade in local currencies, and discussions for a shared BRICS currency are advancing. Africa's PAPSS system already saves \$5 billion annually by avoiding dollar conversions. China, once America's largest creditor, has cut its U.S. Treasury holdings from over \$1.3 trillion a decade ago to \$780–785 billion—its lowest in 15 years. Nations from Russia to Saudi Arabia are converting reserves into gold and non-dollar assets. With U.S. national debt at \$36 trillion, a future in which creditors demand repayment could force the sale of American land, infrastructure, or even strategic assets—undermining sovereignty itself.

And all this unfolds while Trump clings to unconditional support for Israel—even as, for the first time in modern polling, a majority of Americans express sympathy for Palestinians. The narrative has shifted. The atrocities in Gaza—starvation, bombardment, and mass displacement—are no longer hidden from U.S. audiences. In this climate, Trump's Israel policy is not only morally bankrupt but politically toxic. The irony is devastating: while Trump claims to put America first, his policies—on disaster aid, healthcare, trade, immigration, environmental stewardship, and global finance—are systematically dismantling the country's strength from within. For now, the pain is unevenly distributed, but make no mistake: it is coming for every household. When higher prices, job losses, environmental collapse, and global isolation converge, Americans will see clearly who hollowed out their nation. And when that reckoning comes, it won't be softened by speeches, spin, or scapegoats. It will be the moment America realizes it wasn't foreign adversaries that broke its back—it was a president who declared war on his own people.

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



## Briefs

## Ina Lepel returns to Pak as German...

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regional affairs are expected to contribute positively to further enhancing Pak-German relations, particularly in trade, climate cooperation, cultural exchange, and development collaboration. Diplomatic circles in Islamabad view her return as a positive development, especially at a time when Germany and Pakistan continue to expand cooperation in key sectors. Ambassador Lepel's second tenure is expected to build on previous successes and open new avenues for bilateral engagement.

## Azerbaijan, US forge strategic partnership

FROM PAGE 01  
its symbolic importance. The trip also yielded breakthroughs in the Azerbaijan-Armenia normalization process. A tri-lateral summit between the Presidents of Azerbaijan, the United States, and Armenia concluded with the signing of a Joint Declaration by Azerbaijan and Armenia, witnessed by the U.S. President. Foreign Ministers of both countries also initiated the Draft Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and Inter-State Relations and jointly appealed to the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the closure of the OSCE Minsk Process and its related structures. The Joint Declaration reaffirmed Azerbaijan's peace agenda while noting that constitutional amendments in Armenia would be necessary to remove territorial claims against Azerbaijan. It also committed both sides to opening transport and communication links, including unimpeded connectivity between mainland Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. Of particular note was the announcement of the "Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity," a U.S.-led special connectivity project through Armenian territory to link Azerbaijan with Nakhchivan. In the economic sphere, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between SOCAR and ExxonMobil in the presence of President Aliyev and the U.S. President's Special Envoy. The agreement aims to build on existing ties and explore opportunities in both conventional and unconventional oil and gas development in Azerbaijan. President Aliyev's U.S. visit, alongside the progress made in the peace process with Armenia, represents a landmark moment in Azerbaijan's diplomatic history—strengthening strategic ties with Washington while advancing the vision for lasting peace and regional prosperity.

## Islamabad Airport not being closed for 8 days

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only two hours on specific days and times." From Aug 6-9 and Aug 11-14, the airport will be shut from 11am-1pm PST. On Aug 9 and 11, the airport will also be shut from 8-10pm. "Apart from these brief interruptions, all flights at the airport will continue as usual," the statement said, advising passengers to contact their airline for the latest information on their schedule. During the four-day conflict between Pakistan and India, flight disruptions left hundreds of passengers stranded at the country's major airports, including Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi and Sialkot airports. The Ministry of Defence informed the National Assembly on Friday that the PAA lost Rs4.1 billion from April 24 to June 30 due to the closure. PAA also issued a schedule for temporary runway closure at Lahore's Allama Iqbal International airport owing to bird activity. The closure will be in effect daily from 5am to 8am, starting July 1 until September 15.

## Defending champs Sinner, Sabalenka make winning starts

*She pushed me to the limit. If you lose focus even a little bit it can cost you a set. I had to fight for every point against her, added*

CINCINNATI: Jannik Sinner and Aryna Sabalenka got their title defenses off to smooth starts as they powered into the third round of the ATP-WTA Cincinnati Open on Saturday. The men's and women's top seeds, each ranked number one in the world, were both competing for the first time since Wimbledon – where Sinner lifted the title and as Sabalenka bowed out in the women's semi-finals. Sinner crushed Colombian Daniel Elahi Galan 6-1, 6-1 in steamy afternoon weather while Sabalenka beat 2023 Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova 7-5, 6-1 under the lights of the night session. Sabalenka needed 54 minutes and a service break in the final game to clinch the opening set with a stinging winner. The second set was more of a grind than the score suggested as she saved five break points for a 4-1 lead and recovered from 0-30 down in the final game before securing the win. "It's always a tough match against her," Sabalenka said of the Czech opponent she has faced nine times. "She pushed me to the limit. If you lose focus even a little bit it can cost you a set. I had to fight for every point against her," added Sabalenka, who next faces Britain's Emma Raducanu, a 6-3, 6-2 winner over Olga Danilovic. Meanwhile Sinner outclassed Colombia's Galan with 17 winners and just four unforced errors. Sinner won the opening five games in 15 minutes as he allowed his 144th-ranked opponent, who came through qualifying, little breathing room.



