



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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Detailed News On Page-08

Ministry role in countering propaganda

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Murad vows to provide facilities

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Regional stability

Pak, China, Afghan FMs to meet in Kabul on Aug 20

Sources indicate that counterterrorism will be a top priority in the Kabul talks. Pakistan has repeatedly raised concerns over the presence of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) sanctuaries inside Afghanistan, which Islamabad says are being used to launch cross-border attacks

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The foreign ministers of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China are scheduled to convene in Kabul on August 20 for high-level trilateral talks aimed at strengthening regional cooperation, sources confirmed on Thursday. The meeting will bring together Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, and Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi. According to diplomatic sources, the primary focus will be on enhancing counterterrorism collaboration, expanding the scope of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into Afghanistan, and discussing broader regional stability initiatives. This will be the first formal trilateral meeting between the three countries since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in August 2021. While Pakistan and China have maintained working relationships with the interim Afghan government, international recognition remains withheld, largely due to concerns over human rights, counterterrorism commitments, and inclusive governance. The proposed expansion of CPEC — a multi-billion-dollar flagship project under China's Belt and Road Initiative — to Afghanistan has been under discussion for several years. Islamabad and Beijing believe Afghanistan's integration into regional connectivity projects could provide much-needed economic opportunities and stability, while Kabul sees it as a way to break its economic isolation. Sources indicate that counterterrorism will be a top priority in the Kabul talks. Pakistan has repeatedly raised concerns over the presence of Tehreek-e-Taliban

Pakistan (TTP) sanctuaries inside Afghanistan, which Islamabad says are being used to launch cross-border attacks. China, too, is worried about extremist networks in the region, particularly groups that threaten its western Xinjiang region, such as the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM). The trilateral format is expected to explore practical mechanisms for intelligence sharing, border management, and coordinated operations to curb militant activity. Earlier this month, Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi was due to visit Islamabad on August 5 for bilateral talks with Ishaq Dar. However, the visit was abruptly called off, with both sides citing "technical reasons." It later emerged that the UN Security Council did not grant an exemption for Muttaqi to travel, as he remains on the UN sanctions list of Taliban officials. This time, the meeting in Kabul circumvents that restriction, as foreign diplomats are free to travel to Afghanistan to meet sanctioned individuals. Following the Kabul meeting, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is expected to travel to Islamabad on August 21. His visit will likely focus on follow-up discussions regarding CPEC, bilateral trade, and regional security, as well as Pakistan's growing economic challenges. The trilateral initiative comes at a time when the region is facing heightened security threats, slow economic recovery, and shifting geopolitical dynamics. Both Pakistan and China have vested interests in preventing Afghanistan from becoming a breeding ground for terrorism and instability. The success of the upcoming talks could pave the way for deeper cooperation, though much will depend on Kabul's willingness to address the concerns of its neighbors and the international community.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif attends flag hoisting ceremony at Pakistan Monument on August 14, 2025. — DNA

Independence Day PM Shehbaz hoists flag

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday hoisted the national flag to mark the celebration of the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan. The main flag hoisting ceremony was held at the Pakistan Monument — an iconic structure representing the national unity and strength of the Pakistani people. The event was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, Senate Chairman, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, federal ministers and dozens of students. As the prime minister arrived at the venue, the children attired in national

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CJP's letter reveals split among SC judges

Minutes show clash over fixing hearing before full court or bench

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Yahya Afridi's letter, made public alongside minutes of judges' committee meetings, has revealed sharp divisions within the Supreme Court over how to hear petitions challenging the 26th Constitutional Amendment. The documents, covering meetings held between October 31, 2024, and May 29, 2025, show that differences emerged after Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice

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Naval Chief also decorated

Field Marshal, PAF chief, PPP chief conferred awards

The awards ceremony came against the backdrop of the recent Pakistan-India conflict, which saw Washington brokering a ceasefire between the two nuclear-armed neighbours after New Delhi launched attacks inside Pakistan

