



Islamabad POST

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Kayaking event to Mark ASEAN Day Celebrations held

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May 9 riots cases

Qureshi acquitted; other PTI leaders get heavy sentences

The verdict has sparked a new wave of political debate across the country, with many questioning the apparent disparity in judicial outcomes for different leaders linked to the same series of events

STAFF REPORT / DNA

LAHORE: In a major development in the ongoing legal proceedings against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders, the court on Monday acquitted former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in 2 cases related to the May 9 incidents. However, other prominent PTI figures were not as fortunate. Former Punjab minister Mahmood-ur-Rashid and former federal minister Sarfraz Cheema were each handed 10-year prison sentences, while PTI leaders Alia Hamza and Sanam Javed were sentenced to 5 years each. The verdict has sparked a new wave of political debate across the country, with many questioning the apparent disparity in judicial outcomes for different leaders linked to the same series of events. The acquittal of Qureshi, a senior PTI figure and two-time foreign minister, has given rise to speculation that a "deal" may have been reached with the establishment — a claim widely discussed in political circles though officially unacknowledged. Observers note that Qureshi has been acquitted in multiple cases in recent months, fuelling predictions that he may soon be allowed to walk free entirely. Meanwhile, the harsh punishments for those perceived as "non-compromising" leaders have amplified concerns over selective justice. Both Mahmood-ur-Rashid and Sarfraz Cheema have been vocal in their criticism of the government and have refused to distance themselves from PTI's core political narrative. Likewise, Alia Hamza and Sanam Javed have been known for their staunch party loyalty and outspoken stance against what they term as "political victimisation." This pattern has led to growing unease among political

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PTI asked to delay August 14 demonstrations

PM adviser's remarks follow PTI founder's call for party supporters to "take to the streets in full force"

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah has urged the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership to reschedule its planned nationwide protest, saying occasions should unite the nation rather than become a day of political confrontation. "Independence Day should be a time for the entire nation to celebrate together, not a day of political confrontation," the PM's aide said, speaking on Geo News's programme Naya Pakistan with Shahzad Iqbal. His remarks came after a post from PTI founder and former prime minister Imran Khan's X account on August 6, calling on supporters to "take to

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Diplomatic success?

Govt hails Hague court's award on Indus Water

India in April held the IWT in abeyance following the attack in occupied Kashmir's Pahalgam that killed 26 — an incident New Delhi blamed on Islamabad without evidence

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Monday welcomed the decision by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague to issue an "Award on Issues of General Interpretation of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)" in the Indus Waters case, stating that India must generally "let flow" the waters of the western rivers for Pakistan's "unrestricted use." India in April held the IWT in abeyance following the attack in occupied Kashmir's Pahalgam that killed 26 — an incident New Delhi blamed on Islamabad without evidence. Pakistan termed any attempt to suspend its water share an "act of war", noting the IWT had no provision for unilateral suspension. It later said it was considering court action, citing a violation of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. A supplemental award by the PCA in June held that India could not unilaterally hold

the treaty in abeyance. India, in response, said it did not recognise the court or its decisions. A press release issued today by the PCA said it rendered an award on Friday in an arbitration initiated by Pakistan against India on August 19, 2016, pursuant to Article IX and Annexure G to the IWT. "This arbitration concerns the interpretation and application of the IWT to certain design elements of the run-of-river hydro-electric plants that India is permitted by the treaty to construct on the tributaries of the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab Rivers." Regarding the overall approach to Article 3 (provisions regarding western rivers) of the IWT, the award said: "The general rule is that India shall 'let flow' the waters of the western rivers for Pakistan's unrestricted use. "There are certain specified exceptions to this rule, including in relation to the generation of hydroelectric power, but these exceptions must be strictly construed:

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'Voter fraud': Indian police detain Rahul, Priyanka

Indian opposition leader was leading a protest march towards ECI office in New Delhi

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: Indian Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and other opposition leaders were detained by New Delhi Police during their protest march against the Election Commission of India's (ECI) office over "voter fraud" allegations, according to Indian media. Apart from Rahul and his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, the New Delhi Police detained several opposition members of parliament (MPs). "This fight is not political... it is to save the Constitution. The fight is for 'one person, one vote,'" NDTV reported Rahul as saying while being shifted by the police. Confirming the opposition leaders' detention, Joint Commissioner of Police Deepak Purohit said that the politicians had been taken to a nearby police station. The police officer, citing reasons behind their detention, said that the opposition lacked the necessary permission to hold a protest of such scale and that only 30 MPs were allowed to

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Trump's tariffs spark calls to boycott American goods

DNA

NEW DELHI: US-based multinationals are facing boycott calls in India as business executives and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's supporters stoke anti-American sentiment to protest against US tariffs. India, the world's most populous nation, is a key market for American brands that have rapidly expanded to target a growing base of affluent consumers, many of whom remain infatuated with international labels seen as symbols of moving up in life. India, for example, is the biggest market by users for Meta's WhatsApp and a popular

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ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari, along with ministers and heads of minority communities, cuts a cake at Aiwan-e-Sadr on 11 August 2025 to celebrate National Minorities Day. First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari is also present. — DNA

Air India to stop Delhi-Washington services

Decision taken due to aircraft shortage and closure of Pakistan's airspace

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: Air India said on Monday it would stop services between the capital cities of India and the US from September 1, citing aircraft shortage due to the planned upgrades to its aging Boeing planes and the closure of Pakistan's airspace. The suspension of services between New Delhi and Washington, DC, marks the latest setback for Air India, which is facing heightened regulatory scrutiny after a June crash in Ahmedabad killed 260 people. The planned shortfall in Air India's fleet and continued closure of airspace over Pakistan have impacted the airline's

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2nd phase of Hajj applications

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has opened the second phase of receiving Haj applications for 2026, which will be accepted from August 11 to August 16, state-run Radio Pakistan reported on Monday. On Saturday, the ministry successfully completed the first phase for Haj next year, receiving more than 71,000 application submissions through its online portal and designated banks, the ministry's spokesperson Muhammad Umar Butt said in a statement. "In the second phase, which will continue till Saturday,

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After airstrikes

Pakistan calls for Israel's accountability

Reaffirms unwavering solidarity with Palestinian people during period of profound suffering

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday strongly condemns the recent airstrike by Israeli occupying forces in Gaza, which tragically resulted in the loss of numerous civilian lives. The Foreign Office, in a statement, said: "Pakistan extends its deepest condolences to the families of the victims and reaffirms its unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people during this period of profound suffering." Slamming Israel, FO spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan said that the egregious attack constituted yet another serious violation of international humanitarian and human rights law, underscoring the scale and severity of the crimes perpetrated by the occupying power. It added that the Pakistani government called upon the international community to take immediate and decisive action to end Israeli impunity, ensure the protection of civilians, and hold Israel accountable for its actions. Pakistan reiterated its

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Pakistan rejects Indian ministry remarks

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday strongly rejected what it termed as "immature remarks" made by India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) regarding the statements attributed to Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff. In a sharply worded response, the Foreign Office Spokesperson accused New Delhi of having a "chronic tendency" to distort facts and twist statements out of context. The spokesperson dismissed India's narrative of "nuclear blackmail" as a "misleading and self-serving construct," stressing that Pakistan remains firmly opposed to the use or threat of use of force.

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PDMA issues flood advisory as Punjab braces for 7th spell

Disaster management authority says fresh spell of rains to hit province from August 13

ABID LATEEF

ISLAMABAD: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) of Punjab on Monday issued a flood advisory as the province braces for a seventh spell of monsoon rains from August 13. In its advisory, the PDMA said that a fresh monsoon spell is likely to cause rising water levels in major rivers, including the Sutlej, Ravi, Chenab and Jhelum, as well as their adjoining streams and tributaries.

The PDMA warned of flooding in low-lying and riverine areas due to expected heavy rainfall. Commissioners, deputy commissioners, and all relevant departments have been instructed to remain on high alert, the advisory read. Meanwhile, Punjab PDMA Irfan Ali Kathia has urged local authorities to ensure the evacuation of residents and livestock from riverbanks. He also reminded the public that swimming in rivers, canals, and water bodies is

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AUGUST 2025

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Briefs

Chehlum of Imam Hussain Section 144 imposed in 13 KP districts

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Home Department has imposed Section 144 in 13 districts of the province in connection with the observance of Chehlum of Imam Hussain (AS) to maintain law and order, said a notification issued here on Monday. According to the Home Department, the districts where Section 144 will remain in force include Kohat, Hangu, Bannu, Tank, Dera Ismail Khan, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Haripur, Nowshera, Kurram, Mardan, and Lakki Marwat. The order will remain effective for one week.

Under Section 144, pillion riding, wall chalking, and hatred speeches have been banned, along with gatherings of five or more people in the mentioned districts. The notification further prohibits the display of weapons, aerial firing, use of black-tinted windows, loudspeakers, fireworks, and dissemination of objectionable material.

Authorities have also barred people from standing on rooftops along procession routes, restricted the public movement of Afghan nationals, and limited the entry of outsiders into these districts during the enforcement period. – APP

Rs 2 billion bailout for QAU hailed

ISLAMABAD: The Academic Staff Association (ASA) of Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) expressed gratitude to the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC), for approving a Rs. 2 billion bailout package for the university during its recent meeting, chaired by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb. Prof. Mazhar Iqbal, President of the Federation of All Pakistan Universities Academic Staff Associations (FAPUSA) and ASA-QAU, noted that the higher education recurring grant for university salary expenses has remained stagnant at Rs. 65 billion since 2018, said a press release on Monday. He further highlighted that as the number of universities has grown, the per-institution share has decreased, exacerbating financial pressures due to government-mandated salary increases and a rising number of pensioners. Prof. Iqbal hailed the bailout as a critical first step in prioritizing higher education and urged the government to extend similar financial relief to other older universities facing similar challenges. Considering bailout package as a short time solution, the government needs to increase share of universities in recurring grant by adding the impact of annual salary and pension increases, he urged. – APP

Ban imposed on Mishi Walk in Rawalpindi: Commission

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Engineer Amir Khattak, while presiding over the Divisional Coordination Committee (DCC) meeting on Monday, said that in view of security concerns, the government had imposed a ban on the Mishi Walk. He directed the police and administration to ensure the implementation of the ban on Arbaeen Walk in all the five districts of the Rawalpindi Division.

The meeting held here at the Commissioner's Office was attended by Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Hassan Waqar Cheema, Additional Commissioner Coordination Syed Nazarat Ali and heads of other relevant departments. The deputy commissioners of Chakwal, Jhelum, Murree and Attock participated through video link. The meeting reviewed the preparations, security arrangements, and law and order situation on the occasion of Chehlum Imam Hussain (AS). The Commissioner directed that steps be taken to prevent the holding of Mishi Walk by keeping close contact with the peace committees of all districts, religious scholars and stakeholders. – APP



MANDI BAHAUDDIN: Traditional wrestlers (Pehalwans) are in action during Freestyle Wrestling competition at an Akhara (wrestling pit) during annual Mela Baba Naadir Shah Kirmani Jakhar. – DNA

Zardari vows to work for welfare, protection of minorities' rights

Speaking on the occasion of National Minorities Day at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the heads of various minority communities thanked President Asif Ali Zardari for his historic decision in 2009, during his first tenure as President of Pakistan, to declare 11th August as National Minorities Day, to be observed each year

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has said that Pakistan's minority communities are an essential and respected part of society, and that their rights, freedoms, and safety are fully protected under the Constitution of Pakistan. He praised their valuable contributions to the country's strength and progress, noting their important role in national development. He made it clear that the State stands determined against all forms of discrimination, extremism, and violence, adding that such acts have no place in society and will not be allowed to threat-

en national unity and integrity.

The President said the State has taken practical measures to promote inclusion and ensure equal opportunities for all. These include separate seats for non-Muslims in the Parliament and Provincial Assemblies, a 5% quota in federal and provincial government jobs, and scholarships for minority students from the primary level to higher and professional education.

Speaking on the occasion of National Minorities Day at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the heads of various minority communities thanked President Asif Ali Zardari for his historic decision in 2009, during his first tenure as President of Pakistan, to declare 11th Au-

gust as National Minorities Day, to be observed each year. They acknowledged this initiative as a milestone in recognising their contributions and upholding their rights. He further assured the minority communities that their worship places, if presently under illegal occupation, would be retrieved without delay. He said he would ask the government to take steps to ensure such places are immediately restored to their rightful custodians.

He noted that the National Policy for Inter-faith Harmony has been designed to promote religious tolerance, strengthen social integration, and unite all religious communities as part of a cohesive national fabric.

The President said that our religion, Islam, upholds peace, justice, and human dignity – principles reflected in the Charter of Madina, which granted equal rights to all communities, including non-Muslims. He added that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah envisioned a Pakistan where every citizen, regardless of religion, would enjoy equal rights – a vision that continues to guide state policies. Marking the significance of the day, President Zardari called for a collective resolve to build an inclusive and stronger Pakistan where every citizen enjoys equality, mutual respect, and legal protection, and is empowered to contribute meaningfully to the nation's shared destiny.