The victory in 59 minutes was the fastest of Sinner's ATP career, beating his previous quickest by one minute. Sinner claimed his 22nd consecutive win on hardcourt, last losing the Beijing final in September to rival Carlos Alcaraz. "I didn't know what to expect," Sinner said of his return to tournament action. "I'm happy because



it's not easy to play here. "The ball is flying and you have to serve very precise if you want to go far in the tournament. "Today I was finding my spots but there is still a little room to improve. For a first match it could not have gone better." After snapping up the first set Sinner broke to start the second before Galan clawed out

a hold in a seven-minute game in which he fought off five break points. It was only a momentary reprieve. Sinner fired three aces to hold for 3-1 as he roared away again for the victory. Fourth-seeded American Taylor Fritz eased past qualifier Emilio Nava 6-4, 6-4 and seventh-seeded Holger Rune won his opener 7-5, 7-6 (7/5) over Russian Roman Safiullin. But eighth-seeded Lorenzo Musetti and 11th-seeded Casper Ruud bowed out to French opponents. Benjamin Bonzi defeated Musetti 5-7, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) while Artur Rinderknech beat Ruud 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-2 – taking full advantage of Ruud's 34 unforced errors. Rinderknech was pleased with his success so far at his Cincinnati debut. "I stayed aggressive throughout the match," he said. "You cannot let Casper start to dictate." In other women's action, reigning Wimbledon champion Iga Swiatek earned an efficient opening win over Anastasia Potapova 6-1, 6-4. Poland's Swiatek has reached the final four at the last two editions but Cincinnati remains one of the two 1000-level tournaments – along with Canada – where she has never played a final. The third seed moved into the third round in just 74 minutes, saving four of the five break points she faced. "I wanted to play solid - but intense as well," Swiatek said. "It was up and down in the second set. But in the important moments I got my level up to close out the win." Australian Open winner Madison Keys needed more than two hours to advance with a 1-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/1) over German Eva Lys, saving two match points at 5-6 in the deciding set. – Agencies

## Monsoon rains trigger rise in eye infections

*A Physician Dr Imran Jadoon urged the public to take immediate precautionary measures, including using mosquito repellents, wearing protective clothing, avoiding contact with contaminated water and seeking prompt medical attention in case of symptoms or snake bites*

ISLAMABAD: Amid a worrying surge in eye infections, malaria, dengue and snake bites fueled by relentless monsoon rains, health professionals Sunday warned of a looming public health crisis and are strongly urging citizens to adopt strict safety measures without delay. According to doctors and recent reports from local news channels, the ongoing monsoon season has led to a sharp rise in various health concerns across the country. General Physicians are from Chakwal Buner and other areas reporting increased cases of eye infections, dengue, malaria, and snake bites conditions commonly associated with stagnant water, poor sanitation, and increased human exposure to flooded or overgrown areas. A Physician Dr Imran Jadoon urged the public to take immediate precautionary measures, including using mosquito repellents, wearing protective clothing, avoiding contact with contaminated water and seeking prompt medical attention in case of symptoms or snake bites. Dr. Imran Jadoon stated that conjunctivitis, commonly known as "pink eye," becomes more widespread during the monsoon season due to high humidity and moisture levels, which create ideal conditions for the growth and transmission of viruses and bacteria. He added that regions like Buner, currently experiencing monsoon rains, are likely to witness a noticeable increase in conjunctivitis cases. Dr. Jadoon explained that common symptoms of conjunctivitis include redness, itching, watery eyes, a gritty sensation, and discharge that may cause the eyelids to stick together, especially after sleep. He advised the public to maintain good hygiene, avoid touching or rubbing their eyes, use clean towels and personal items, and refrain from close contact with infected individuals to prevent the spread of the infection. Adding to this, Dr. Qadeer highlighted that eye infections are increasingly common among students and children during the monsoon season, urging schools and parents to be vigilant and ensure proper sanitation and awareness to minimize outbreaks. Meanwhile, Dr. Javed described the rising incidents of snake bites and malaria during the monsoon, attributing these to stagnant rainwater, which serves as a breeding ground for mosquitoes and increases human encounters with snakes. He stressed the importance of wearing protective clothing, eliminating standing water, and seeking immediate medical care in case of snake bites or malaria symptoms. – APP

## Independence Day Celebrations to Feature Women's Sports Events

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: As the nation gears up to mark Independence Day with patriotic fervor, sports will take center stage in the celebrations. The Youth Education and Sports Welfare Society (YES) has unveiled a vibrant lineup of events aimed at promoting women's participation in sports and fostering a healthy, active lifestyle. Chairman of YES and Director General of the Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA), Ahmed Hassan Ranjha, said the programs have been planned in collaboration with the PHA and the District Sports Department Rawalpindi. The schedule includes a tree plantation drive on August 14, a Women's T10 Cricket League from August 22 to 24, and women's matches in Australian Football (AFL) and baseball on September 6. Meanwhile, the YES Welfare Society also held a cake-cutting ceremony to mark its seventh anniversary, highlighting the importance of sports for youth. The event was attended by Ahmed Hassan Ranjha, DG PHA, President Dr. Zahid Awan, former Test cricketer Naveed Qureshi, and other dignitaries.