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: In connection with the 78th Independence Day — observed Thursday with a special focus on Marka-e-Haq, the recent armed conflict with India — the President House hosted a special investiture ceremony where the country's top civil and military leaders were bestowed national awards. Among the recipients was Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir who was bestowed with Hilal-i-Jurat by President Asif Ali Zardari for leading the army during the most difficult of times. The awards ceremony came against the backdrop of the recent Pakistan-India conflict, which saw Washington brokering a ceasefire between the two nuclear-armed neighbours after New Delhi launched at-

tacks inside Pakistan — under the pretext of targeting terrorists — which it said were responsible for the Pahalgam attack in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). India's attacks prompted Pakistan to launch Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos after downing six Indian Air Force fighter jets, including three Rafales, in response to Indian unprovoked aggression. Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Chief of Air Staff Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu was conferred with Hilal-i-Jurat at today's ceremony. Following the conflict between the two nuclear-armed neighbours, Pakistan launched a diplomatic offensive and sent a delegation led by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman and former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari to the United States,

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Briefs

Over Rs11 drop likely in diesel rate

Petrol price is projected to rise by Rs1.32 per litre while Kerosene likely to fall by Rs6.25 per litre

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Petroleum product prices are expected to see mixed changes from August 16 for the next fortnight, driven by a drop in global oil rates, The News reported. Officials have calculated a reduction of Rs11.75 per litre in the price of high-speed diesel, while petrol is projected to rise by Rs1.32 per litre. Kerosene price is likely to fall by Rs6.25 per litre, and Light Diesel Oil (LDO) may see a decrease of Rs7.11 per litre. The new price of HSD is likely to settle down at Rs274.08 per litre from the existing price of Rs282.83 per litre. However, the price of Mogas (petrol) is likely to increase to Rs265.93 per litre from the existing Rs264 per litre.

OIC warns Israeli PM

DNA

JEDDAH: Condemning Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's "Greater Israel" remarks, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) warned that Tel Aviv's "expansionist colonial discourse" poses threat to regional and international peace. The inter-governmental organisation said in a statement that the Israeli leader's comments were "an extension of the rhetoric of extremism, incitement, aggression, and disregard for the sovereignty of states", adding that they violated the principles of international law, Al Jazeera reported. "The organisation warns of the danger of this expansionist colonial discourse, which poses a threat to regional and international security and peace."

Security beefed up

Five cops martyred in KP terrorist attacks

Militants simultaneously target police officials in districts Upper Dir, Lower Dir and Peshawar

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: At least five policemen were martyred and as many injured as terrorists attacked the law enforcers simultaneously in different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on late Wednesday. Unidentified terrorists targeted police officials in districts Upper Dir, Lower Dir and Peshawar, according to the police officials. Militants attacked police mobile van in Upper Dir, leaving three cops martyred and as many injured. Police officials said they repelled militant attacks on Hassan Khel Police Station near Peshawar and two checkpoints. However, one policeman was martyred and another injured in attack on the police station. They further added that a constable lost his life in attack on checkpoint in Lajbok area of Lower Dir. Earlier this week, authorities had decided to take action against terrorists in Bajaur and Khyber districts of KP, government sources said on Tuesday. They said the decision was taken after talks between militants and

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan may move UNSC against BLA, affiliate

Such processes are time-consuming, and immediate action should not be expected, says source

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD: After securing a major diplomatic win in Washington, Pakistan is expected to bring before the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) a request to designate the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and its armed wing, the Majeed Brigade, as terrorist organisations. The United States designated the Majeed Brigade as a terrorist group late on Tuesday, while the BLA had already been listed in 2019 — a diplomatic triumph that could significantly bolster

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Donald Trump says Vladimir Putin ready to make deal on Ukraine

He said a second meeting, featuring Trump, Putin and Zelensky, would likely dig deeper into boundary issues. Zelensky has been adamant about not ceding territory that Russian forces occupy