Seminar on India's foreign policy ambitions, domestic governance held

ISLAMABAD: Experts recommend that Pakistan must assert its rights under international law in response to India's actions related to the Indus Waters Treaty To evaluate the BJP government's performance during the first year of its third term, with a particular focus on how 'Modi 3.0' fared on domestic socio-political, economic, military, and foreign policy fronts, the India Study Centre (ISC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organised a Round Table today, titled: "One Year of Modi 3.0 – India's Foreign Policy Ambitions and Domestic Governance."

The Round Table was attended by senior diplomats, practitioners, academics, think-tank experts, and area specialists. Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood delivered welcome remarks. Of the panellist, Dr. Raashid Wali Janjua spoke on the internal dynamics of Modi 3.0, while Ambassador Riffat

Masood covered the foreign policy arena. The distinguished participants included former Foreign Minister Ambassador Inam ul Haque. During the course of discussion, it was highlighted that since the beginning of 2025, the BJP has incurred losses in the internal political space, while India lost considerable ground in its international standing and image. There is deepening polarization in Indian society on political, social, economic, ethnic, linguistic and regional lines. The Waqf bill, migration laws, and revision of voter lists in states like Bihar indicated further shrinking space for the Muslims. 'Saf-ronisation' of key state institutions – including the Planning Commission, Election Commission, High Judiciary, and the Armed forces – has been the hallmark of the Modi era.

Experts also noted an ostensible rift between the RSS and BJP on a range of issues from appointment of

BJP party President, to PM Modi approaching the age of 75 years, to some BJP segments' clamour for a course independent from Nagpur. In the aftermath India-Pakistan conflict of May 2025, PM Modi's popularity has declined, but he could probably manage the mounting challenges. Internally, India is coping with issues like poverty, income inequality, and growing unemployment. In today's India, is witnessing creeping authoritarianism and majoritarianism. Pluralism is increasingly losing ground.

It was highlighted that in order to understand Indian policies, particularly towards Pakistan, the Indian "mind-set" needs to be understood first. Experts pointed out that India never accepted the creation of Pakistan and the current BJP leadership believed in the RSS fantasy of Akhand Bharat. Mr. Modi's disdain for Pakistan and his expansionist designs are reflective of this mindset. – APP

Huawei , HEC call for strengthening long-standing partnership

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from Huawei met with the Chairman, Higher Education Commission (HEC) Mr. Na-deem Mahbub on Monday to discuss ongoing collaborations and explore new avenues for advancing digital transformation in Pakistan's higher education sector.

The Huawei delegation included Mr. Yushaoning, Vice CEO of Public Affairs; Mr. Pan Feng, Managing Director, Enterprise Business Group (EBG); and Mr. Ali Raza, Account Director, Education. During the meeting, Huawei highlighted its more than 15-year partnership with HEC and its significant contributions to the ongoing Higher Education Development in Pakistan (HEDP) projects. The delegation also emphasized Huawei's role in establishing ICT Academies across universities, aimed at nurturing digital talent in Pakistan.

Huawei shared that university teams from Pakistan achieved remarkable success in this year's global ICT competition, securing the first, second, and third positions—an achievement that reflects the impact of sustained collaboration in ICT education and training. Reaffirming its commitment, Huawei expressed a strong interest in continuing and expanding its partnership with HEC, especially in areas such as digital transformation of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the upgrade of network infrastructure and services. – APP

CD chief chairs meeting to review planning wing performance

ISLAMABAD: An important meeting was held at the CDA Headquarters under the chairmanship of CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa. The meeting reviewed the performance of CDA's Planning Wing. The meeting was attended by Member Planning Dr. Khalid Hafiz, Member Finance Tahir Naeem, Member Environment Ehsandiyar Baloch, DG Planning Dr. Zafar Iqbal, DG Building Control & Housing Faisal Naeem, DG Islamabad Water Sardar Khan Zamri, DG Resources Shakeel Ahmad, DG Special Projects Arshad Chohan, and other senior officers. The meeting was informed that proper planning of Islamabad city,

approval of layout plans and maps for all projects, designs of urban renewal projects, and approval of projects for environmental protection have been carried out. Additionally, modern GIS mapping and digital approval systems have been introduced. Chairman CDA said that maintaining Islamabad's unique identity, planning, and natural beauty while achieving developmental goals is a highly significant role for the Planning Wing. He mentioned that urban infrastructure, traffic management, residential and commercial projects and environmental balance all fall under the planning category.

For these, excellent planning, modern technology, digital mapping and

global standards are essential because effective and well-organized planning will help make Islamabad a developed, beautiful, eco-friendly, and model city. Chairman CDA also emphasized that the services of the Planning Wing are commendable in aligning Islamabad with modern requirements, particularly with building codes and improving the system of residential and commercial zoning. He further added that transparency, sustainability, and swift implementation in accordance with the law are top priorities for CDA. Chairman CDA directed that in the planning and development process, expertise, merit and transparency should be prioritized, alongside national and international standards and sustainability. – DNA

Nasir Mansoor Qureshi lauds DRAP's push for quality management excellence

DRAP hosts training session at ICCI in collaboration with TUV Austria Bureau of Inspection and Certification

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, has lauded the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) for organizing a Training Session on Implementing Quality Management System (ISO 9001:2015) in collaboration with TUV Austria Bureau of Inspection and Certification at ICCI auditorium. The event drew wide participation from DRAP, PS&DC ICT regulators and DC TMD, NIH. He commended the initiative as a significant step towards institutional excel-

lence and global alignment, noting that DRAP's adoption of internationally recognized quality standards would enhance regulatory efficiency and bolster public trust. "ISO 9001:2015 is more than just a certification; it is a holistic approach to quality that nurtures continuous improvement, customer focus, and process efficiency," he said. He added that the framework would promote transparency, accountability, and consistency in regulatory decisions, thereby ensuring safe and effective medical products for the public. Highlighting the economic impact, the ICCI President stressed that a credible regulatory environment is vital for attracting

local and foreign investment, particularly in healthcare and pharmaceuticals. He pointed out that robust quality systems reduce compliance burdens and foster a more business-friendly, globally competitive environment. Qureshi reaffirmed ICCI's support for institutional capacity building and public-private collaboration, congratulating DRAP for setting a benchmark for other public sector bodies.

In his closing remarks, DRAP CEO Dr. Obaidullah underscored the Authority's dedication to institutional reform and regulatory excellence. He said the adoption of ISO 9001:2015 would streamline operations, enhance transparency, and

align DRAP's oversight with international benchmarks. Appreciating the engagement of experts and staff, he reiterated DRAP's commitment to continuous capacity building and stakeholder confidence.

The sessions also featured addresses by Muhammad Adnan Azam, and Umar Habib. The event concluded with an interactive Q&A session, certificate distribution, and a group photograph. Director Licensing DRAP Dr. Noor Muhammad, ICCI Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, Executive Members Zulqurnain Abbasi, Imran Minhas and ICCI member Shah Faisal also attended the event.

Tessori reviews IDay preparations with foreign consuls generals

KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, accompanied by the Consuls General of various countries, reviewed preparations for the "Maarka-e-Haq" Independence Day celebrations at the Governor House. Consuls General from Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, Germany, Iraq, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Bahrain, and Oman attended the meeting, said a news release on Monday. Governor Sindh said that the largest digital stage in Pakistan's history is being prepared for the celebrations. The Consuls General lauded the governor's public service efforts and praised his keen interest in the "Maarka-e-Haq" Independence Day festivities. – APP

Safeguarding minorities' rights top priority:Murad

KARACHI: Chief Minister (CM) Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah on Monday reiterated his government's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the rights of religious minorities, stressing that Pakistan belongs equally to all its citizens regardless of faith. He made this statement while speaking at a gathering of different minority communities during a joint event organised to celebrate Minority Day at Swami Narayan temple.

The program was attended by MPAs Gianchand Ukrani (who was dressed in a green Kameez and white shalwar resembling a national flag), Tushna Patel, Dinsha B. Aavri (Parsis), Deputy Speaker of the Sindh Assembly Anthony Naveed (Christian), CM's Special Assistant on Minorities Affairs Dr Lal Chand Ukrani, Special Assistant Rajveer Sindh Senator Poonjo Bheel, MNA Dr Mahesh Malani, Sham Sundar, Roma Mushtaq Matto, Mahesh Kumar Hasjii, Aneel Kumar, Sardar Ram Singh, Professor Parkash Lal (Sikh), and several others.

Speaking at a special event at the Swami Narayan Mandir to mark National Minority Day, Murad Ali Shah congratulated the minority communities and recalled that the tradition of observing the day was initiated by former President Asif Ali Zardari during his first term in 2009. He said he has been participating in these celebrations every year since then.

The CM noted that August 11 holds historic significance as on this day in 1947, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah delivered a landmark address in the Sindh Assembly, laying down the policy of the newly independent Pakistan. "Quaid-e-Azam clearly stated that minorities are free to go to their mosques, temples and churches and that the state has no concern with anyone's religion," he reminded. – APP

Overseas Pakistanis office to be set up Bannu

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Chaudhry Salik Hussain met with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam leader and former Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Zahid Akram Durran. During the meeting, they discussed various proposals regarding employment and skill provision for overseas Pakistanis. Federal Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain stated that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan are among his priorities for overseas employment and skill development. He highlighted that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa contributes significantly to foreign remittances, increasing foreign remittances to \$4 billion per month is the next target. Former Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durran noted that people from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa face challenges, residents of Bannu have to travel four hours to reach the Protector Office in Dera Ismail Khan. Zahid Akram Durran urged the establishment of a Protector Office in Bannu to facilitate the local population and surrounding areas. Federal Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain issued directives for the swift establishment of a Protector Office in Bannu and assured full coop in this regard.

National Days and Armed Forces Days

- AUGUST**
- Aug 01/China Armed Forces Day
 - Aug 01/Switzerland National Day
 - Aug 01/Lebanon Armed Forces Day
 - Aug 01/Syria Armed Forces Day
 - Aug 4/Bukino Faso National Day
 - Aug 15/DPR Korea Independence Day
 - Aug 15/India Independence Day
 - Aug 15/Poland Armed Forces Day
 - Aug 17 /Indonesia Independence Day
 - Aug 24/Ukraine Independence Day
 - Aug 25/Uruguay Independence Day
 - Aug 30 /Turkey Armed Forces Day
 - Aug 31/Kyrgyz Republic Independence Day
 - Aug 31/Malaysia National Day

Hotels & Restaurants

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133
Marriott.....051- 2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812

Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

Emergency

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PNCA announces winners of youth art competition

This National Youth Art Competition and Exhibition was announced in July 2025 under the themes

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The PNCA is proud to announced the winners of the National Youth Art Competition 2025 organised by its Visual Arts Division (VAD). This annual event celebrates the creativity and talent of young Pakistani artists, providing them with a national platform to showcase their skills and compete with their peers. The exhibition was inaugurated by renowned calligrapher Lt. Gen. (R) Humayun Bangash, who also presented awards to the winners. He was joined by former Ambassador to Japan, Mr. Farukh Amil, and Director General PNCA M. Ayoub Jamali. General Bangash, a celebrated figure in the field of calligraphy, has made significant contributions to Pakistan's cultural heritage. This National Youth Art Competition and Exhibition was announced in July 2025 under the themes "Bunyanum Marsoos" and "Marka-i-Haq" received an overwhelming response from young artists. Nationwide, more than 300 submissions were received, each reflecting deep patriotism love for the country and heartfelt tributes to the brave soldiers safeguarding Pakistan's borders. Top Prize Winners received cash prizes, including First Prize (Rs. 40,000): Ms. Arina Khan, second prize (Rs. 30,000): Ms. Amna Wajahat, third prize (Rs. 20,000) Syeda Wajeha Fatima. The Honourable Mentions (Rs. 5000) included participants, Ms. Saleha Naseem, Ms. Urooj Saleem, Ms. Noor Ul Fajar, Ms. Mishal Mahsud, Ms. Abeeha Humayun, M. Hassan Ali and Ms. Amna Bibi. All participating artists were awarded certificates in recognition of their creativity and dedication. In line with this years Pakistan 78th Inde-



pendence Day celebrations the art competition and exhibition carried the banner of "Marka-i-Haq" (Battle of Truth) symbolising Pakistan's resilience, progress and national pride. The initiative served as a heartfelt tribute to the courage sacrifice and patriotism of the Pakistan Armed Forces, who continue to protect the nation against external threats. Artworks of senior artists Ms. Nusrat Ji, Ms. Farrah Mahmood and Calligraphies of Humayun Bangash were also included in the exhibition.

Director General of the Pakistan National Council of Arts, M. Ayoub Jamali said that it is very pleasing to see the youth participating in this exhibition and competition, and we hope for the same efforts and participation in the future as well. Speaking at the ceremony, Honourable Chief Guest Lt. Gen. (R) Humayun Bangash said: Today, I have witnessed not just art but the voice of a proud and determined generation. These young artists have shown through colours and strokes

what words often can not express their unwavering love for Pakistan and deep respect for the armed forces who guard our freedom. The creativity, discipline, and passion displayed here today assure me that the future of our cultural heritage is in safe and capable hands. I congratulate PNCA for providing such a meaningful platform and commending every participant for their inspiring work. The exhibition will continue till 22nd August 2025. Saturday galleries are closed.