## Football Match held in Larkana

LARKANA: As part of the celebrations for August 14, Independence Day (Battle for Truth), a final football match was held the other day at the Municipal Stadium Larkana on Sunday, under the directives of the Government of Sindh and the arrangements of the Sindh Department of Sports and Youth Affairs, between Al-Shams Football Club Larkana and Mehran Football Club Larkana. On this occasion, the special guests included Advocate Anwar Ali Lahr, Mayor Municipal Corporation Larkana; Deputy Commissioner Larkana Wajahat Ghafoor Mirani; Advocate Abdul Nabi Sario, District Attorney Larkana; Mahfooz Ahmed Makani, District Officer Sports; Gulbahar Magi, DEO Secondary Schools Larkana; officials from the Sports Department, and a large number of citizens. The ceremony began with the hoisting of the national flag, followed by the national anthem. Slogans of "Pakistan Zindabad" (Long live Pakistan), "Pak Army Zindabad" (Long live Pakistan Army), and "Jashn-e-Azadi Zindabad" (Long live Independence Day) were also chanted. The distinguished guests were presented with traditional Ajraks. Afterwards, Deputy Commissioner Larkana Wajahat Ghafoor Mirani, while talking to the media, said that under the directives of the Government of Sindh, with arrangements by the Department of Sports and Youth Affairs and the district administration, they were organizing this sports festival to instill a spirit of healthy activities among the youth of Sindh, and to convey the message that we are a free nation living in a free country. He urged that such programs should be attended enthusiastically and that we should love our country. On the occasion, Mayor Municipal Corporation Larkana Advocate Anwar Ali Lahr said that under the directives of Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and the Sindh Government, Independence Day programs are being organized from August 1 to August 14, 2025, under the title "Battle for Truth." Today's football match is also part of this series to inspire enthusiasm among the youth. – APP

## Azadi Cup Tenpin Bowling competition held

ISLAMABAD: Ladies singles and Deaf Men singles competitions of Azadi Cup Tenpin Bowling Championship concluded at leisure City Bowling Club, Safa Gold, F-7 Markaz, Islamabad. Maryam and Wajid lifted ladies and deaf titles of Azadi Cup Tenpin Bowling Championship, respectively. While Rana Azam Khan got 2nd position in Deaf Men singles and Noor bagged 2nd position in the Ladies singles. President, Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation, Ijaz Ur Rehman and a large number of peoples were also present on the occasion. Results Deaf Men singles; Wajid Ali got first position with 190 points, Rana Azam khan secured 2nd position with 166 points, Umer Farooq obtained 3rd position with 166 points and Nasir received 4th position with 156 points. Results Women singles; Maryam bagged first position with 273 points, Noor obtained 2nd position with 222 points, Shaista obtained 3rd position with 201 points and Mehr Noor got 4th position with 183 points. Players from all over the country are taking part in the Championship. The Championship is being played under the auspices of Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation. Championship will continue till August 14. – DNA

## Pawol becomes first woman to umpire in Major League Baseball

*Pawol began working as an umpire in the rookie-level Gulf Coast League in 2016 and last year became the first woman umpire in a pre-season spring training game since Ria Cortesio in 2007 before making her historic breakthrough in a regular-season game*

WASHINGTON: Jen Pawol made history by becoming the first woman to umpire in a regular-season Major League Baseball game on Saturday – and she says she is aware of the "magnitude" of the moment. The 48-year-old, who worked in more than 1,200 minor league games before getting the call-up this week, achieved the milestone at Truist Park in Atlanta in the first game of a double-header between the Braves and the Miami Marlins. "I'm aware of the gravity. I'm aware of the magnitude," said Pawol, who worked at first base. Pawol, whose cap from the historic outing will be donated to the Baseball Hall of Fame, will be calling balls and strikes behind home plate

in Sunday's contest between the clubs. "Just incredible. The dream came true. The dream actually came true today," Pawol said following the game. "And I'm still living in it." The historic moment for Pawol came when Atlanta starting pitcher Hurston Waldrep threw the opening pitch. She later inspected Waldrep's hands for foreign substances as part of her game duties. "Once I started umpiring, I was like, 'This is for me,'" Pawol recalled before the game. "I can't explain it. It's just in my DNA. "This is a viable career, to become a professional umpire, for men and women, girls and boys. I'm able to make a living doing it and I'm passionate about it. I just work harder

every day and get better before tomorrow." In the game, Drake Baldwin singled in two runs and Michael Harris smashed a three-run home run in the seventh inning to lead the Braves over Miami, 7-1. Pawol began working as an umpire in the rookie-level Gulf Coast League in 2016 and last year became the first woman umpire in a pre-season spring training game since Ria Cortesio in 2007 before making her historic breakthrough in a regular-season game. "It has been a long, hard journey to the top here," Pawol said. "I'm just extremely focused on getting my calls right and I'm so grateful to all those along the way who have helped me become a better umpire

every day." MLB's addition of a female umpire comes 28 years after Violet Palmieri became the first woman to referee an NBA game in October 1997. Shannon Eastin was the NFL's first female on-field official, hired as a replacement when regular officials were locked out in a contract dispute in September 2012. Three years later, Sarah Thomas became the NFL's first full-time female on-field official and last year, two women worked on the officiating crew of the same game for the first time. Stephanie Frappart of France was the first woman to referee a men's World Cup match when she worked a group stage match in 2022. – Agencies

## Dar, Turkish FM discuss bilateral ties

FROM PAGE 01  
international law and UNSC resolutions," Foreign Office Spokesperson, on Sunday, said in a press statement. DPM/FM Dar also stressed the urgent need for providing unimpeded humanitarian assistance and an end to Israeli impunity. international law and UNSC resolutions," Foreign Office Spokesperson, on Sunday, said in a press statement. DPM/FM Dar also stressed the urgent need for providing unimpeded humanitarian assistance and an end to Israeli impunity.