DNA

WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump said on Thursday that he believes Russian President Vladimir Putin will make a deal on his war on Ukraine and that the threat of sanctions against Russia likely played a role in Moscow's decision to seek a meeting. Trump is scheduled to meet with Putin in Alaska tomorrow. The US president said he is unsure whether an immediate



ceasefire can be achieved, but expressed interest in brokering a peace agreement. "I believe now, he's convinced that he's going to make a deal. He's going to make a deal. I think he's going to, and we're going to find out," Trump said in an interview on Fox News Radio's "The Brian Kilmeade Show". Trump also mentioned during the Fox interview that he has three locations in mind for a follow-up meeting with Putin and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky, though he noted that a second meeting is not guaranteed. He said staying in Alaska for a three-way summit would be the easiest scenario. "Depending on what happens with my meeting, I'm going to be calling up President Zelensky, and let's get him over to wherever we're going to meet," Trump said. He said a second meeting, featuring Trump, Putin and Zelensky, would likely dig deeper into boundary issues. Zelensky has been adamant about not ceding territory that Russian forces occupy. "The second meeting is going to be very, very important, because that's going to be a meeting where they make a deal. And I don't want to use the word 'divvy things up', but you know, to a certain extent, it's not a bad term, okay?" he said. "But there will be a give and take as to boundaries, lands, etc, etc. The second meeting is going to be

Continued on Page 06

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Murad vows to ensure equal opportunities for every citizen

Syed Murad Ali Shah engaged with school children and members of the public who were present at the mausoleum

KARACHI: To commemorate the anniversary of the Independence of Pakistan with national zeal and fervor, the Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Thursday, paid a visit to the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

In a symbolic gesture of national pride, the Chief Minister, accompanied by the Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori, hoisted the national flag. He later laid a floral wreath at the Mazar, offered fatha, and recorded his reflections in the visitors' book, paying homage to the Father of the Nation.

Earlier, on arrival at the Quaid's mausoleum, the CM Murad Shah was warmly welcomed by members of Sindh Cabinet, advisors, Special assistants, the Chief Secretary, and the Inspector General of Police.

During his visit, Syed Murad Ali Shah engaged with school children and members of the public who were present at the mausoleum. The Independence Day ceremony commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by performances of national songs by schoolchildren.

The event attracted a diverse audience, including diplomats from various countries, members of civil society, and a large number of students. The children greeted the Chief Minister with enthusiastic cheers upon his arrival, creating

a vibrant atmosphere. After the guard of honour, the Chief Minister concluded his visit and departed from the mausoleum.

The CM Syed Murad Ali Shah, in his message to the nation on the occasion of Pakistan's Independence Day, said that August 14 is not merely a day of celebration but a moment to renew our pledge towards the country's progress and unity.

The teachings of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah remain a guiding light and we firmly believe in the principle of 'Work, work and only work, he CM stated and highlighted that the land of Sindh has always promoted national unity, harmony, and tolerance, and stands as a custodian of ancient civilization and rich heritage.

Murad Ali Shah noted that the people of Sindh have consistently embraced the values of brotherhood, tolerance, democracy, and constitutional supremacy. He paid glowing tribute to the martyrs, stating that their sacrifices are a source of pride and inspiration for the entire nation.

The CM urged all citizens to take a firm stand against terrorism, poverty, and ignorance, stressing that unity is essential for the country's development, prosperity, and integrity. He reaffirmed his government's commitment to providing basic facilities to the people, with

special focus on education, health, employment, and agriculture. "Ensuring equal opportunities for every citizen is our mission," the CM said, adding that the provincial government is working tirelessly to make Pakistan a modern, peaceful, and prosperous country.

Extending heartfelt greetings to the entire nation on Independence Day, Murad Ali Shah prayed for Pakistan's safety and continuous progress. "May Allah Almighty protect and bless Pakistan," he concluded. The Governor Kamran Tessori, at the occasion, mingled with children present at the Quaid-e-Azam Mausoleum to join the Independence Day festivities, while children cheered the company of the Governor and took selfies with him.

Kamran Khan Tessori, while talking to media persons at the occasion, said that the entire nation was celebrating the celebrations of the Independence with double enthusiasm as this year celebrations of the independence being commemorated under the theme of Ma'araka-e-Haq.