312 dead, 740 injured in flash floods, torrential rains since June 26: NDMA

ISLAMABAD: At least 312 people have lost their lives and 740 others have been injured due to heavy rains and flash floods that have affected vulnerable regions of Pakistan since June 26, according to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), which continues to monitor the situation. The fatalities include 142 children, 113 men, and 57 women. Among the injured are 243 children, 288 men, and 209 women. The monsoon-triggered disasters have caused widespread destruction, damaging a total of 1,722 houses. Of these, 572 homes were completely destroyed while 1,150 sustained partial damage. The floods have also led to the loss of 434 livestock, deepening the crisis for affected communities. In response to the emergency, NDMA has carried out 223 rescue operations, successfully evacuating 2,880 individuals from flood-hit areas. Relief efforts have been extensive, with the authority distributing 14,112 essential items including tents, food packs, blankets, quilts, mattresses, kitchen sets, tarpaulins, life jackets, hygiene kits, ration bags, and de-watering pumps. – APP

Pak stands tall on Int'l stage with renewed honor: Aleem

ISLAMABAD: The Central Executive Committee (CEC) meeting of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) was held under the Chairmanship of Central President Abdul Aleem Khan where the prevailing national and political situation as well as party affairs, were reviewed in detail. Addressing the meeting, Federal Minister & President IPP Abdul Aleem Khan said due to the leadership of Chief of Army Staff Gen. Hafiz Syed Asim Munir and Pakistan Army, the country has earned remarkable recognition and globally boom at the international level, said a press release issued on Monday. He added the Pakistan Army inflicted a decisive defeat upon the enemy in a short span of conflict. He urged party leaders to stand with the families of martyrs who sacrifice their loved ones for the nation's

security and well-being. He emphasized that the Battle of "Baniyan al-Marsoos" had completely transformed Pakistan's image and today the world regards our beloved country with respect and esteem. Highlighting the party's progress, Abdul Aleem Khan noted that winning 8 electoral seats in the Assemblies during its first elections was a significant achievement. "Politics is ever-changing, and we stand together through thick and thin, Insha'Allah, we will strengthen the party collectively," he stated. Abdul Aleem Khan praised the party's successful public gatherings and stressed that our elected representatives and party leaders must visit flood-affected areas personally to extend sympathy to the victims, there. IPP President expressed satisfaction over the Intra-Party Elec-

tions and its endorsement by the Election Commission, congratulating party leaders on the achievement. All Members of the Central Executive Committee congratulated Abdul Aleem Khan on his re-election as Party President, pledging their full support and confidence in his leadership. The meeting also deliberated on the early appointment of IPP's Central and Provincial office bearers. Concerns were expressed over certain matters related to the Punjab Government alongside a demand for introducing farmer-friendly policies. It was decided that the IPP would participate through mutual consultation in the upcoming by-elections in Lahore and other districts. The proposal to hold the next Marka-e-Haq Convention in Faisalabad was unanimously agreed upon. – APP

Section 144 imposed in Murree for 3 days on Mall Road, GPO Chowk

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner Murree Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi has imposed Section 144 on Mall Road and GPO Chowk in order to ensure public safety and law & order in the hilly station on the occasion of Independence Day. Only families would be allowed to enter the places on August 12, 13 and 14. The decision to the effect was taken on the recommendations of the July 30 meeting of the District Intelligence Committee that Mall Road and GPO Chowk should be reserved for families only to avoid unnecessary crowding and any kind of disturbance during the Independence Day celebrations. The Deputy Commissioner Murree imposed the restrictions under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code 1898 (Punjab Amendment Act 2024). – APP

AIOU faculty board reviews 32 PhD research proposals

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University's Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies and Faculty of Social Sciences held their 74th Faculty Board meeting on Monday. The meeting was chaired by the Director of the Board, Prof. Dr. Irshad Ahmad Arshad and attended by Deans, Senior faculty members, Heads of various departments and external education experts. Among the participants was Professor Dr. Anila Kamal, Vice Chancellor of Rawalpindi Women University. On the first day, 16 PhD scholars presented their research proposals (synopses). Each scholar was given 10 minutes to comprehensively defend their topics. Education experts raised questions on academic, research, and technical aspects, which the scholars answered in detail. The Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Professor Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir, instructed scholars to further refine their proposals from technical, intellectual, literary, and thematic perspectives to ensure they meet high standards. Several synopses were returned for revision with constructive suggestions, while the majority were approved by the Faculty Board. On the second day (Tuesday), another 16 scholars will present their synopses. Experts emphasized that quality research is essential not only for academic advancement but also for addressing social and intellectual issues. It is worth noting that, in line with the directives of Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, AIOU is striving to ensure research of global standards. The hard work of the university's scholars and the guidance of their supervisors guarantee that these research projects will achieve distinction not only in Pakistan but also internationally. – APP

ASA welcomes ECC's Rs 2b bailout for QAU

ISLAMABAD: The Academic Staff Association (ASA) of Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) expressed gratitude to the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC), for approving a Rs. 2 billion bailout package for the university during its recent meeting, chaired by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb. Prof. Mazhar Iqbal, President of the Federation of All Pakistan Universities Academic Staff Associations (FAPUASA) and ASA-QAU, noted that the higher education recurring grant for university salary expenses has remained stagnant at Rs. 65 billion since 2018, said a press release on Monday. He further highlighted that as the number of universities has grown, the per-institution share has decreased, exacerbating financial pressures due to government-mandated salary increases and a rising number of pensioners. – APP

Businesses' confidence rises to 4-year high, Gallup survey

ISLAMABAD: The confidence of Pakistan's private businesses has surged in the country's direction to its highest level in nearly four years, according to Gallup Pakistan's latest survey. Also, an increasing number of businessmen have started thinking that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's government is managing Pakistan's economy better than the previous government of his counterpart Imran Khan. The improvement comes despite inflation, high utility costs, and electricity load-shedding continue to hinder business operations. The Gallup's business confidence survey for Q2 2025 was conducted between July 23 and 27 and captured the views of 524 businesses of Pakistan across manufacturing, services, and trade sectors. The standout finding from this quarter is a significant rebound in perceptions of the country's overall direction. Gallup's "Direction of the Country Score" now stands at -2 percent, a dramatic improvement from the far more pessimistic readings of late 2024. While the score remains marginally negative, it marks the highest level of confidence in national direction since Q4 2021. "This uptick suggests a moderate easing of political and economic uncertainty from the perspective of the business community," the survey said. The number of businesses holding a good perception about Sharif government's ability to manage the country's economy has significantly improved over the past year. According to Gallup, 46 percent of businessmen rated the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government's management of the economy as better than its predecessor, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, compared to just 24 percent a year ago. Commenting on the survey, Gallup Pakistan Executive Director Bilal Ijaz Gilani said the survey's latest edition was pointing to a "cautiously improving mood" among Pakistani businesses. "While the shift is incremental, it reflects a growing sense of stabilization among economic actors," he said. The most visible change, Gilani said, was improvement in perception around the direction of the country and also positive trend in trust in the government's handling of the economy. "As always, sustained momentum will depend on continued macroeconomic reforms, policy consistency, and greater institutional responsiveness, especially toward businesses operating outside the formal sector," said the official. – Agencies

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Briefs

Pakistan ensures equality, justice

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Human Rights Azam Nazeer Tarar has said that the National Minority Day is a solemn reminder of our shared responsibility to ensure that every citizen of Pakistan enjoys equality, justice, and respect, irrespective of faith. In a message on the Minority Day here on Monday, he said founding father Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah envisioned a state (Pakistan) where religion would never hinder the rights, dignity, or equal standing of its people. Moreover, the teachings of Islam call upon us to safeguard the rights of all communities, promote harmony, and uphold justice without exception, he added. "Let us pledge to build a Pakistan where diversity is celebrated, unity is our strength, and justice remains our guiding principle," he concluded. – APP

Pak's sovereignty absolutely non-negotiable

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training Farah Naz Akbar stated that Pakistan is more than just a nation on the map; it is an idea, a mission, and a divine blessing, and its sovereignty will always be fiercely protected. Addressing a special gathering at Lok Virsa on Monday to commemorate Marka-e-Haq and Jashn-e-Azadi, she said that Pakistan's birth on the 27th night of Ramadan was a sign of its sacred purpose, deeply rooted in the principles of Kalmā-e-Tayyabā. She said that "Pakistan is not just a nation, it is a sacred trust and we must protect it, serve it, and rise together." Paying tribute to the Marka-e-Haq struggle, she said that "We can't forget the sacrifices of those who fought for truth, dignity, and identity, giving Muslims a homeland where they could live and worship freely". Acknowledging Pakistan's armed forces, she praised their "exceptional resolve" under the command of Field Marshal Asim Munir and the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. She commended their service, leadership, and discipline, calling them "the pride and promise of the nation." She reaffirmed the government's commitment to education, especially girls' education, as "the core of progress and the foundation of a progressive and peaceful Pakistan." – APP

Genetic disorders drive childhood blindness in Pak

The data originates from Pakistan's first Department of Ophthalmic Genetics, where molecular geneticist Dr Rutaba and a dedicated bioinformatician are decoding complex DNA mutations linked to severe pediatric eye diseases

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Hereditary and congenital disorders account for an estimated 40 to 60 percent of childhood blindness cases in Pakistan, according to new findings from Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital. Experts warn that the widespread lack of early genetic diagnosis leaves many children permanently blind, imposing a long-term health and economic burden on families and the national healthcare system. The data originates from Pakistan's first Department of Ophthalmic Genetics, where molecular geneticist Dr Rutaba and a dedicated bioinformatician are decoding complex DNA mutations linked to severe pediatric eye diseases. Their work has uncovered previously undocumented gene mutations associated with retinal degeneration, childhood cataracts, and optic nerve abnormalities. "Our goal is to identify the genetic root of each case and guide families on future risks," said Dr Tayyab Afghani, senior consultant and head of the Oculoplastic Department. He emphasised that while global advances in gene therapy offer



hope, most hereditary eye conditions remain incurable, making early diagnosis and counselling essential. Specialists at Al-Shifa emphasise that the impact of childhood vision loss extends far beyond the individual. Children with undi-

agnosed genetic eye conditions often face delayed schooling, limited mobility, and social isolation, factors that compound over time to restrict their economic potential. In rural areas, where access to specialised care is even more limited, families

frequently rely on informal remedies or remain unaware that the condition may be inherited and preventable.

In Pakistan, where marriages within the family are common, the risk of inherited disorders is significantly higher. However, genetic testing is virtually unavailable in public hospitals due to a lack of laboratory infrastructure and trained personnel. Consequently, many children receive a diagnosis only after irreversible vision loss, affecting their education and future productivity. To address this gap, Al-Shifa Trust now offers free genetic testing for patients referred through its hospital network, a service that typically costs around Rs100,000 per person. Since the department was launched, we have analysed a select group of complex cases - each requiring intensive DNA sequencing - to identify hereditary patterns and build a growing national genetic database, Dr Afghani said. Al-Shifa Trust urges families with children suffering unexplained or congenital vision problems to seek evaluation promptly. Early genetic diagnosis not only improves clinical outcomes but also reduces the long-term financial and emotional toll of blindness on individuals and society.

27 professional beggars arrested

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has intensified its campaign against professional begging in the Federal Capital, arresting 27 individuals during an operation across the city's main roads and markets. According to the spokesman of ICT administration, the authority, in coordination with police, conducted an extensive operation targeting professional beggars operating in different parts of Islamabad. The crackdown covered major commercial areas, markets, and busy intersections. According to officials, the campaign is part of ongoing efforts to address the growing presence of professional beggars in public spaces. The administration has increased monitoring in key locations where begging is frequently reported, including major shopping areas and traffic signals. During the latest operation, 27 individuals identified as professional beggars were taken into custody. They were later shifted to police stations for further legal action under relevant laws. Authorities stated that the detainees were found repeatedly engaging in begging despite previous warnings and actions. – APP

Tribute paid to volunteers killed in Danyor tragedy

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam, paid tribute to the valiant volunteers who tragically lost their lives while working on a water channel in Danyor, GB. In a statement issued here on Monday, Engineer Amir Muqam who is also President of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, described sacrifices as a powerful symbol of national unity and unwavering courage. "The entire nation mourns this irreparable loss," he added. Amir Muqam expressed profound sorrow over the tragic incident, extending his heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives. "We stand shoulder to shoulder with the grieving families in this hour of immense sorrow," he stated. Prayers were also offered for the speedy recovery of those injured in the tragedy, he said. He emphasized that all necessary medical facilities must be provided to ensure the best possible treatment for the injured. – APP

Sugar mafia looting public, crippling economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Business leaders have demanded a transparent, time-bound investigation into the sugar mills cartel, accusing it of price manipulation, strategic hoarding, and policy capture that have drained billions from consumers and weakened the economy. They argued that the recent surge in sugar prices to nearly Rs 200 per kilogram is not driven by market forces but by a deliberate scheme orchestrated by mill owners. Speaking at a meeting, they said that independent estimates put the cartel's annual windfall at around

Rs 300 billion. In comparison, some assessments place the broader economic impact at Rs 610 billion, equivalent to 1.22 percent of Pakistan's GDP. During the meeting, former Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Shahid Rasheed Butt said despite producing about 6.8 million tonnes of sugar in 2024-25, almost matching national consumption of 6.6 million tonnes, the industry allegedly engineered artificial shortages to push prices higher and justify export strategies that favour millers over consumers and farmers. He urged authorities to recover illicit profits imme-

diately and impose strict penalties on those responsible, warning that without enforcement, profiteering will persist. He said the cartel's unchecked dominance is not only straining household budgets but also distorting agriculture by displacing cotton cultivation with sugarcane farming. This shift has driven cotton arrivals down by 34 percent, from 8.4 million bales to 5.5 million in 2025, choking the textile sector, Pakistan's most significant urban employer and top export earner. With domestic supply short, textile producers are forced to import cotton at higher costs, eroding global competitiveness.