## Briefs

## Iraqi PM removes commanders after deadly clash

BAGHDAD: Iraq's prime minister approved sweeping disciplinary and legal measures against senior commanders in a paramilitary force after clashes with police at a government facility that left three people dead last month, his office said Saturday.

Gunmen descended on the agricultural directorate in Baghdad's Karkh district on July 27 and clashed with federal police. The raid came after the former head of the directorate was ousted and a new one appointed.

A government-commissioned investigation found that the former director — who was implicated in corruption cases — had called in members of the Kataib Hezbollah militia to stage the attack, Sabah Al-Numan, a spokesperson for Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani, said in a statement Saturday. Al-Sudani, who also serves as commander in chief of the armed forces, ordered the formation of a committee to investigate the attack. — Agencies

## UK slammed for arrests of Palestine Action protesters

LONDON: Amnesty International has branded reports that police in the UK arrested 474 people at a Palestine Action protest "deeply concerning."

It comes after a demonstration was held in Parliament Square in central London in support of the group, which was banned by the UK government earlier this year as a terrorist organization. The Metropolitan Police said it was the largest spate of arrests it had made at a single event in over a decade, and that 466 people at the protest were arrested under the Terrorism Act. Sacha Deshmukh, Amnesty International's UK chief executive, said: "The protesters in Parliament Square were not inciting violence and it is entirely disproportionate to the point of absurdity to be treating them as terrorists. "Instead of criminalizing peaceful demonstrators, the government should be focusing on taking immediate and unequivocal action to put a stop to Israel's genocide and ending any risk of UK complicity in it." Those arrested included healthcare professionals, a blind wheelchair user, and former Guantanamo Bay detainee Moazzam Begg. — Agencies

## Australia condemned for not ending export of weapons parts to Israel

LONDON: The Australian government has been criticized by opposition politicians and human rights experts for continuing to export components to Israel used to make weapons. The Australian Greens condemned the Labor government of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, with its foreign affairs spokesperson David Shoebridge stating: "The Australian public knows that the Albanese government is permitting the export of armored steel, F-35 weapons parts and other critical materials to Israel and wants it to stop."

Shoebridge added: "Two years of hollow talking points from the Albanese government aren't washing with the public anymore as we watch a genocide in real time." It comes after the country's Defense Minister Richard Marles said Australia did not send weapons to Israel but would continue to manufacture and export parts for the Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter jet, which is used by the Israeli military. "We're an F-35 country and we have been that for a couple of decades," Marles said. "That is a multi-lateral arrangement with supply chains that are organized by Lockheed Martin in the United States and have multiple suppliers in respect of all of those supply chains." — Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Khalid Hussain Magsi, met the Ambassador of Romania, Dr. Dan Stoenescu to discuss enhanced cooperation in science, technology, innovation, and education. — DNA

## Israel faces growing calls to scrap new Gaza offensive plans

"The invasion of Gaza risks turning into a Vietnam for Israeli soldiers," Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said in an interview with daily Il Messaggero

JERUSALEM/CAIRO: Israel's far-right finance minister has demanded Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu scrap his plan to seize Gaza City in favor of a tougher one, while Italy said on Sunday the plan could result in a "Vietnam" for Israel's army. Netanyahu's security cabinet, of which the minister, Bezalel Smotrich, is a member, approved the plan by majority on Friday to expand military operations in the shattered Palestinian enclave to try to defeat militant group Hamas. The move drew a chorus of condemnation within Israel, where thousands of people protested in Tel Aviv on Saturday calling for an immediate ceasefire and release of hostages held by militant group Hamas, as well as abroad. The United Nations Security Council was expected to meet later on Sunday to discuss the plan, with

many countries expressing concern it could worsen already acute hunger among Palestinians. Netanyahu was expected to give a news conference for international media in Israel and make a televised announcement later in the day. It was not clear what he would say. Smotrich said he has lost faith in Netanyahu's ability and desire to lead to a victory over Hamas. The new plan, he said in a video on X late on Saturday, was intended to get Hamas back to ceasefire negotiations. The prime minister and the cabinet have decided to do "more of the same" he said, referring to the fact that Israeli troops have entered the city before and failed to defeat Hamas. He and other far-right members of Netanyahu's coalition argue that the plan does not go far enough while the army, which opposes military rule in Gaza, has warned it would endanger remaining

hostages held by Hamas as well as Israeli troops. Smotrich stopped short of delivering a clear ultimatum to Netanyahu. Other far-right coalition allies of Netanyahu have also pushed for total military occupation of Gaza, the annexation of large swaths of the territory and the removal of much of its Palestinian population. National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who has made similar calls, told Army Radio on Sunday that the plan to take over Gaza City was a good one, as long as it was a first step. The Israeli military has warned that expanding the offensive could endanger the lives of hostages. Hamas is still holding in Gaza, believed to number around 20, and draw its troops into protracted and deadly guerilla warfare. Italy said Israel should heed its army's warnings. "The invasion of Gaza risks

turning into a Vietnam for Israeli soldiers," Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said in an interview with daily Il Messaggero. He reiterated calls for a United Nations mission led by Arab countries to "reunify the Palestinian state" and said Italy was ready to participate. The Security Council is likely to discuss the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the prospect of its worsening if the Israeli plan goes ahead but there has so far been little appetite among Arab states to send their troops in. Israel has already come under mounting pressure over widespread hunger and thirst in the enclave, prompting it to announce a series of new measures to ease aid distribution. The Israeli military said on Sunday that the contents of nearly 1,900 aid trucks were distributed last week from the Gaza sides of the Kerem Shalom and Zikim border crossings. A spokesperson