The Sindh Governor said that the gallant and vigilant armed forces of Pakistan raised the nation's head with pride. The Pakistan Army gave a befitting reply to Indian aggression and this historic triumph of the armed forces of Pakistan over India was commended all over the world, he stated.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Former Naval Chief Admiral Zakaullah, former Provincial Health Minister Dr. Jamal Nasir, Senior Vice President Professor Shoaib Shafi, General Mazhar, General Salman and Dr. Qayyum cutting to mark Independence Day ceremony organized by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Pakistan.

Magsi urges unity, innovation & national resilience

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Khalid Hussain Magsi, has extended heartfelt congratulations to Pakistanis at home and abroad on the nation's Independence Day, calling for renewed commitment to unity, innovation and national progress.

In his Independence Day message, the minister described August 14 as "a day of gratitude, pride, and renewed resolve," honoring the immense sacrifices that secured Pakistan's freedom. "This independence carries a profound responsibility," he stated.

"Every citizen must play an active role in safeguarding, developing and strengthening our homeland. Only a united Pakistan can defeat the malicious designs of its enemies," he said. Commending the armed forces for their unwavering defense of the nation, Khalid Magsi highlighted their courage and achievements in operations such as Bunyanum Marsoos, which have reinforced Pakistan's security and dignity on every front.

Reaffirming his ministry's vision, he said, "The Ministry of Science and Technology is committed to transforming Pakistan into a modern, self-reliant, and technologically advanced nation. Through innovation, research, and strategic development, we aim to lay the foundations for sustainable prosperity."—APP

Azma urges responsible celebrations on IDay

LAHORE: Punjab Information and Culture Minister Azma Bokhari, in a special Independence Day message, called on the nation to celebrate with deep patriotism and heartfelt gratitude. "Independence Day is a time to thank Allah Almighty for the priceless gift of freedom," she said, recalling the immense sacrifices, martyrdom and

migrations that made Pakistan's creation possible. Highlighting the recent success of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, Azma noted that "this victory has doubled the joy of celebrating Independence Day."

She urged citizens to mark the occasion responsibly, appealing for respect towards the national flag. "If you see a flag lying on

the ground, pick it up respectfully. Our flag is our identity; do not trample it underfoot," she stressed. Concluding on a poetic note, the minister prayed for everlasting peace and prosperity: "May the flowers that bloom here continue to blossom for years to come, and may autumn never darken this land."—APP

Shah stresses unity, solidarity, tolerance

He further stated that the ongoing serious human rights violations in Kashmir and Palestine are contrary to the fundamental principles of human rights

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah on Thursday emphasized that national unity, solidarity, and tolerance are crucial needs of the time in the current situation for a strong, stable, and peaceful Pakistan. In his message on the Independence Day and the occasion of Marka-e-Haq, Shah urged young people to adopt knowledge, hard work, honesty, and patriotism as their guiding principles. He said a stable Pakistan is a valuable legacy for future generations.

Shah said freedom is a great blessing from Almighty Allah, and it is the responsibility of every Pakistani to safeguard it. He added that independence

is the result of the sacrifices made by our forefathers and the visionary leadership of Quaid-e-Azam.

The Deputy Speaker paid tribute to the Pakistan Armed Forces for their glorious victory in the Marka-e-Haq, describing it as a remarkable triumph that has sent a clear message to the world about Pakistan's defense capabilities. He said the brave armed forces have demonstrated their global superiority by delivering a decisive response to the enemy. Recalling the Marka-e-Haq, Shah said the entire nation set an exemplary model of unity during the Indian aggression. He noted that Pakistan's history stands

as a testament to courage, sacrifice, unity, and determination. The nation has faced every challenge with resilience and will continue to elevate Pakistan to a position of respect by achieving new heights of progress and prosperity. Deputy Speaker prayed for the freedom of Kashmir and Palestine. He noted that the people of Kashmir and Palestine have been struggling for freedom for decades, and emphasized that the international community should play its role in securing their right to freedom. He further stated that the ongoing serious human rights violations in Kashmir and Palestine are contrary to the fundamental principles of human rights.—APP

Corps Commander, DG Rangers, IG Police pay visits to Mazar-e-Quaid

DNA

KARACHI :The Corps Commander Karachi, Director General Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) and Inspector General of Police Sindh, on Thursday, paid visits to the mausoleum of the Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on Independence Day Ma'araka-e-Haq.