Butt also condemned export policies that allow mills to sell sugar abroad at prices reportedly Rs 30-40 per kilogram higher than domestic rates while avoiding sales tax on exports. Exporters, he noted, have allegedly withheld stocks until approvals were granted, worsening shortages and driving up local prices. Calling for robust legal reforms, Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the powerful sugar sector suffers from lax oversight and enforcement, enabling cartelisation over decades. "We need laws that not only criminalise profiteering but dismantle the networks that sustain it," he stressed.

have been instructed to take precautionary measures. The directives include maintaining constant communication between field teams, keeping rescue equipment ready, and ensuring clear passage for emergency vehicles. Officials also emphasized the importance of public cooperation during such situations. People have been asked to follow instructions issued by the administration and avoid crossing flooded paths or approaching restricted zones. The administration said it would continue to monitor the water level at Rawal Dam and adjust spillway operations accordingly. Continuous updates will be provided to keep the public informed of any changes in the situation. In recent days, heavy rainfall in the catchment areas increased the water inflow into the dam, pushing the level closer to its maximum capacity. – APP

Spillways opened at Rawal Dam as water level rises to 1,751 feet

ISLAMABAD: The spillways of Rawal Dam were opened following a rise in the water level to 1,751 feet. The step was taken to manage water flow and prevent any potential overflow risks in downstream areas, said the spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration here. In this regard, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Nilore was present at the dam to oversee the process of opening the spillways. Officials said the presence

of senior administration ensured real-time monitoring of water discharge and coordination with relevant departments. Meanwhile, Rescue 1122, police personnel, and ambulance teams were stationed at various bridges and sensitive points near the riverbanks. Their deployment aimed to respond promptly to any emergencies and guide the public to safer areas if required. According to the district administration, all relevant departments



ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education and Professional Training, Ms. Farah Naz Akbar cutting cake in connection with Marka-e-Haq and the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan celebrations at Lok Virsa. – DNA

Pakistan's cotton yarn exports to China surpass \$203m

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan exported cotton yarn worth \$203.29 million to China in the first half of 2025, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Monday quoting the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC). The figure indicates a 19% decline compared to \$251.51 million during the same period in 2024, but the sector continues to maintain strong bilateral trade momentum. Under commodity code 52051200, uncombed single cotton yarn exports reached \$112 million from January to June 2025, versus \$144.85 million in the same period last year. The average price of this

year was \$2.40 per kg and 46.48 million kilograms of this category were exported to China. Pakistan was the second largest exporter of this category after Vietnam which exported \$340.69 million and under commodity code 52051100 were recorded at \$90 million of exports from Pakistan to China, down from \$102.96 million last year. Sajjad Mazahir, Director of Marketing at Keywin Trading Ltd., China, noted that Pakistan's cotton yarn exports under HS code 5205 have been a consistent product for decades. "The industry has transformed from surplus production of generic commodities to a supplier-brand-based approach to raw materials with supply chain manage-

ment principles. Many factories now hold registered IP rights and trademarks both domestically and internationally, bringing recognition to the country," he said. He added that cotton yarn exports to China provide Pakistan with valuable foreign exchange from a secure financial system, as transactions are largely conducted via Letters of Credit from Chinese banks. Currently, about 10-15% of production capacity is exported, reflecting the growing domestic manufacturing of garments for export, particularly casual wear. Despite challenges such as high energy, logistics, and financing costs, Pakistan's cotton yarn maintains strong acceptance in

China's denim market due to quality and competitive pricing," Mazahir said. Pakistan's traditional cotton varieties continue to offer a competitive edge for producing high-quality yarns used in denim, towels, knitwear, and socks, ensuring the textile trade remains a vital part of Pakistan-China economic cooperation. He believes this is a positive decline because under the China Pakistan Free Trade Agreement Pakistan is shipping more finishing goods to China, adding that it's a long journey and consistent efforts both at the government level and private business will enable Pakistan to avail a greater opportunity for Industry, the CEN added.

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Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 06 Issue: 82

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394 / 051-2261960

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ASEAN-Pakistan ties: a partnership with untapped potential

ISLAMABAD recently witnessed the vibrant celebration of the 58th ASEAN Day, marking the founding of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967. The event, attended by ASEAN envoys, Pakistani officials, diplomats, and members of civil society, was not just a ceremonial occasion but a reaffirmation of ASEAN's commitment to deepening ties with Pakistan. Representatives from ASEAN member states – including Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam – underscored their shared vision of strengthening cooperation in political, economic, cultural, and people-to-people domains. Speaking at the reception, ASEAN envoys emphasized that Pakistan remains an important partner for the region, offering opportunities in trade, investment, tourism, and education. Pakistan's trade with ASEAN countries currently stands at a modest level compared to its potential. ASEAN collectively represents one of the world's fastest-growing economic blocs, with a combined GDP of over \$3 trillion and a consumer base of more than 660 million people. This makes it an attractive market for Pakistani exports, including textiles, agricultural products, surgical instruments, sports goods, and IT services. Experts believe Pakistan should prioritize negotiating trade facilitation measures and reducing tariff barriers to boost exports to ASEAN markets. Conversely, Pakistan can benefit from importing technology, electronics, machinery, and expertise from ASEAN to modernize its industries and diversify its economy. Initiatives such as preferential trade agreements or a free trade pact under the Pakistan-ASEAN framework could provide the much-needed push for economic integration. Economic ties alone cannot define a lasting partnership. People-to-people exchanges, including tourism, academic linkages, cultural programs, and sports diplomacy, play an equally vital role. ASEAN's cultural diversity resonates well with Pakistan's own rich heritage, offering numerous opportunities for collaboration. Visa facilitation and direct air connectivity between Pakistan and ASEAN countries could open new avenues for tourism and business travel. Student exchange programs, joint research initiatives, and cultural festivals could further bridge the understanding between societies. Sports exchanges – such as the recent kayaking activity organized for diplomats and sports enthusiasts in Islamabad – also contribute to building informal but impactful bonds. Geographically, Pakistan enjoys a strategic location linking South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. This position could be leveraged to become a hub for ASEAN's trade with these regions, especially through initiatives like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). ASEAN's growing interest in regional connectivity and Pakistan's infrastructural development goals make this a natural area for partnership.

Navigating China-US relations in a multipolar world

CHINA-US relations, arguably the most consequential bilateral relationship of the 21st century, stand at a pivotal juncture. The two global powers—one a long-established superpower and the other a rapidly ascending force—are engaged in a complex web of competition, cooperation, and confrontation. From trade and technology to regional security and climate change, the dynamics between Beijing and Washington carry profound implications for global peace, economic stability, and the emerging world order. Recent years have witnessed a marked deterioration in relations. The trade war initiated during the Trump administration, continued tensions over Taiwan, and a growing race for technological supremacy have defined a new era of strategic rivalry. The Biden administration, while restoring some diplomatic channels, has largely retained a tough posture on China, particularly in matters of national security and economic independence. Yet, despite the increasing friction, both sides are keenly aware that complete decoupling is neither practical nor desirable. China and the US are deeply integrated in global supply chains, financial markets, and climate negotiations. The world's two largest economies remain interdependent to a degree that demands a calibrated approach rather than one driven by ideology or reactionary politics. Taiwan remains the most sensitive flashpoint. For China, it is a non-negotiable issue of sovereignty. For the US, it's a cornerstone of its Indo-Pacific strategy. Misteps or miscalculations in this arena could trigger conflict with global consequences. Hence, restraint and clarity in communication are essential. Washington must avoid provocations that are symbolic but strategically damaging, while Beijing must manage nationalist impulses and reassure the region of its peaceful intentions. Economic competition, too, must be managed with foresight. While safeguarding national interests is valid, weaponizing trade or technology risks dividing the global economy into rival blocs—undermining innovation, growth, and cooperation. Instead of punitive tariffs and blacklists, both nations should work toward fair trade norms and transparent rules that benefit global stability. On the flip side, areas like climate change, counter-terrorism, global health, and AI governance offer opportunities for cooperation. The US and China share responsibility as global stakeholders and must lead by example. Multilateral forums like the G20, APEC, and the UN can serve as platforms to nurture cooperation while maintaining healthy competition. The international community, especially emerging economies, has no appetite for a new Cold War. They seek a world where China and the US compete but also collaborate—respecting sovereignty, economic independence, and the rules-based order.

Italian Crew Stopped Saudi Ship Carrying Arms to Israel

Qamar Bashir



Islamic history offers many examples of rulers who came to the aid of the oppressed without hesitation, regardless of religion. The standard was never sect or ethnicity, but justice. If a Christian community under Muslim protection was attacked, Muslim armies would defend them. Yet today, Gaza's children – many too young to comprehend the politics dictating their fates – are being buried under rubble, not by weapons smuggled by criminal gangs, but by munitions carried aboard a vessel owned by the Muslim world's wealthiest state

IT was the kind of news I wanted desperately to dismiss as a fabrication – a malicious AI-generated smear designed to inflame anger against a Muslim nation. The claim seemed too outrageous to be true: an Italian dockworkers' union had stopped a Saudi-owned ship carrying weapons to Israel, even as Gaza's people were being starved, bombed, and hunted like wild animals by one of the most advanced militaries on Earth. As a trained analyst, my first instinct was to reject it outright. Surely, I thought, no Muslim country – least of all the custodian of the Two Holy Mosques – would supply arms to those slaughtering Palestinians, many of them children. But deeper investigation left no room for doubt. On August 7, 2025, at the Port of Genoa, a Saudi-flagged vessel – the Bahri Yanbu – was stopped by some 40 dockworkers after they discovered its cargo: weapons, ammunition, explosives, armored vehicles, and at least one Italian-made Oto Melara naval cannon. According to port sources and union officials, the shipment was bound for Israel, even as it intensified its siege of Gaza. This was no minor cargo ship. The Bahri Yanbu is owned by Bahri, the Saudi state shipping company, with a long record of transporting military cargo globally. The ship had sailed from Baltimore, USA, and was scheduled to collect more military equipment before heading toward Israel. The dockworkers – organized under the Unione Sindacale di Base (USB) and the Collettivo Autonomo Lavoratori Portuali (CALP) – refused to touch the cargo, declaring, "We do not work for war." Their action was grounded in both Italian law (Law 185/90 prohibits arms exports to conflict zones) and in moral conviction. In response, the Genoa port authority pledged to create a "permanent observatory on arms trafficking," with formal discussions scheduled for September. This was not the first confrontation: in 2019, dockworkers in Genoa blocked the same Bahri Yanbu from loading arms bound for the war in Yemen. History, it seems, was repeating itself – only this time, the weapons were meant for Israel's campaign in Gaza. That the workers who took this stand were not Muslim but overwhelmingly Christian deepens the sting. For the love of humanity, they risked livelihoods, defied a powerful foreign state, and upheld the prin-

ciple that complicity in war crimes is itself a crime. They acted while too many Muslim governments stood paralyzed, issuing hollow statements that echo like empty promises across a devastated Gaza. The humiliation is bitter. This is the same Saudi Arabia that Donald Trump visited twice – once during his first term in 2017 and again in his second term – extracting trillions of dollars in investments, arms purchases, and trade deals for the United States. It is the same kingdom that spares no expense in projecting an image of power, prosperity, and religious leadership before the Muslim world. Yet, when the moment came to stand unequivocally with the Palestinians – not in words, but in decisive action – it was dockworkers in Italy who bore the moral burden. This is not a new shame. In 1990, during another Middle Eastern crisis, reports emerged of Muslim-owned vessels transferring arms later used against other Muslims. The bitter lesson then, as now, was that political expediency, alliances with Western powers, and economic self-interest can override the Qur'anic injunction that Muslims are one body: "If one part suffers, the whole body feels the pain." Islamic history offers many examples of rulers who came to the aid of the oppressed without hesitation, regardless of religion. The standard was never sect or ethnicity, but justice. If a Christian community under Muslim protection was attacked, Muslim armies would defend them. Yet today, Gaza's children – many too young to comprehend the politics dictating their fates – are being buried under rubble, not by weapons smuggled by criminal gangs, but by munitions carried aboard a vessel owned by the Muslim world's wealthiest state. Meanwhile, ordinary Americans are showing unexpected moral clarity. Across social media, independent outlets, and even segments of mainstream media, Israel's siege is being condemned as genocide and ethnic cleansing. Prime Minister Netanyahu is increasingly depicted as a butcher and war criminal. The anger is fueled by the understanding that silence is complicity – an understanding apparently clearer to Christian dockworkers in Genoa than to many leaders in the Muslim world. Saudi Arabia now faces a stark choice – one that will define its reputation and its claim to lead the Muslim ummah. If the government authorized this shipment, it must answer to the Muslim world. If it

claims the transfer was conducted by a private contractor, then that party must be punished so severely that no one dares to repeat the offense. This is not mere public relations; it is about moral survival. It is also a wake-up call for all Muslim nations. The defense of Palestinians cannot be left solely to Iran, which, despite crippling sanctions and isolation, has resisted U.S. and Israeli pressure and materially supported Palestinian armed resistance. The Qur'an and the Prophet's example leave no room for inaction when oppression is visible. Even if every worldly power aligns against them, Muslims are commanded to stand for justice. The events in Genoa strip away all excuses. They show that moral courage is not bound by religion, nationality, or language – it is a choice made regardless of personal or political cost. The dockworkers did not calculate their odds before boarding that ship; they saw a line that could not be crossed and refused to cross it. Muslim leaders must now ask themselves a painful question: will history remember them as the custodians of holy places who stood idle while Gaza's people starved and bled, or will they seize this moment to move beyond hollow declarations and take tangible action? The answer will not be written in speeches, but in whether arms shipments like those aboard the Bahri Yanbu are ever allowed to leave port again. If they act, they may yet restore the unity, dignity, and purpose the ummah once embodied. If they fail, history's judgment will be harsh – and it will not be written by allies in Washington, London, or Tel Aviv, but by the very people whose cries they ignored. In that record, the names of the Genoa dockworkers will stand as men and women of conscience, while those who turned away will find their titles and riches no shield from infamy. The moral of this moment is unavoidable: justice does not wait for convenience, and righteousness does not bow to fear. If Christian dockworkers in Italy can risk everything to stop a Muslim nation's complicity in genocide, then Muslim leaders have no excuse left. Either they act now for Palestine, or they forfeit forever the moral authority to speak in its name.