was not immediately available to comment on the reported figure but the United Nations has said Gaza needs far more aid to come in. On Saturday, medics said that a 14-year-old boy was killed by an aid airdrop that fell on a tent encampment in central Gaza. A video, verified by Reuters, that went viral on social media, showed the parachuted aid box falling on the teenager who, among many other desperate Palestinians, was awaiting food. The Hamas-run Gaza government media office said the new death raised the number of people killed during the airdrops to 23 since the war began, almost two years ago. "We have repeatedly warned of the dangers of these inhumane methods and have consistently called for the safe and sufficient delivery of aid through land crossings, especially food, infant formula, medicines, and medical

supplies," it said. Five more people, including two children, died of malnutrition and starvation in Gaza in the past 24 hours, the health ministry said, taking the number of deaths from such causes to 217, including 100 children. The war began on October 7, 2023 when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel and killed 1,200 people, and took 251 hostages. Israeli authorities say 20 of the remaining 50 hostages in Gaza are alive. Israel's offensive in Gaza has since killed more than 61,000 Palestinians, according to health officials, and left much of the territory in ruins. Gaza medics said Israeli fire killed at least six Palestinians on Sunday, four of them in an airstrike in Khan Younis and two more people among crowds seeking aid in central Gaza. The Israeli military did not immediately comment on the report. — Agencies

## Firefighters battling huge blaze in France

FONTJONCOUSE: Firefighters have contained a massive wildfire in southern France but local officials warned on Sunday that scorching heat and dry conditions could reignite the blaze, as parts of the Mediterranean region face a heatwave.

The fire has ravaged a vast area of France's southern Aude department at the peak of the summer tourist season, killing one person and injuring several others. Authorities said that hot, dry winds on Sunday — similar to those on the day the blaze began — and a heatwave would make the work of firefighters more difficult. "It's a challenging day, given that we are likely to be on red alert for heatwave from 4:00 pm, which will not make things any easier," said Christian Pouget, prefect of the Aude department.

The fire is no longer spreading but is still burning within a 16,000-hectare area, said Christophe Magny on Saturday, chief of the region's firefighter unit, adding it would not be under control until Sunday evening. But the blaze will "not be extinguished for several weeks," he said. Some 1,300 firefighters were mobilized to prevent the blaze from reigniting amid fears that the tramontane wind, which officials said picked up overnight Saturday to Sunday, could fan lingering hot spots. — APP

## PFC for taking swift advantage of low US tariff

LAHORE: Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq said on Sunday that Pakistan must take swift advantage of the US low tariff by boosting its exports on top priority. Chairing the PFC meeting here Sunday, he said Pakistan's exports to the US bear lower tariffs than countries like Vietnam and Bangladesh. And the development could open up space for manufacturers, particularly in textiles and clothing. Pakistan must benefit from this opening in the American market and attract FDI in export-oriented industries. The global supply chain shift — accelerated by President Trump's tariffs — is already underway. He said Pak exports to United States must take advantage of lower tariffs compared to competitors creating a significant competitive edge. This development offers a promising opportunity for local manufacturers, especially in the high-potential sectors of textiles and clothing, which form the backbone of Pakistan's export portfolio. — APP

## Call for gradual reduction in policy rate

LAHORE: Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Coordinator Saif-ur-Rehman has urged the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to gradually reduce the policy rate to a single digit. In a statement issued here Sunday, he highlighted that reducing the policy rate would provide small and medium enterprises (SMEs), access to loans at lower costs which would boost economic activity, create employment opportunities, and enhance exports. He stressed that the current high-interest rate is non-lucrative to investment and places an excessive financial burden on industries already struggling with inflation and economic challenges. He urged policymakers to adopt business-friendly monetary policies to support local industries and promote economic stability. He also pointed out that regional competitors offer lower borrowing rates, making Pakistani industries less competitive in the global market. Saif Ur Rehman suggested that lowering the policy rate would restore investor confidence and attract foreign direct investment (FDI). He reiterated that a stable and growth-oriented economic policy is crucial for Pakistan's economic revival and long-term sustainability. He argued that high borrowing costs under the current monetary policy have stifled business expansion, hampered job creation, and limited access to affordable financing for industries, particularly SMEs. He emphasized that lowering the policy rate would reduce loan costs, enabling businesses to invest in modernization. — APP

## Unlocking Pak's \$25b crypto dream requires smart regulation

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is positioning itself to tap into a projected \$2.5 billion market by 2025 end and 29 million users by 2026, signaling a potential fintech leap for the country. However, this promise is conditional on enacting smart regulations, raising public awareness, and building trust in digital finance. Without a clear legal framework and national strategy, Pakistan risks falling behind as over 130 countries move forward with regulated crypto ecosystems and digital currencies. Amayed Ashfaq Tola, President of Tola Associates, speaking to media emphasized, "Crypto's potential can only be realized through robust protocols and clear regulations. The new Virtual Assets Ordinance and Regulatory Authority lay the groundwork,

but the FBR must adopt a growth-oriented tax approach. Internationally, a FATF-aligned framework and cross-border cooperation are essential for investor confidence." In the public eye, cryptocurrency is often associated with scams and unrealistic promises, further breeding skepticism. Rural populations face additional obstacles: poor internet connectivity, limited access to learning resources, mostly in English, and confusion over legal status due to past bans. Yet the potential is undeniable. If embraced and regulated effectively, crypto could reshape Pakistan's economy, enabling low-cost remittances, expanding financial access to unbanked populations, and creating a new wave of digital entrepreneurship.