The Lieutenant General Muhammad Avasi Dastgir, Commander 5 Corps Pakistan Army Karachi, during his visit, laid a floral wreath at the mausoleum of the father of the nation, offered fatha and also inscribed his impressions in the visitors' book.

Director General Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) Major General Muhammad Shamraiz Khan also paid a visit to the mausoleum of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and laid a floral wreath. On this occasion, DG Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) and other Rangers officers offered fatha and prayed for the eternal peace of the Quaid's soul and for the progress and prosperity of the country and nation. Later, DG Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) recorded his impressions in the visitors' book. The IG Police Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon, separately, paid a visit to Quaid-e-Azam's mausoleum. The IG Sindh, accompanied by senior police officers, laid a floral wreath and offered fatha at the grave of father of the nation Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Urban Plantation Campaign inaugurated

PESHAWAR: Provincial Finance Adviser, Muzamil Aslam here Thursday inaugurated Urban Plantation Campaign in which 7,000 saplings would be planted along banks of Hayatabad Khwar and Achini Khwar.

The ceremony was attended by Secretary Forests, Shahid Zaman, Commissioner Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Mehsud, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Sarfraz Salim Akram, Director General Peshawar Development Authority, Shah Fahad, and other relevant officials.

Commissioner Riaz Khan Mehsud briefed the finance adviser about the ongoing plantation efforts and told that that under the Urban Plantation Campaign trees and

plants are being planted along 36 kilometers of key routes in the provincial capital including the Ring Road, GT Road and central medians. He urged public to support efforts of government and said that so far, plantation has been completed over area of 11 kilometers.

Finance adviser expressed satisfaction over the campaign and directed that planted saplings be properly protected. He expressed hope that the Urban Plantation Campaign would not only enhance the beauty of Peshawar but it would significantly contribute to environmental cleanliness and mitigate climate change affects. Meanwhile, Provincial

Law Minister Aftab Alam Afridi, on Thursday, inaugurated a tree plantation campaign on Independence Day.

The inauguration ceremony was also attended by MPA, Shafiullah Jan, Commissioner Kohat Division Mutasim Ballah Shah, Deputy Commissioner Kohat Rahimullah Mehsud, students, teachers, public representatives and government employees.

Speakers urged people to plant saplings on the roadsides, schools, colleges, universities, hospitals and other places during the monsoon tree plantation campaign.

At the end of the ceremony, special prayers were offered for the peace and security of the country.—APP

Independence, pride, Haq victory, vision 2035: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday said that the nation was celebrating its Independence Day with a renewed sense of pride, demonstrated by the success of Maarka-e-Haq under Operation Bunyan al-Marsoos (Iron Wall) - a testament that no enemy could dare cast an evil eye on Pakistan. "Independence Day is a day of joy and pride. Today, we thank Allah Almighty and celebrate the victory in Maarka-e-Haq, during which the nation proved that no enemy can cast a malicious eye on Pakistan," he said in his Independence Day message. The minister affirmed that the armed forces were fully capable of delivering a decisive response to any aggression, adding that the political leadership, under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to defending the honor and dignity of Pakistan. Ahsan Iqbal praised the armed forces for their readiness and strength, highlighting the country's unyielding resolve to protect its sovereignty. He also commended the government's leadership, saying "The political leadership has shown it will not waver in making bold decisions for Pakistan's honor." He expressed pride in Pakistan's growing international recognition, saying "The world is looking at Pakistan with admiration." He highlighted major achievements in the defense sector under Operation Bunyan al-Marsoos, calling it an unparalleled success. However, Ahsan Iqbal stressed that the real battle lies ahead in the economic domain, under the 'Uraan Pakistan' initiative, which aims to transform the country into an economic powerhouse by 2035. "Teachers, doctors, engineers, traders, farmers, and laborers - all must contribute to the goal of making Pakistan a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2035," he stressed. He placed special focus on youth, calling them "Pakistan's most valuable asset," and emphasized the importance of equipping them with modern skills to showcase their talent on the global stage. "The youth will be the face of Pakistan, proving their capabilities to the world," he added. Ahsan Iqbal paid tribute to the founding fathers Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Muhammad Iqbal for their vision and leadership in securing a separate homeland for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. He also honored the sacrifices of the nation's martyrs, saying "We live in a free land today because of the sacrifices of the martyrs of independence."—DNA