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

Ukraine's Gamble on Belarus

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Despite this starkly diverging path, Ukraine's post-Maidan leadership made a conscious choice not to isolate Lukashenko. Instead, they elevated Minsk to a central role in regional diplomacy, most notably as the venue for the Minsk Agreements aimed at resolving the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas. This decision served multiple purposes for Kyiv

THE seismic shifts in Ukraine following the Euromaidan Revolution and the 2014 election of a pro-Western government fundamentally altered the nation's geopolitical trajectory. Declaring European Union and NATO integration as its paramount objectives, Ukraine decisively pivoted away from Russia. This dramatic reorientation logically suggested an inevitable cooling in relations with Belarus, a state traditionally aligned with Moscow and under the enduring authoritarian rule of Alexander Lukashenko. Yet, contrary to expectations, Ukraine embarked on a policy of sustained, even strategic, engagement with Minsk. This approach, predicated on a critical misreading of Belarusian sovereignty, ultimately proved a costly failure, culminating in Belarus's complicity in the 2022 invasion. Prior to 2014, under President Viktor Yanukovich, Ukrainian-Belarusian relations existed within a framework of gradual convergence with Russia. Despite nominal pro-European rhetoric, Yanukovich's policies fostered deeper ties with both Moscow and Minsk, making strong bilateral cooperation appear a natural extension of Kyiv's overall orientation. The Euromaidan upheaval shattered this dynamic. Ukraine's new leadership unequivocally rejected Russia's sphere of influence, embracing Western structures instead. This created a profound divergence: Ukraine sought security and integration with the West, while Belarus remained entrenched within Russian-led frameworks like the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and the deeply integrating Union State. Despite this starkly diverging path, Ukraine's post-Maidan leadership made a conscious choice not to isolate Lukashenko. Instead, they elevated Minsk to a central role in regional diplomacy, most notably as the venue for the Minsk Agreements aimed at resolving the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas. This decision served multiple purposes for Kyiv. Firstly, Minsk was perceived as a neutral location acceptable to all parties involved, including Russia and the OSCE. Secondly, and more strategically, Ukraine sought to leverage this engagement to pull Lukashenko away from Moscow's orbit. By offering Belarus a plat-

form for international relevance and fostering bilateral economic ties, Kyiv hoped to cultivate a degree of Belarusian independence beneficial to Ukraine. This engagement yielded immediate, albeit superficial, benefits for Lukashenko. Hosting high-stakes negotiations provided a veneer of international legitimacy and became a crucial tool in his efforts to emerge from the isolation imposed by the West due to his regime's human rights record. Improved dialogue with Kyiv facilitated tentative outreach to the EU and even the US. For Ukraine, the logic was multi-layered. Beyond the practicalities of a negotiation venue, Kyiv aimed to bind Belarus economically, creating mutual dependencies that would deter Minsk from hostile actions. Preserving existing economic benefits – trade, transit, joint ventures – was a significant motivator. This explains Kyiv's notable reluctance, even after the brutal crackdown on Belarusian protesters in 2020, to fully align with Western sectoral sanctions against Belarus, seeking to insulate bilateral economic cooperation from broader geopolitical condemnation. However, this strategy rested on a fundamental and ultimately catastrophic miscalculation: the overestimation of Alexander Lukashenko's genuine independence from Russia. Ukrainian policy treated Lukashenko as a pragmatic, albeit authoritarian, leader capable of balancing between Moscow and the West to preserve his own power and Belarusian sovereignty. This perception was dangerously divorced from reality. By 2014, and indeed much earlier, Belarus was already deeply enmeshed within Russia's political, economic, and military structures. Membership in the CIS, EAEU, CSTO, and the Union State represented not just formal alliances, but profound integration. Belarus's economy was critically dependent on Russian energy subsidies and market access. Its military doctrine and capabilities were inextricably linked to Russia's, with deep interoperability. The events of 2020 laid bare the true nature of Lukashenko's dependency. The Kremlin's overt political backing and alleged involvement of Russian security "consultants" in suppressing protests demonstrated unequivocally that Lukashenko's political survival hinged on Vladimir Putin's support, not on maintaining distance from Moscow. His

regime was a client state, its stability purchased with loyalty to the Kremlin. Despite this stark revelation, Ukraine persisted with its engagement strategy, albeit in a diminished form, clinging to the hope of economic leverage and the Minsk negotiation format. The brutal culmination of this failed policy arrived on February 24, 2022. Belarus, far from acting as a neutral buffer or a state restrained by economic ties to Ukraine, actively facilitated the Russian invasion. Its territory served as a crucial launchpad for Russian troops and missiles attacking Kyiv and northern Ukraine, transforming Belarus from a problematic partner into a direct co-aggressor. This act irrevocably shattered any illusions about Minsk's capacity or willingness to pursue an independent course contrary to Moscow's dictates. The war laid bare the utter ineffectiveness of eight years of Ukrainian policy towards Lukashenko. The core systemic error was evident from the outset: Ukraine fundamentally misjudged the nature of the Belarusian state. It treated Belarus as a genuinely sovereign actor capable of strategic neutrality, rather than recognizing it as a de facto Russian vassal, deeply integrated and subordinate within Moscow's imperial project. Given the ongoing Russian aggression in Crimea and Donbas since 2014, Ukraine should have adopted a far more cautious and realistic approach. The minimal prudent stance would have been to treat Belarus unequivocally as an ally of the aggressor state, adjusting all political and economic relations accordingly, minimizing dependencies, and anticipating potential threats from Belarusian territory. Instead, the pursuit of a "Minsk mirage" – the belief that engagement could foster Belarusian neutrality blinded Kyiv to the hard reality of Belarus's subordination to Russia, leading to a profound strategic failure with devastating consequences. The war has now forced a complete reassessment, with Ukraine recognizing Belarus not as a neutral neighbor, but as occupied territory instrumentalized by the Kremlin. The lessons of this miscalculation resonate far beyond their bilateral relationship, underscoring the peril of underestimating the depth of authoritarian dependencies within Russia's sphere.

Briefs

Qureshi
acquitted;
other PTI...

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commentators, civil society, and even members of rival parties. They warn that eliminating political opponents through legal manoeuvres sets a dangerous precedent. In Pakistan's turbulent political history, leaders from various parties have faced sudden disqualifications, arrests, or convictions, only for such measures to be reversed years later when political winds change.

PTI asked
to delay
August 14...

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the streets in full force" against what the party described as ongoing oppression. The call followed PTI's unsuccessful protest attempt on August 5. Sanaullah said he had no objection to PTI exercising its right to protest, but stressed that the date was inappropriate. "On August 14, the whole country celebrates with enthusiasm and protesting on that day goes against our traditions," he said. "They can hold it on the 13th, 15th, or 16th instead." He praised opposition parties for showing unity and coordination, but criticised their choice to stage political demonstrations on national occasions.

'Voter fraud':
Indian police
detain...

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march towards the ECI of fice and lodge a complaint. Purohit's remarks come after the INC-led Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) commenced a march towards the ECI office. The credibility of elections has rarely been questioned in recent decades in the world's most populous democracy. Some analysts say the opposition accusations could damage Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he navigates one of the toughest periods of his 11 years in office.

Pakistan
calls for
Israel's...

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longstanding support for the Palestinian cause and advocates for a just, sustainable, and peaceful resolution, in line with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions that uphold the rights and dignity of the Palestinian people. "This includes the establishment of an independent, sovereign, viable, and contiguous Palestinian State, based on the pre-June 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital," it concluded.

Pakistan
rejects
Indian...

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"India's sabre-rattling and war-mongering whenever confronted invite unfounded allegations bereft of rationality," the statement read. It reiterated that Pakistan is a responsible nuclear weapon state with a robust command and control system under full civilian oversight and has always exercised restraint on such sensitive matters.

PDMA
issues flood
advisory...

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strictly prohibited during the emergency period. Citizens are advised to contact PDMA's helpline at 1129 in case of any emergency, he said. The recent monsoon spell wreaked havoc across Pakistan with scenes of urban flooding, flash floods and landslides resulting in over 300 deaths, while several others are still missing, along with damage to infrastructure. Gilgit-Baltistan, which hosts several tourist hotspots, was also battered by flash floods and landslides, with Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan.

58th ASEAN Day celebrations continue

Rising Star Hockey team joins ASEAN
Kayaking & lake clean-up initiative

Acting Chairman of the ASEAN Committee Islamabad Wunna Han Ambassador of Myanmar, Ambassador of Vietnam Pham Anh Tuan and Ambassador-designate of Indonesia Chandra W Sukotjo also attended the event

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In a vibrant display of sportsmanship, environmental care, and diplomatic friendship, the High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam Col @ Kamal Ahmed hosted a special kayaking event at Rawal Lake on Sunday to mark the 58th ASEAN Day celebrations.

The initiative, part of the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad's ongoing efforts to enhance people-to-people connections, offered kayaking activities for diplomats, their families, and friends from the diplomatic community. The event brought together ASEAN Ambassadors, diplomatic staff, and members of the local sports community for an afternoon of recreation and goodwill.

Acting Chairman of the ASEAN Committee Islamabad Wunna Han Ambassador of Myanmar, Ambassador of Vietnam Pham Anh Tuan and Ambassador-designate of Indonesia Chandra W Sukotjo also attended the event.

One of the highlights of the day was the participation of the Rising Star Hockey Team, whose members eagerly took to the waters for kayaking. Demonstrating their commitment to community service, the team also carried out a cleaning campaign, collecting rubbish thrown into Rawal Lake and along its banks. Their efforts not only contributed to environmental preservation but also symbolised the spirit of civic responsibility and teamwork.

The High Commissioner of Brunei commended the Rising Star team and all participants for their enthusiastic involvement, noting that the event served as a bridge between cultures while promoting environmental awareness. "Sports and community action are powerful tools for building understanding and friendship," he remarked.

A group photo session, held with the ASEAN flag prominently displayed, captured the camaraderie and unity of the day. The gathering included ASEAN Ambassadors, further underlining the regional solidarity and collaborative spirit that ASEAN represents. The kayaking and clean-up initiative reflected ASEAN's broader mission of fostering closer ties not only between member countries but also with their host communities. As paddles sliced through the calm waters of Rawal Lake, the event stood as a reminder that shared activities – whether on the field, in the water, or in environmental stewardship – can bring people together in meaningful ways.

The Brunei High Commissioner Kamal Amed also thanked Adil Shah who facili-



tated the activity by providing the venue and other necessary logistic support. The Rising Stars Club management –

led by Asif Bhatti, Mehmood Ahmed, and Sohail Janjua – expressed heartfelt gratitude to the High Commissioner of

Brunei for giving them the chance to experience kayaking first-hand. For many of the hockey players, it was their very

first encounter with the sport, and they embraced it with great enthusiasm, relishing every moment on the water.

Battle for Freedom
Boxing Championship
concludes

PESHAWAR: The much-anticipated "Battle for Pakistan's Freedom" Boxing Championship concluded in the provincial capital with electrifying bouts and remarkable performances, as Champion Boxing Club emerged victorious, securing the coveted title. The event showcased the grit, skill, and unwavering determination of talented boxers, who delivered thrilling moments in the ring.

Zalmi Boxing Academy and Eagle Boxing Academy claimed joint second place after a series of hard-fought matches, while Warriors Taekwondo & Kickboxing Academy took third position with impressive displays of technique and resilience. Each fight was marked by lightning-fast movements, precision punches, and solid defensive strategies, keeping spectators on the edge of their seats.

The closing ceremony was graced by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Finance) Asghar Surani and Youth Minister of the Youth Assembly Talha Jan, who presented trophies and medals to outstanding performers. Addressing the athletes, the guests praised the young boxers' talent, calling them a valuable asset for the province and the nation, and pledged full support for their development. Those present were included Secretary Provincial Boxing Association, Khizarullah and Peshawar Division Boxing Association Secretary Muhammad Ajmal.