Sardar M. Ahsan Ahmed, Head of Economic Advisory, talking to this scribe reinforced this, saying, "Cryptocurrency offers Pakistan immense economic potential, from faster remittances and greater financial inclusion to new tech-driven jobs and global investment. But this promise depends entirely on establishing strong regulatory frameworks and public awareness."

Government interest appears to be growing. The formation of the Pakistan Crypto Council (PCC), chaired by Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, and the appointment of Bilal Saqib as State Minister for Blockchain and PCC CEO, signal a shift toward formal recognition of digital assets. The government has also announced plans to integrate crypto into various sectors, including energy. Legal clarity would allow for licensed exchanges, taxation systems, and possibly even a Digital Rupee, improving transparency and enabling efficient subsidy and tax tracking. Cross-border B2B trade could benefit from faster payments, while reduced remittance fees could strengthen forex reserves. —Agencies

## Over 600 pilgrims hospitalized due to chlorine gas leak

KARBALA: More than 600 pilgrims in Iraq were briefly hospitalized with respiratory problems after inhaling chlorine as the result of a leak at a water treatment station, authorities said Sunday. The incident took place overnight on the route between the two Shiite holy cities of Najaf and Karbala, located in the center and south of Iraq respectively. This year, several million Shiite Muslim pilgrims are expected to make their way to Karbala, which houses the shrines of the revered Imam Hussein and his brother Abbas. There, they will mark the Arbacen — the 40-day period of mourning during which Shiites commemorate the death of Hussein, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. In a brief statement, Iraq's health ministry said "621 cases of asphyxia have been recorded following a chlorine gas leak in Karbala." "All have received the necessary care and left hospital in good health," it said. Security forces charged with protecting pilgrims meanwhile said the incident had been caused by "a chlorine leak from a water station on the Karbala-Najaf road." Much of Iraq's infrastructure is in disrepair due to decades of conflict and corruption, with adherence to safety standards often lax. — Agencies

## India braces for economic impact of Trump's new tariffs

The move increased the total duty on Indian exports to 50 percent. While India's Ministry of External Affairs vowed to "take all actions necessary to protect its national interests," experts do not see much room for negotiations, as the tariff regime is set to take effect next month

NEW DELHI: India is bracing for the impact of new US tariffs, with experts warning of the economic and political consequences of an unprecedented duty on exports, marking one of the highest tariffs the US has ever imposed on a major trading partner. In an unexpected move last week, US President Donald Trump imposed an additional 25 percent tariff on Indian goods, citing New Delhi's purchases of Russian oil. His Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller said the oil imports amounted to "financing" Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The move increased the total duty on Indian exports to 50 percent. While India's Ministry of External Affairs vowed to "take all actions necessary to protect its national interests," experts do not see much room for negotiations, as the tariff regime is set to take effect next month. "It will have economic repercussions if things are not changed.

Fifty percent is a lot, and it will affect us. Right now, there is an exemption for pharmaceuticals, but in other areas, there will be an impact," Manoj Joshi, distinguished fellow at the Observer Research Foundation, told Arab News. "We don't have much leverage. We don't have many options. The US is the one taking these actions, so unless and until the US withdraws these taxes, there is not much India can do." The US and India have been in tariff talks since the beginning of the year, in the wake of the US ongoing global tariff campaign. Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a personal visit to Washington, D.C., in February to meet Trump and discuss strengthening bilateral ties, trade relations, and the procurement of new US weapons and aircraft. In April, the Trump administration imposed a 25 percent reciprocal tariff on Indian goods in response to India's continued purchases of Russian oil and to rec-

tify trade imbalances. A new deal was expected in July, but Trump did not approve it, leading to a breakdown in talks. The US threatened to increase tariffs on India if it were not given broader access to several key sectors, including automobiles, steel, aluminum, and dairy products — a concession New Delhi resisted. "India is not going to compromise on agriculture and dairy products. India will find it very difficult to stop buying Russian oil. There is not much room for any kind of concessions from India's side," Joshi said. The US is India's largest export market, accounting for 18 percent of its exports and 2.2 percent of its gross domestic product. The latest estimates by Indian economists suggest that the new tariff could reduce GDP by 0.2 to 0.8 percentage points. It could also have an impact on India's global standing. After emerging as a new superpower when it

hosted the G20 Summit in 2023 and over the past few years betting everything on its strategic partnership with the US, India may now be forced to recalibrate its relations, including with its rival China. India is a member of the QUAD — Quadrilateral Security Dialogue — a forum that also includes the US, Japan, and Australia and focuses on regional security and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. India's engagement with the bloc has increased in recent years, shifting from its earlier engagement with BRICS — a grouping that includes also Brazil, Russia, China, and Indonesia, and is the most powerful geopolitical forum outside of the Western world, accounting for 45 percent of the world's population and 35 percent of its economy. In the wake of tensions with the US, Modi is expected to visit China for a summit of the multilateral Shanghai Cooperation Organiza-

tion and meet Chinese President Xi Jinping in late August. This will be his first official trip to China in over six years. The last visit took place before the 2020 Galwan Valley border clashes, which significantly strained India-China ties. Modi's office said on Saturday that he had invited Vladimir Putin to visit Delhi by the year's end. It would be the Russian president's first trip to India since December 2021. "Consequences would be there so long as Trump is there. But the whole episode has exposed the leadership of India," said Mohan Guruswamy, policy analyst specializing in economic and security issues. "India has been ignoring its traditional allies. It has been pursuing QUAD and trying to appease the US, forgetting China and Russia. It has been pursuing the US and calling them strategic allies, and now the US has given it a shock." —Agencies