CDA chief visits Pakistan Sweet Home, highlights unity, sacrifice on IDay

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, visited Pakistan Sweet Home on Thursday as part of Marka-e-Haq and 79th Independence Day celebrations. Accompanied by CDA Member Administration and Estate, Talat Mehmood, the Chairman addressed students, emphasizing the importance of unity, faith, and sacrifice in the nation's journey. Welcomed warmly by Pakistan Sweet Home Patron-in-Chief, Zamurd Khan, and CDA CBA General Secretary, Chaudhry Muhammad Yaseen, the visit featured a symbolic cake-cutting ceremony to mark the occasion. Speaking to the students, Randhawa paid tribute to the martyrs and veterans of the independence movement, urging the younger generation to dedicate themselves to the country's development and prosper. "Pakistan's freedom was achieved through immense sacrifice. Our youth must uphold the values of hard work, commitment, and service to ensure a brighter future for the nation," he said. Commending Pakistan Sweet Home's role in providing education, shelter, and care to orphaned and underprivileged children, Randhawa described the initiative as a "great national service." He pledged continued CDA support for welfare projects benefiting its students.—DNA



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Briefs

CPEC an engine
of socio-
economic
progress

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China's Ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong reaffirmed his country's strong commitment to deepening agricultural and industrial cooperation with Pakistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework, describing the initiative as a "symbol of friendship and an engine of socio-economic progress." Speaking here at a seminar on 'CPEC in my eyes' attended by senior government officials, business leaders, academics, and stakeholders from both nations, Ambassador Jiang underlined the flagship Belt and Road Initiative's far-reaching impact in Pakistan, Gwadar Pro reported. He credited CPEC with upgrading infrastructure, generating employment, and laying the foundation for sustained industrial expansion. The envoy emphasised that both countries are now moving into the second phase of the corridor, which will prioritise industrial cooperation, modern agricultural practices, and sustainable development.—APP

Punjab
receives
100 Chinese
electric buses

DNA

ISLAMABAD, Aug 14 (): "A fleet of 100 electric buses is being loaded at Yantai Port in China and is expected to depart for Pakistan later tonight", Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said. The vehicles will be deployed in Mianwali, Okara, Nankana Sahib, Muzaffargarh, Vehari, Pakpattan and Dera Ghazi Khan, the districts that have long lacked a formal public transport system, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro. "The fare for this service will be just 20 Rupees", as the provincial government aims to make the service affordable for all income groups. Each bus will be air-conditioned, equipped with free Wi-Fi, and operated through a fully automated ticketing system, according to the Chief Minister who added that the design includes accessibility features for passengers with disabilities, along with enhanced safety and comfort measures. This latest shipment is part of Punjab's wider push to modernize its public transport while reducing emissions. Earlier this year, 27 Chinese-made electric buses were introduced in Lahore under a pilot program, supported by a dedicated charging station in the Green Town area. The initiative was met with positive public feedback and encouraged the government to extend the service to rural and semi-urban areas. Similar projects are underway across Pakistan. In 2024, Islamabad received the first batch of its planned 160 electric buses from China, while Sindh began integrating electric buses into its Peoples Bus Service.—APP

SECP's silence on its own
misinformation draws criticism

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Billions in losses and lasting reputational damage continue to mount for a private company employing five thousand people after Pakistan's financial regulator removed — but did not publicly retract — a press release later deemed both legally unsound and factually inaccurate. The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) took down the disputed statement from its website in compliance with a recent court order. However, the allegations, first circulated through the regulator's official channels, remain accessible on mainstream media platforms, with no corrective notice issued. Legal experts note that merely deleting the content from an official portal does not erase its impact. "Unless the regulator takes proactive steps to publicly withdraw the information, the harm remains,"