They lauded the players' performances and described the championship as a milestone for the promotion of boxing in the region. Organized under the banner of the Provincial Boxing Association and Peshawar Division Boxing Association, with support from the Regional Sports Officer Peshawar, the event brought together around 110 registered boxers from 17 clubs across the division.

Competitors impressed with their technical skills, offensive and defensive tactics, speed, and tactical awareness, leaving a lasting impact on the crowd. – **Agencies**

PMYP–Lahore
Qalandars
talent hunt
cricket trials
draw record
turnout

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), in collaboration with Lahore Qalandars, witnessed a historic turnout at the open cricket trials held in Lahore, with more than 18,000 aspiring cricketers, both male and female, showcasing their talent over two days.

The trials were overseen by Lahore Qalandars' renowned professional scouting team, known for discovering and nurturing some of Pakistan's most exciting cricketing prospects. Boys and girls were put through a rigorous selection process, giving them a rare chance to perform in front of experienced evaluators from one of the Pakistan Super League's most successful franchises, said a press release.

Erratic Alcaraz battles through
in Cincinnati opening match

CINCINNATI: Carlos Alcaraz had to fight his way out of a second-set slump on Sunday to escape with a 6-1, 2-5, 6-3 victory over Damir Dzumhur in his opening match at the ATP-WSA Cincinnati Open. The Spaniard, playing his first tournament since a runner-up finish to Jannik Sinner at Wimbledon, raced through the first set but completely lost his way in the second set, dropping his serve twice against the 33-year-old Bosnian.

But he regained his intensity – and cut down his errors, in the third. Alcaraz fired his seventh ace to set up a match point and advanced to the third round seconds later as his opponent fired wide. Alcaraz, seeded second claimed his 12th consecutive match at the Masters 1000 level after titles in Monte Carlo and Rome.

"It was a relief to get this win," Alcaraz said after committing 44 unforced errors. "It was a rollercoaster of good feelings and bad feelings. 'I was happy to get the win in the end. I know that I have chances to do better. 'I will use the day off tomorrow to get my confidence back. It was a little tricky, I need to play smart tennis.' Alcaraz, runner-up in Cincinnati in 2023, added: "It can be difficult to play great tennis here. The ball really flies and goes super fast. There will be some points where you don't feel so good."

"You must maintain positive thoughts and keep going in the right way." Sixth seed Alex de Minaur, the Washington champion and a Toronto quarter-finalist last week, was bounced by American Reilly

Opelka 7-6 (8/6), 6-4, who crushed 14 aces and saved all seven break points he faced. "I didn't serve as well as I'd have liked to, but everything else was working," said Opelka, who had lost five prior matches against the Australian. "My serve fluctuated and it was a bit of a surprise that the other things came through well for me today." Spanish veteran Roberto Bautista Agut dismissed Briton Cam Norrie 6-4, 6-3 while number nine seed Andrey Rublev beat American Learner Tien 7-6 (7/4), 6-3. In women's action, second-seeded French Open champion Coco Gauff battled through a tough first set to beat China's Wang Xinyu 6-3, 6-2.

Gauff, who lifted the trophy in Cincinnati in 2023 and went on to claim her first Grand Slam title at the US Open that year, grinded through a first set marred by five service breaks. But the seed steadied in the second set to run out the winner in 71 minutes on a first match point. "It was a rough start," Gauff said. "But it was about just trusting myself and the work we've done in practice. 'I was able to let it all go in the second set.' Third seed Jessica Pegula, runner-up last year to Aryna Sabalenka, defeated Kimberly Birrell 6-4, 6-3. Seventh seed Jasmine Paolini, finalist last season at Roland Garros and Wimbledon, needed her last-chance match point to cement a 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/5) win over Greek Maria Sakkari. The Italian winner blew her first five match points and advanced to the third round when Sakkari delivered a double-fault. – **Agencies**

Govt hails
Hague
court's...

FROM PAGE 01

the design and operation of run-of-river hydroelectric plants must hew strictly to the requirements in the treaty, rather than to what India might consider an 'ideal' or 'best practices' approach." It further noted that questions relating to the balance between the parties' respective rights and obligations in this regard were to be identified and addressed through the treaty's procedures for notification, objection and dispute resolution in furtherance of the treaty's objective and its obligations of mutual cooperation.

Trump's
tariffs spark
calls to...

FROM PAGE 01

pizza chain has more restaurants than any other brand in the country. US-based beverage companies often dominate store shelves, and people still queue up when a new smartphone store opens or a coffee shop does out discounts.

Air India to
stop Delhi...

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long-haul operations, leading to longer flight routings and increased operational complexity, the carrier said. The airline has undertaken a \$400 million retrofit programme to upgrade its fleet. It, however, sees the Pakistan airspace ban costing it \$600 million over 12 months, Reuters had earlier reported.

2nd phase
of Hajj...

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unregistered intending pilgrims can also submit their applications. The process of receiving applications will continue through the ministry's online portal and designated banks," the report said.

West Indies clinch five-wicket win
in rain-hit 2nd ODI, series tied 1-1

Chase anchored innings with vital knock, receiving solid support from Greaves, despite early top-order setbacks

DNA

TRINIDAD: West Indies overhauled a revised target of 181 in 33.2 overs to beat Pakistan by five wickets and level the ODI series 1-1, after rain had limited the visitors to 171 for seven in 37 overs at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy on Sunday. Thanks to match-winning knocks from Roston Chase and Sherfane Rutherford, alongside valuable contributions from captain Shai Hope, the hosts chased down Pakistan's total. Chasing a target of 181, the West Indies lost an early blow when Hasan Ali dismissed opener Brandon King for just one run in the second over.

Hasan struck again in the fourth over, removing the other opener Evin Lewis, who had scored seven runs off six balls, leaving the hosts struggling at 12 for 2 in 3.1 overs.

The Windies' top order came under further pressure when Keacy Carty was dismissed cheaply for 16 runs off 42 deliveries, handing Abrar Ahmed his first wicket of the match. However, Sherfane Rutherford then took charge with a fierce batting display. Shaheen Afridi went for 17 runs, including two boundaries and a six, as Rutherford's aggressive innings helped stabilise the innings with the team aiming to level the series at 81.3 in 17 overs. Rutherford continued to dismantle Pakistan's bowling, benefitting from another expensive over by Abrar Ahmed, who conceded 20 runs during a 50-run partnership for the fourth wicket. The partnership ended when Mohammad Nawaz dismissed captain Shai Hope for 32 runs off 35 balls, including two boundaries and a six, leaving West Indies at 102 for 4 in 19.2 overs. Sherfane Rutherford looked set to guide the hosts to victory as he approached his

fifty but was dismissed by Nawaz, who claimed his second wicket, ending Rutherford's innings at 45 runs off 33 balls, which included four boundaries and three sixes. As the match slipped away from Pakistan, Roston Chase steadied the innings with crucial runs and was well supported by Justin Greaves. The pair put together an unbroken 77-run partnership to chase down the target. Chase remained unbeaten on 49 off 47 balls, while Greaves contributed 26 off 31 deliveries. For the men in green, Hasan Ali and Mohammad Nawaz each took two wickets, while Abrar Ahmed claimed one wicket. Earlier, Pakistan's openers started cautiously, reaching 37 without loss in the first eight overs. The game shifted when Jayden Seales produced a double-wicket maiden over, dismissing Saim Ayub for 23 off 31 balls, caught at third slip, followed immediately

by the wicket of captain Babar Azam for a three-ball duck. Pakistan were 37-2 at the end of the ninth over. Abdullah Shafique and Mohammad Rizwan attempted to stabilise the innings but managed only 27 runs together before Shafique was dismissed in the 17th over, scoring 26 off 40 balls with three fours. West Indies' disciplined bowling kept the pressure high, eventually removing Rizwan, who struggled to accelerate and scored 16 off 38 balls. At 88.4 in 22 overs, Pakistan's situation looked precarious. Hussain Talat contributed a valuable 31 off 32 deliveries but was caught behind off Roston Chase's bowling. Hasan Nawaz provided the late impetus with powerful hitting, pushing Pakistan to a defendable total. He remained unbeaten on 36 off 30 balls, including three sixes, while Shaheen Afridi added an unbeaten 11 off seven balls.

Briefs

Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in the inter-bank trading and closed at Rs 282.45 against the previous day's closing Rs 282.46. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 284.1 and Rs 285.6, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by 54 piasa to close at Rs 328.83 against the last day's closing of Rs 329.37, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.91, whereas an increase of Rs 0.21 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 380.07 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 379.86. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal also remained stagnant and closed at Rs 76.90 and Rs 75.26, respectively. – **Agencies**

Banks to remain closed on Thursday

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), on Monday, announced that the central bank as well as all banking and financial institutions will remain closed on Thursday, August 14, 2025. "The State Bank of Pakistan will remain closed on Thursday, August 14, 2025 being a public holiday on the occasion of 'Independence Day' as declared by the Government of Pakistan", said a statement issued here. Subsequently, all banks, Micro Finance Banks, Development Finance Institutions and other financial institutions will remain closed on August 14 in observance of Independence day. – **APP**

Gold price dips by Rs3,600 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed a decrease of Rs3,600 on Monday and was sold at Rs358,800 against its sale at Rs362,400 on the previous trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs 3,086 to Rs.307,613 from Rs 310,699 whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 Karat went down by 2,829 to Rs 281,988 from Rs 284,817. The rates of per tola and ten gram silver decreased by Rs51 and Rs44 and was traded at Rs.4,013 and Rs 3,440 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$36 to \$3,361 from \$3,397 whereas silver decreased \$0.51 to \$37.80 against \$38.31, the Association reported. – **APP**

Israel has 'lost humanity' on Gaza: Italy

ROME: Italy's defense minister said in an interview published Monday that Israel's government had "lost its reason and humanity" over Gaza and signalled an openness to potential sanctions. "What is happening is unacceptable. We are not facing a military operation with collateral damage, but the pure denial of the law and the founding values of our civilization," Defense Minister Guido Crosetto told La Stampa daily. "We are committed to humanitarian aid, but we must now find a way to force Netanyahu to think clearly, beyond condemnation." Asked about possible international sanctions against Israel, Crosetto said that "the occupation of Gaza and some serious acts in the West Bank mark a qualitative leap, in the face of which decisions must be made that force Netanyahu to think." "And it wouldn't be a move against Israel, but a way to save that people from a government which has lost reason and humanity. "We must always distinguish governments from states and peoples, as well as from the religions they profess. – **APP**

Aurangzeb vows to deepening bilateral ties with Turkmenistan

The Ambassador emphasized Turkmenistan's high regard for its partnership with Pakistan, describing it as both an important trading and investment partner as well as a vital transit hub for bilateral and transnational trade, said a press release

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to deepening its relations with the brotherly country of Turkmenistan, noting that the past year had witnessed several high-level ministerial exchanges between the two nations. He expressed the commitment, while talking to Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan Atadjan Movlamov, who called him and discussed matters of mutual interest, with a particular focus on expanding bilateral trade, commerce and investment. The Ambassador emphasized Turkmenistan's high regard for its partnership with Pakistan, describing it as both an important trading and investment partner as well as a vital transit hub



ISLAMABAD: Atadjan Movlamov, Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan, called on Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, at the Finance Division. – **DNA**

for bilateral and transnational trade, said a press release. The discussions also explored avenues for joint ventures and cooperation, especially in the energy, transportation, and

construction sectors.

On behalf of Minister of Finance and Economy of Turkmenistan Mammatguly Astanagulov, Ambassador Movlamov extended an invitation to Senator

Muhammad Aurangzeb to participate in the Turkmenistan Investment Forum, scheduled to be held in mid-September in Ashgabat, in conjunction with the celebrations marking the

34th Anniversary of Turkmenistan's Independence. Earlier, Federal Minister for Finance, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, was given a comprehensive briefing by the Competition

Commission of Pakistan (CCP) on the challenges related to promoting competition in the sugar sector and the causes of the recent sugar crisis. The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Finance Minister, Khurram Shehzad, Chairman CCP, Dr Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, Registrar CCP, Shehzad Hussain, Legal Advisor, Hafiz Naem and Director Cartel & Trade Abuse, Salman Zafar, along with other senior officials, said a release issued here on Monday. During the briefing, Dr Kabir Ahmed Sidhu informed the Finance Minister that CCP is preparing detailed recommendations to assist the Sugar Sector Reform Committee. He also apprised the Minister of the causes of previous sugar crises in 2008-09, 2015-16 and 2019-20 and shared the Commission's findings and enforcement actions against cartelization in the sector.