## Briefs

Pak hails  
Azerbaijan-  
Armenia  
peace deal

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan welcomed the signing of the peace agreement between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia. This historic moment reflects the wisdom and sagacity of Azerbaijan's leadership in bringing a prolonged conflict to a peaceful resolution. Pakistan acknowledges and appreciates the efforts of President Trump in fostering conflict resolution and promoting peace across various regions of the world. As a steadfast advocate for peace and stability in the Caucasus and beyond, Pakistan hopes this agreement will mark the beginning of a new era of prosperity and enduring peace not only for Azerbaijan and Armenia but for the entire region.

Germany's  
Merz faces  
discord  
at home

BERLIN: German Chancellor Friedrich Merz has driven sweeping changes in security, economic and migration policy during his first 100 days in office, but faces widening cracks in his uneasy coalition. On election night in February, a jubilant Merz promised to bring a bit of "rambo zambo" to the post – using a colloquialism that can evoke a wild and joyous ride, or chaos and mayhem. Having achieved his life's ambition at age 69 to run Europe's top economy, Merz lost no time to push change, mostly in response to transatlantic turbulence sparked by US President Donald Trump. Germany is back," Merz said, vowing to revive the economy, the military and Berlin's international standing after what he labelled three lacklustre years under his centre-left predecessor Olaf Scholz, before taking office, Merz's Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and their governing partners from Scholz's Social Democratic party (SPD) loosened debt rules and unlocked hundreds of billions of euros for Germany's armed forces and its crumbling infrastructure. – APP

Smuggled  
goods cost  
country  
dearly

NEWS DESK

KARACHI: The recent reduction in the State Bank of Pakistan's policy rate to 11 per cent, nearly half of what it was in July 2024, has failed to generate enthusiasm among the country's traders and industrialists. While the rate cut is seen as a step towards easing the cost of doing business, many in the sector argue that it remains uncompetitive compared to regional rates and does little to address the core challenges hindering economic growth. Industry leaders point to the high cost of production and the rising influx of smuggled goods from countries such as Iran, China, and Bangladesh.



The evening also featured a fashion show themed “Fabrics of ASEAN and Pakistan”, traditional handicrafts, tourism showcases, and ASEAN cuisine

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Myanmar to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Wunna Han, speaking as Chair of the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad (ACI), underscored ASEAN's remarkable journey, unity in diversity, and deepening partnership with Pakistan at a reception marking the 58th ASEAN Day at Serena Hotel. Federal Minister for Culture and National Heritage Aurangzeb Khichi was the chief guest on the occasion. Ambassador Wunna Han recalled that ASEAN was founded on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok with five founding members – Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand – during the height

of the Cold War, despite early doubts about its survival. Today, ASEAN has 10 member states, a combined population of 690 million, and an estimated GDP of USD 4.12 trillion, making it the world's fifth-largest economy. Timor-Leste is set to become the 11th member in the near future. He highlighted ASEAN's guiding principles – mutual respect for sovereignty, non-interference, peaceful dispute settlement, and consensus-building – which have enabled it to address diverse challenges from border disputes to transnational crimes. “We proudly say ‘Unity in Diversity,’” he noted, citing recent examples of peaceful dispute resolution among member states. On Myanmar, the Ambassador acknowledged the country's political challenges since 2021 and ASE-

AN's active role through the Five-Point Consensus to engage all stakeholders. He announced that Myanmar is preparing for general elections in December 2025, with a firm commitment to transfer power to the elected leadership. Turning to ASEAN-Pakistan relations, Ambassador Wunna Han praised Pakistan as ASEAN's first and longest-serving Sectoral Dialogue Partner, a signatory to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation since 2004, and an active participant in the ASEAN Regional Forum. He outlined ongoing cooperation under the ASEAN-Pakistan Practical Cooperation Areas (PCA) 2024-2028, including scholarships, cultural exchanges, poverty alleviation initiatives, pandemic response, and capacity-building programs. He encouraged Pakistan's support for ASE-

AN Community Vision 2045 and collaboration on sustainable development, connectivity, and smart cities initiatives. In a lighter note, the Ambassador announced a new initiative – free weekend kayaking sessions for diplomats and friends of the diplomatic community from August 2025 to January 2026. The evening also featured a fashion show themed “Fabrics of ASEAN and Pakistan”, traditional handicrafts, tourism showcases, and ASEAN cuisine. “ASEAN-Pakistan Zindabad!” the Ambassador concluded. Heads of missions from ASEAN member states, along with their staff members, brought added vibrancy to the celebrations by participating in the colourful fashion show, where they showcased the traditional attire and cultural heritage of their respective countries.

Trump nominates  
Bruce as US  
deputy rep to UN

DNA

WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump said on Saturday he was nominating State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce as the next US deputy representative to the United Nations. Bruce has been the State Department spokesperson since Trump took office in January. In a post on social media in which Trump announced her nomination, the president said she did a “fantastic job” as State Department spokesperson. Bruce will need to be confirmed for the role by the US Senate, where Trump's Republican Party holds a majority. During press briefings, she has defended the Trump administration's foreign policy decisions ranging from an immigration crackdown and visa revocations to US responses to the Russia-Ukraine war and Israel's military onslaught on Gaza, including a widely condemned armed private aid operation in the Palestinian territory. Bruce was previously a political contributor and commentator on Fox News for over 20 years.