Mental health clinics in violence-prone South Sudan rare

MUNDRI: Joy Falatiya said her husband kicked her and five children out of their home in March 2024 and that she fell apart after that. Homeless and penniless, the 35-year-old South Sudanese mother said she thought of ending her life. "I wanted to take my children and jump in the river," she said while cradling a baby outside a room with cracked mud walls where she now stays. But she's made a remarkable recovery months later, thanks to the support of well-wishers and a mental health clinic nearby where she's received counseling since April. She told The Associated Press that her suicidal thoughts are now gone after months of psycho-social therapy, even though she still struggles to feed her children and can't afford to keep them in school. The specialized clinic in her hometown of Mundri,

in South Sudan's Western Equatoria state, is a rare and endangered facility in a country desperate for more such services. Now that the program's funding from Italian and Greek sources is about to end and its future is unclear. The clinic is in one of eight locations chosen for a project that aimed to provide mental health services for the first time to over 20,000 people across this East African country. Launched in late 2022, it proved a lifeline for patients like Falatiya in a country where mental health services are almost non-existent in the government-run health system. Implemented by a group of charities led by Amref Health Africa, the program has partnered with government health centers, Catholic parishes, local radio stations. Across South Sudan, there has been massive displacement of people in the civil

war that began in 2013 when government troops loyal to President Salva Kiir fought those loyal to Vice President Riek Machar. The eruption of fighting was a major setback for the world's newest country, which became a major refugee-producing nation just over two years after independence from Sudan. Although a peace deal was reached in 2018, the resumption of hostilities since January led the UN to warn of a possible "relapse into large scale conflict." The violence persists even today, with Machar under house arrest and government forces continuing with a campaign to weaken his ability to wage war. And poverty – over 90 percent of the country's people live on less than \$2.15 per day, according to the World Bank – is rampant in many areas, adding to the mental health pressures many people face,

according to experts.

In a country heavily dependent on charity to keep the health sector running, access to mental health services lags far behind. The country has the fourth-highest suicide rate in Africa and is ranked thirteenth globally, World Health Organization figures show. In South Sudan, suicide affects mostly the internally displaced, fueled by confinement and pressures related to poverty, idleness, armed conflict, and gender-based violence, according to the International Organization for Migration. "Mental health issues are a huge obstacle to the development of South Sudan," said Jacopo Rovarini, an official with Amref Health Africa. More than a third of those screened by the Amref project "show signs of either psychological distress or mental health disorders," he said. – **Agencies**

Head of Iran top security body heads to Iraq, Lebanon

TEHRAN: The head of Iran's top security body, Ali Larjani, will visit Iraq on Monday before heading to Lebanon, where the government has approved a plan to disarm Tehran's ally Hezbollah, state media said. "Ali Larjani departs today (Monday) for Iraq and then Lebanon on a three-day visit, his first foreign trip since taking office last week," state television reported. Larjani will sign a bilateral security agreement in Iraq before heading to Lebanon, where he will meet senior Lebanese officials and figures. His trip to Lebanon comes after Tehran expressed strong opposition to a Lebanese government plan to disarm Tehran's ally Hezbollah, a stance condemned by Beirut as a "flagrant and unacceptable interference." "Our cooperation with the Lebanese government is long and deep. We consult on various regional issues. In this particular context, we are talking to Lebanese officials and influential figures in Lebanon," Larjani told state TV before departing. "In Lebanon, our positions are already clear. Lebanese national unity is important and must be preserved in all circumstances. Lebanon's independence is still important to us and we will contribute to it." On Saturday, Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior adviser to Iran's supreme leader, described the plan to disarm Hezbollah as compliance "to the will of the United States and Israel." The disarmament push followed last year's war between Israel and Hezbollah, which left the group, once a powerful political and military force, weakened. – **Agencies**

UAE maintains global lead in digital transformation

ASTANA: The UAE continues to strengthen its leading position on the global digital transformation map, driven by a forward-looking vision and ambitious national policies that have made digital innovation a cornerstone of sustainable development and economic competitiveness, WAM reports. Public and private institutions are adopting policies that place people first, viewing them as both the beneficiaries and leaders of the transformation process. Numerous international reports highlight the country's rapid progress in this field and its top rankings in prestigious global indices, reinforcing its regional and global leadership in modern technology and smart transformation. According to the United Nations E-Government Survey 2024, the UAE ranked first globally in the Telecommunications Infrastructure Index, achieving a full score of 100 percent. This reflects the extensive reach and high efficiency of digital networks, underscoring the maturity of the country's digital infrastructure. As per the Speedtest Global Index issued by global company Ookla, the UAE has maintained its first-place ranking worldwide for mobile internet speed from July 2024 to June 2025. In the latest update for June, the UAE recorded an average download speed of 546.14 megabits per second, significantly ahead of its nearest global competitors. – **APP**

Syria vows accountability after video of Sweida hospital killing

DAMASCUS: Syria's interior ministry on Monday said it would hold accountable those responsible for the apparent killing of an unarmed man at a hospital during violence last month in Druze-majority Sweida province, after a purported video of the incident emerged. "We condemn and denounce this act in the strongest terms and affirm that the perpetrators will be held accountable and brought to justice... whatever their affiliation," the ministry said in a statement. A week of bloodshed began on July 13 with clashes between local Druze fighters and Bedouin tribes, but the violence rapidly escalated as it drew in outside forces, eventually killing some 1,600 people, many of them Druze civilians, according to an updated toll by a war monitor. Local media outlet Suwayda 24 pub-

lished the video on Sunday, saying it was from hospital surveillance footage. Forces in military garb are seen shooting dead a man whom Suwayda 24 identified as an engineer volunteering with the hospital team after a brief scuffle, as a group of people dressed as health care workers are crouched on the floor. Another man seen in the video told AFP that the incident took place on July 16. Rights activists called for accountability and an independent inquiry after the footage emerged, following other videos that circulated last month that also appeared to show government forces killing civilians. The interior ministry said it appointed an official "to directly oversee the progress of the investigation in order to ensure the culprits are found and arrested as soon as possible."

Late last month, authorities announced the formation of a committee to investigate the Sweida violence, which should present its findings within three months. Activists have instead called for an independent investigation to probe the violence. Mohammad Al-Abdallah, executive director of the Syria Justice and Accountability Center, said on Sunday that United Nations investigators "must enter Sweida immediately" and labelled the medic's killing a war crime. Despite a ceasefire, the situation remains tense in Sweida and access to the province remains difficult. Local residents accuse the government of imposing a blockade, something officials have denied, pointing to the entry of humanitarian convoys. – **Agencies**

Nahyan bin Mubarak joins members of Pakistani community to celebrate I Day

DUBAI: Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance and Co-existence, alongside Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the UAE, and a number of officials, diplomats, economic representatives, and social figures from the Pakistani community, attended a gathering marking the 78th anniversary of Pakistan's Independence Day at the Dubai Exhibition Centre in Expo City Dubai. The event attracted more than 60,000 attendees and was organised by "Emirates Loves Pakistan" Page, a platform dedicated to sharing inspiring content that highlights the success stories and contributions of the Pakistani community in the UAE – in cooperation with the Pakistan Association Dubai and with support from Dubai Police. The occasion provided an opportunity to strengthen social relations within the Pakistani community and reflected the established diplomatic ties between the peoples of the UAE and Pakistan. Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan remarked: "It is an honour to join you in commemorating Pakistan's Independence Day. I extend my warmest congratulations to you all and to the people of Pakistan on this momentous occasion. I share your pride in celebrating what this day signifies for Pakistanis worldwide, a testament to a robust national identity, resilience, determination, achievement, and optimism for the future. Here in Du-

bai, we also celebrate the deep bonds of friendship and brotherhood uniting Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates." Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak continued: "Our steadfast relationship is founded on shared values, cultural heritage, mutual respect, and a collective vision for peace and prosperity. The UAE stands with Pakistan as a friend and partner. These ties are strengthened daily through the invaluable contributions of the Pakistani community, whose talent, dedication, and creativity enrich the fabric of our country." Sheikh Nahyan added: "The partnership between the UAE and Pakistan exemplifies the fraternal bonds essential for fostering social and economic prosperity globally. I am delighted to express my optimism for the bright future awaiting our two nations." He further stated: "Under the leadership of President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and with the support of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai, the UAE has emerged as a global beacon of tolerance, coexistence, and human fraternity. Our nation embraces individuals from diverse backgrounds, living and working together in peace and security. In the UAE, we cherish diversity, promote dialogue, and are united by shared values. This societal harmony is among our greatest achievements, and the Pakistani community is a vital part

of this success. Today, in Dubai, we have every reason to rejoice in your National Independence Day." He elaborated: "In the spirit of shared humanity, I wish to highlight a significant national writing competition organised by the Watani Al Emarat Foundation in collaboration with the Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence, as part of the 'Year of Community' initiatives. We invite all residents of the UAE – citizens and expatriates, young and old – to share their reflections on the theme 'What the UAE Means to Me.' We welcome personal stories, experiences, and insights in the form of short stories, poems, letters, or essays, in Arabic or English, submitted via the official website: www.myaestory.ae." Sheikh Nahyan expressed his confidence that the Pakistani community will contribute many inspiring entries to this competition. He urged those present to encourage their families, friends, and colleagues to participate, sharing their stories, aspirations, achievements, and gratitude. These contributions will form a collective legacy of life in the UAE, inspiring generations to come. "Over the past decades, the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have established distinguished relations based on mutual respect and constructive cooperation in various fields, particularly in the economy, culture, and human development," the Ambassador of

Pakistan to the UAE told to the Emirates News Agency (WAM) on the sidelines of the event. He expressed his pride in the fraternal bond uniting the two peoples, reaffirming a shared commitment to further strengthen it through joint programmes and initiatives that foster cultural exchange, bolster economic cooperation, and bring communities closer together through the arts, music, and a rich cultural heritage. He added that relations between the UAE and Pakistan will continue to stand as a model of bilateral cooperation, with ongoing efforts dedicated to nurturing and advancing these historic ties for the mutual benefit of both nations and their peoples. The event featured a programme of entertainment and cultural activities that showcased the distinct heritage, traditions, and arts of Pakistan, including its broad diversity. It highlighted the unique cultural identity of the Pakistani community through its arts, music, and folk traditions, as well as the varied talents of the Pakistani diaspora in the UAE, within a unified cultural framework. The programme also acknowledged the positive contributions of the community to the UAE's sustainable development, including cultural performances, traditional dances, musical displays, a section for heritage cuisine, and artistic works inspired by Pakistan's rich environmental and cultural landmarks. – **Agencies**

Nigerian military kills more than 100 'bandits' in raid

KANO: The Nigerian military killed more than 100 members of a criminal gang in an air and ground raid over the weekend, according to a conflict monitoring report produced for the United Nations and seen by AFP on Monday. Armed groups called "bandits" by locals have for years been terrorizing communities in northwest and central Nigeria, raiding villages, kidnapping residents for ransom and burning homes after looting them. The military raid in the restive northwestern state of Zamfara was launched "in the early hours" Sunday in the Bukkuyum local government area, where fighter jets in coordination with ground troops pounded a gathering of more than 400 bandits in their Makakkari forest camp. The military's attack "may have occurred in response to consecutive banditry, especially kidnapping, in the state in the previous month," the report said, noting a link between a recent decrease in military operations in the state and a spate of bandit attacks. Bukkuyum's Adabka village was on Friday the scene of a bandit attack that saw residents kidnapped and 13 security personnel killed. Bandits had been planning an attack on a farming village when "air and ground troops ambushed a bandit camp... killing over 100," the report said. – **APP**

Starmer concerned about targeting of journalists in Gaza

LONDON: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is "gravely concerned" about the repeated targeting of journalists in Gaza, his spokesperson said on Monday, after five reporters were killed in an Israeli airstrike. Israel's military said it targeted and killed prominent Al Jazeera journalist Anas Al Sharif, alleging he had headed a Hamas militant cell and was involved in rocket attacks on Israel. Al Jazeera, which is funded by the Qatari government, rejected the assertion, and before his death, Al Sharif had also rejected such claims by Israel. "We are gravely concerned by the repeated targeting of journalists in Gaza," Starmer's spokesperson told reporters. "Reporters covering conflicts are afforded protection under international humanitarian law, and journalists must be able to report independently, without fear, and Israel must ensure journalists can carry out their work safely." Asked about the claim that one of the journalists was linked to Hamas, Starmer's spokesperson said: "That should be investigated thoroughly and independently, but we are gravely concerned by the repeated targeting of journalists." – **Agencies**

Spain orders town to scrap motion restricting Muslim festivities

MADRID: Spain's leftist government on Monday ordered a town to drop a ban on religious celebrations in municipal sports facilities, a measure critics say was aimed at blocking longstanding Muslim festivities. The town council of Jumilla, in the southeastern region of Murcia, approved the ban last week with support from the conservative Popular Party (PP), saying it sought to "promote and preserve the traditional values" of the area. Far-right party Vox had demanded the measure in exchange for backing the PP mayor's municipal budget. Spain's national government swiftly denounced the ban, with minister for inclusion and migration Elma Sainz calling it a "racist motion." Territorial Policy Minister Angel Victor Torres announced on X on Monday that the central government had formally ordered the Jumilla council to scrap the ban, arguing it violates the constitution. Jumilla, a wine-producing town of about 27,000 people, has a significant Muslim community, many of whom work in the agricultural sector. – **Agencies**

Briefs

PSX climbs to record high

DNA

KARACHI: The equity market began the week on a strong note on Monday, climbing to fresh record territory amid sustained buying interest driven by robust corporate results and optimism over circular debt resolution. The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index climbed to 146,617.48 points, gaining 1,234.69 points, or 0.85%, from the previous close of 145,382.79. The index retreated to a low of 145,258.49 points, reflecting a loss of 124.3 points, or 0.09%.

"Stellar corporate results, improving sentiment and liquidity are the driving force behind the continued rally that took a slight breather on Friday. Market will react to results and headlines about circular debt payments," said Ahfaz Mustafa, CEO of Ismail Iqbal Securities. Macroeconomic indicators presented a mixed picture. The trade deficit for July 2025 widened sharply by 44% year-on-year (YoY) to \$2.8 billion due to higher imports, while remittances rose 7% YoY to \$3.2 billion, though declining 6.0% month-on-month (MoM). The SBP foreign exchange reserves slipped by \$72 million week-on-week (WoW) to \$14.2 billion, largely on account of external debt repayments. The rupee appreciated modestly by 0.1% WoW, closing at Rs282.47 against the US dollar.

Pakistan committed to minorities' rights

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, on Minorities' National Day reiterated Pakistan's unwavering commitment to protecting the rights, freedoms, and dignity of its minority communities, calling them "equal heirs of the state" and an "integral part of national development."

Speaking on the occasion, Naqvi said Pakistan was founded on the golden principles of Islam — justice, equality, and tolerance — and would always remain steadfast on these foundations. He emphasized that protecting the life, property, faith, and freedom of worship of minorities was not only a constitutional obligation but also part of Pakistan's national identity.

"Every citizen, regardless of religion, is an equal Pakistani," he said, adding that Islam rejects coercion, promotes freedom of belief, and upholds respect for humanity — values that form the basis of minorities' protection in the country.

Citing Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's landmark address of August 11, 1947, Naqvi noted that the country's founder had clearly stated that all citizens enjoy equal status. "The Constitution of Pakistan guarantees the fundamental rights of minorities, and we are committed to ensuring their full implementation," he said.

Israel kills Al Jazeera team

NEWS DESK

CAIRO/JERUSALEM: Israel's military said it killed an Al Jazeera journalist it accused of being a Hamas cell leader in a Gaza airstrike, but rights advocates said he had been targeted for his frontline reporting on the Gaza war and Israel's claim lacked evidence. Anas Al Sharif, 28, was among a group of four Al Jazeera journalists and an assistant who died in a strike on a tent near Shifa Hospital in eastern Gaza City, Gaza officials and Al Jazeera said. An official at the hospital said two other people were also killed in the strike. Calling Al Sharif "one of Gaza's bravest journalists," Al Jazeera said the attack was a "desperate attempt to silence voices in anticipation of the occupation of Gaza." Al Sharif was the head of a Hamas cell and "was responsible for advancing rocket attacks against Israeli civilians and IDF [Israeli] troops," the Israeli military said in a statement, citing intelligence and documents found in Gaza as evidence.

7 volunteers die in mudslide while restoring water channel

Police say four pulled out from under the debris; rescue operation completed

DNA

GILGIT: According to the GB government spokesperson Faizullah Faraq, the incident also left seven others injured. All the injured were rushed to nearby hospitals, where emergency services were immediately activated to manage the crisis. The volunteers were reportedly repairing a damaged water channel when a sudden mudslide buried them under tonnes of earth and rocks. Police said four individuals were pulled out from the debris in critical condition during the rescue operation. Faraq said that the search and rescue efforts have now been completed. The recent monsoon spell wreaked havoc across Pakistan with scenes of urban flooding, flash floods and landslides resulting in over 260 deaths, while several others are still missing, along with damage to infrastructure.

President Zardari condoles deaths in Gilgit landslide

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday expressed deep grief over the death of volunteers in a tragic incident of a landslide that took place in Gilgit. The president, in a statement, expressed sympathies and condolences to the families of the deceased volunteers. He also paid tribute to the volunteers who sacrificed their lives for the sake of humanity. "The entire nation is grieved over the loss of precious lives in the tragedy," the president said and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured volunteers. — DNA

Gilgit Baltistan, which hosts several tourist hotspots, was also battered by flash floods and landslides, with Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan, last month, saying that at least 10 people were killed and four others were injured in the region in floods triggered by intense monsoon rains. Expanding on the extent of damage, the chief minister said that 300 houses were

destroyed, whereas 200 were partially damaged. Also, 30-40% of water channels and 15 to 20 kilometres of roads were damaged. Last week, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif distributed compensation cheques among families affected by recent floods in Gilgit Baltistan and directed immediate restoration of damaged infrastructure under a Rs4 billion relief package.

During his visit to the region, the premier handed over Rs1 million compensation cheques to the next of kin of those who lost their lives in the calamity. Offering prayers for the deceased and speedy recovery of the injured, the prime minister said he had come to express solidarity with the flood victims. "Pakistan is among the countries most affected by climate change," PM Shehbaz had said while addressing the check-distribution ceremony. He called for the establishment of an advanced warning system to mitigate future disaster risks. "An early warning system is the need of the hour," he stressed. He directed the Minister for Communications to take immediate steps for infrastructure restoration and pledged that his next visit to the region would take place before the end of this month. The premier further revealed that a 100-megawatt solar power project in the region would be completed this year.

Senate chairman son robbed in Spain

DNA

BARCELONA: Thieves snatched an expensive gold-plated watch worth more than Rs18.4 million from Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) MNA Abdul Qadir Gilani in the Spanish city of Barcelona before fleeing the scene.

"I bought it 13 years ago, back when gold was cheaper; now it is three times higher," said Abdul Qadir Gilani. "I was with my family, and the watch was in my hand," he added, noting that his host in Barcelona was also robbed.

"As long as there is life, there is the world; such things come and go," the PPP lawmaker remarked. The current value of the stolen timepiece, which Gilani said he purchased long before gold prices surged, makes theft one of the costlier street crimes involving a Pakistani public figure abroad in recent memory.

The Gilani family of Multan is a prominent political dynasty. Three brothers — Abdul Qadir Gilani, Ali Musa Gilani and newly elected MNA Qasim Gilani — are member of the National Assembly. They are the sons of former prime minister and incumbent Senate Chairman Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani. Their other brother, Ali Haider Gilani, is a PPP MPA in the Punjab Assembly.

In a rare coincidence, MNAs Ali Musa and Qasim, along with Ali Haider, were all born on the same day — April 10, 1986 — making the present National Assembly home to a set of twins in the form of Ali Musa and Qasim.

Ziarat assistant commissioner, son abducted

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: A search operation is underway to recover Ziarat Assistant Commissioner Muhammad Afzal and his son who were abducted a day earlier during their visit to the tourist spot Zezri, the Levies said on Monday. Unidentified gunmen had kidnapped the AC, his son, gunman and driver on Sunday — but later released the latter two. The kidnappers later released the gunman and driver but took away the assistant commissioner and his son, fleeing the scene after torching the official vehicle.

Security forces and local administration cordoned off the area and began a search operation, but no breakthrough in the recovery of the abductees has been reported so far. It is worth noting that two months ago, Assistant Commissioner Tump, Mohammad Hanif Norzai, was also kidnapped. The purported kidnapping comes as Balochistan, along with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has faced the brunt of increased terrorist incidents witnessed by the country in recent times. Both provinces share a border with neighbouring Afghanistan and have been facing infiltration attempts by terrorists. Last week, security forces gunned down 47 Indian-backed terrorists during separate operations in Zhob who were trying to infiltrate through the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

6.1-magnitude earthquake strikes Turkey

Officials say about 10 buildings toppled in Sindirgi, quake's epicentre, including three-storey building in city centre

NEWS DESK

ANKARA: A 6.1-magnitude quake struck Sindirgi in western Turkey on Sunday, the Turkish disaster management agency (AFAD) said, killing at least one person and injuring dozens more. The quake was felt across several cities in the west of the country, including Istanbul and the tourist hotspot of Izmir. "An 81-year-old person died soon after having been rescued from under the rubble," Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya told journalists at Sindirgi, the epicentre of the quake. Another 29 people had been injured, but not seriously, he added. The quake collapsed 16 buildings in Sindirgi and its surroundings, of which four were inhabited, including a three-storey building in the city centre, he said. Several people were pulled alive from the rubble of the three-storey building, where six people were living. The person who died had also been buried under the rubble there before being freed. Earlier, Mayor Serkan Sak had told Turkish private channel NTV: "Four were rescued from the rubble." Efforts to extract the two others were ongoing, he added. Some 319 first responders were deployed to the affected zone, AFAD said. The quake hit at 7:53 pm (16:53 GMT), with some 20 aftershocks ranging from 3.5 to 4.6-magnitude, according to AFAD. Turkey is crisscrossed by several geological fault lines, which have previously caused catastrophes in the country. A quake in February 2023 in the southwest killed at least 53,000 people and devastated Antakya, the site of the ancient city of Antioch.

Deaths from dengue rise to 101 in Bangladesh

Of the fresh cases, 84 people in Dhaka Division and 81 in Chittagong Division were admitted to hospitals in the past hours

DHAKA: The number of deaths from the mosquito-borne dengue disease in Bangladesh this year rose to 101, with three new fatalities in the past hours, according to the health office on Sunday. The Directorate General of Health Services said that two people died of dengue in the capital Dhaka's South City Corporation and one in the southeastern Chittagong Division. Of total deaths, 45 fatalities occurred in the Dhaka South City Corporation. And, 11 in Dhaka North City Corporation with 17 in the Chittagong division.

Meanwhile, as many as 448 new dengue patients were admitted to hospitals in the last 24 hours, taking the total caseload to 24,183 this year.

However, 22,708 patients were released from the hospital. Of the total cases, 39.3% are female, the health services said. The highest number of dengue patients were admitted to hospitals in the south-central Barisal division in the past hours. As many as 95 dengue patients were admitted to hospitals across this division in the last 24 hours.

Of the fresh cases, 84 people in Dhaka Division and 81 in Chittagong Division were admitted to hospitals in the past hours. In 2023, Bangladesh reported a record 1,705 deaths due to dengue and a total of 321,179 cases, according to official data. — Agencies

Europe pushes for Ukraine role in Trump-Putin talks

BRUSSELS: European leaders on Sunday pushed for Ukraine to be a part of negotiations between the United States and Russia, ahead of talks between Presidents Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump. The two leaders will meet in the US state of Alaska Friday to try to resolve the three-year war, but the European Union has insisted that Kyiv and European powers should be part of any deal to end the conflict. The idea of a US-Russia meeting without Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has raised concerns that a deal would require Kyiv to cede swaths of territory, which the EU has rejected. EU foreign ministers will discuss the talks in a meeting by video link on Monday, joined by their Ukrainian counterpart.

"The path to peace in Ukraine cannot be decided without Ukraine," leaders from France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Britain and Finland and EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said in a joint statement, urging Trump to put more pressure on Russia. In a flurry of diplomacy, Zelensky held calls with 13 counterparts over three days including Kyiv's main backers Germany, Britain and France. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said Sunday he hoped and assumed that Zelensky would attend the leaders' summit. Leaders of the Nordic and Baltic countries — Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden — also said no decisions should be taken without Kyiv's involvement. Talks on ending the war could only take place during a ceasefire, they added in a joint statement. Asked on CNN on Sunday if Zelensky could be present, US Ambassador to NATO Matthew Whitaker responded: "Yes, I certainly think it's possible." "Certainly, there can't be a deal that everybody that's involved in it doesn't agree to. And, I mean, obviously, it's a high priority to get this war to end," Whitaker said the decision would ultimately

be Trump's to make, and there was no word Sunday from the White House. Top EU diplomat Kaja Kallas said any deal between the United States and Russia to end the war in Ukraine had to include Kyiv and the bloc.

"President Trump is right that Russia has to end its war against Ukraine," Kallas said in a statement Sunday.

"The US has the power to force Russia to negotiate seriously. Any deal between the US and Russia must have Ukraine and the EU included, for it is a matter of Ukraine's and the whole of Europe's security," she added.

"I will convene an extraordinary meeting of the EU foreign ministers on Monday to discuss our next steps."

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga will also take part in the Monday afternoon meeting, the ministry said. NATO chief Mark Rutte told ABC's "This Week" broadcast on Sunday that Trump was "putting pressure on Putin".

"Next Friday will be important because it will be about testing Putin, how serious he is on bringing this terrible war to an end," he added. Ukraine's military said on Sunday it had taken back a village in the Sumy region from the Russian army, which has made significant recent gains.

The village is on the frontline in the north of the country and about 20 kilometres (13 miles) west of the main fighting between the two armies in the northern region.

As a prerequisite to any peace settlement, Moscow has demanded Kyiv pull its forces out of the regions and commit to being a neutral state, shun US and EU military support and be excluded from joining NATO. Kyiv said it would never recognise Russian control over its sovereign territory, though it acknowledged that getting land captured by Russia back would have to come through diplomacy, not on the battlefield. The EU's Kallas backed Kyiv's position on Sunday. —Agencies

Petroleum product prices likely to further drop

Market data shows prices of US crude oil, Brent crude has dropped

ISLAMABAD: In a sigh of relief for the inflation-hit masses, petroleum product prices in Pakistan are expected to see another reduction from August 16, following a fall in global crude oil prices over the past 11 days, Geo News reported on Monday. According to market data, US crude oil prices have dropped by \$5.71 per barrel, from \$69.26 to \$63.48. Similarly, Brent crude has fallen by \$5.72 per barrel, from \$71.70 to \$65.98. The government will make change-

es to domestic petroleum prices on August 16. In the previous fortnightly review, the federal government had slashed petrol price by Rs7.54 for the next fortnight to Rs264.61 per litre, while diesel's price was increased by Rs1.48 to Rs285.83 per litre. Separately, during the National Assembly's Question Hour, Minister of State for Petroleum Ali Pervaz Malik said that on April 16 this year, petroleum levy was increased by Rs8 on petrol and Rs7 on diesel. — DNA



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