Kazakhstan's  
president to visit  
Pakistan in Nov

The visit is expected to bring about major breakthroughs in bilateral relations between both countries. Prior to the visit, Joint Working Groups between Pakistan and Kazakhstan will be established in the fields of Commerce and Transport

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin on Saturday expressed his country's readiness to provide full investment for the construction of new trade corridors through China to Central Asian States. The initiative aims to replace the existing challenging land routes with improved connectivity, thereby boosting bilateral and regional trade. During his meeting with Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan, Ambassador Yerzhan Kistafin shared that the President of Kazakhstan will undertake a two-day official visit to Pakistan in the first week of November, said a press release. The visit is expected to bring about major breakthroughs in bilateral relations between both countries. Prior to the visit, Joint Working Groups between Pakistan and Kazakhstan will be established in the fields of Commerce and Transport. He further emphasized his country's

strong interest in expanding bilateral trade with Pakistan and discussed the existing corridor from Kashgar to Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan while he also proposed improvements to the trade route from Karachi to Chaman to Kandahar, presently available for trade. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan assured the Yerzhan Kistafin his full cooperation, reiterating that Pakistan is committed to take concrete measures for establishing trade corridors to Central Asian States through China, Afghanistan, and Iran. Referring to recent international conferences held in Belarus and Iran, he stated that regional countries play a pivotal role in promoting cross-border trade through land routes. Abdul Aleem Khan added that Pakistan aspires to develop an inter-country road network similar to the Karakoram Highway. In the meeting, matters pending with NLC regarding trade agreements were also discussed. Federal Secretary for Communications Ali Sher Mehsud was also present in the meeting.

Karachi mob burns  
seven dumpers

Dumpers Association stages sit-in on Superhighway against torching of 7 trucks, blocking both tracks for traffic

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: An infuriated mob in Karachi set fire to at least seven dumper trucks after two siblings were crushed to death by one of the vehicles in a road accident on Rashid Minhas Road in the early hours of Sunday. The incident took place late in the night between Saturday and Sunday in the metropolis's Federal B Area, where the truck ran over the motorcycle. Speaking to reporters, SP Gulberg Iqbal Shaikh said that the motorcycle was carrying a father, his son, and daughter at the time of the collision. The three sustained injuries in the incident; however, the siblings – 22-year-old Mahnoor and 14-year-old Ahmed Raza – later succumbed to their wounds, he added. Following the accident, residents in the area became enraged, setting fire to several dumper trucks. The officer said the dumper truck driver was assaulted by residents before being taken into custody in an injured state. He confirmed that seven dumper trucks were torched, with operations underway to clear the charred vehicles from the road. A spokesperson for police said dumper driver was arrested on the spot while 10 suspects involved in the torching of the dumpers were also taken into custody. The spokesperson added that more arrests will be made with the help of CCTV footages. Traffic on Rashid Minhas Road was suspended after the incident and is being diverted from the Sohrab Goth flyover towards the Sharea Pakistan Water Pump. All Pakistan Dumpers Association staged a sit-in on Superhighway to protest against the torching of the seven trucks, blocking both tracks of the main artery for the traffic. Traffic has been diverted from Punjab Adda to Sohrab Goth police station, the traffic police said in statement.

European leaders urge more 'pressure'  
on Russia ahead of Trump-Putin summit

KYIV: European leaders urged more “pressure” on Russia overnight Saturday, after the announcement of a Trump-Putin summit to end the war in Ukraine raised concern that an agreement would require Kyiv to cede swathes of territory. Presidents Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump will meet in the US state of Alaska this Friday to try to resolve the three-year conflict, despite warnings from Ukraine and Europe that Kyiv must be part of negotiations. Announcing the summit last week, Trump said that “there’ll be some swapping of territories to the betterment of both” sides, without elaborating. But President Volodymyr Zelensky warned Saturday that Ukraine won't surrender land to Russia to buy peace. “Ukrainians will not give their land to the occupier,” he said on social media. “Any decisions against us, any decisions without Ukraine, are also decisions against peace,” he added.

Zelensky urged Ukraine's allies to take “clear steps” towards achieving a sustainable peace during a call with Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer. European leaders issued a joint statement overnight Saturday to Sunday saying that “only an approach that combines active diplomacy, support to Ukraine and pressure on the Russian Federation to end their illegal war can succeed”. They welcomed Trump's efforts, saying they were ready to help diplomatically – by maintaining support to Ukraine, as well as by upholding and imposing restrictive measures against Russia. “The current line of contact should be the starting point of negotiations”, said the statement, signed by leaders from France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Britain, Finland and EU Commission chief Ursula Von Der Leyen, without giving more details. They also said a resolution “must protect Ukraine's and Europe's vital security interests”,

including “the need for robust and credible security guarantees that enable Ukraine to effectively defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity”. “The path to peace in Ukraine cannot be decided without Ukraine,” they said. National security advisors from Kyiv's allies – including the United States, EU nations and the UK – gathered in Britain Saturday to align their views ahead of the Putin-Trump summit. French President Emmanuel Macron, following phone calls with Zelensky, Starmer and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, said “the future of Ukraine cannot be decided without Ukrainians” and that Europe also had to be involved in the negotiations. In his evening address Saturday, Zelensky stressed: “There must be an honest end to this war, and it is up to Russia to end the war it started.” Three rounds of talks between Russia and Ukraine this year have failed to bear fruit. – Agencies

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