Children with disabilities
showcase talent at I Day event

Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Wajiha Qamar, attended as Chief Guest. Director General DGSE Capt. (R) Asif Iqbal Asif, representing Federal Secretary Nadeem Mahbub, welcomed dignitaries and participants

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Directorate General of Special Education (DGSE), Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, celebrated Pakistan's 78th Independence Day with patriotic zeal at the National Institute of Special Education (NISE), Islamabad. The event, themed "It-faal-e-Baham Mazoori Ka Roshan, Jaam-e-Rasaa Ke Saath Mazboot Aur Mehakta Pakistan", highlighted the deep emotional bond that children with disabilities share with their homeland. Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Wajiha Qamar, attended as Chief Guest. Director General DGSE Capt. (R) Asif Iqbal Asif, representing Federal Secretary Nadeem Mahbub, welcomed dignitaries and participants.

The celebration opened with the National Anthem in Pakistan Sign Language, symbolizing an inclusive Pakistan, followed by recitation from the Holy Quran and Naat-e-Rasool Maqbool (S.A.W) by visually impaired students from the National Special Education Centre for the Visually Handicapped (NSEC-VHC). Highlights included a thematic tableau on "Bunyan-un-Marsoos" by students with developmental disorders from RCCDD, a motivational speech by Khadija Bibi, a wheelchair user from NSEC for Physically Handicapped Children, and a musical performance by visually impaired rubab maestro Fawad Alam — recently honoured by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif as an International Youth Icon. In her address, the Chief Guest praised DGSE's efforts for inclusion, quality education, and equal opportunities for children with disabilities, lauding their exceptional talent, dedication, and love for Pakistan. Before the ceremony, the Director General (SE), along with students with disabilities, hoisted the national flag at Al-farabi Na-



tional Special Education Centre for Physically Handicapped Children. On this occasion, a pledge was made with the special students for the country's development, security, and pros-

perity. The event concluded with certificate distribution to winners of the DGSE Azadi Sports Gala, which had been held across DGSE's special education centres since ear-

ly August. The day ended with a cake-cutting ceremony led by the Chief Guest and children with disabilities, celebrating Jashan-e-Azadi and the spirit of Marka-e-Haq.

ICCI hosts distinguished
flag hoisting ceremony

Field Marshal Asim Munir and Armed Forces lauded for Safeguarding the country's sovereignty

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) celebrated the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan with a dignified flag-hoisting and cake-cutting ceremony held at the Chamber premises. The event was attended by a large number of business leaders from various markets, members of the executive body and ICCI staff, all coming together to mark the national occasion with pride and solidarity. Speaking on the occasion, Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President ICCI, said that Pakistan was achieved after immense sacrifices, and it is the collective responsibility of the nation to honor the vision of its founders by transforming it into a prosperous and welfare-oriented state. He emphasized that the guiding principles of Unity, Faith, and Discipline, as laid down by Quaid-e-Azam

Muhammad Ali Jinnah, remain the key to making Pakistan stronger and more respected among the comity of nations. President Qureshi stressed the importance of forging national unity and working together to overcome challenges. He reaffirmed that the business community would fully support the government's initiatives aimed at placing the economy on a path of sustainable growth. Highlighting ICCI's role, he reiterated the Chamber's dedication to positioning Pakistan as a competitive and attractive destination for both domestic and foreign investors. The ICCI President also paid glowing tributes to the armed forces of Pakistan, particularly Field Marshal Asim Munir, for leading the nation's defenders in frustrating the nefarious designs of India and enhancing the country's esteem as well as for playing a proactive role in the country's economic betterment — results of which are already beginning

to show. Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Senior Vice President ICCI, called on the nation to promote "Made in Pakistan" products to strengthen the economy from within. He emphasized that promoting ease of doing business and creating a conducive investment climate are vital for steering the country out of its current economic challenges. Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, Vice President ICCI, pointed out that Pakistan is blessed with abundant natural resources. He urged the government to work closely with the private sector to fully harness these resources, which could help transform Pakistan into a rising economic power. The event was attended by prominent figures from the business community, including former President Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi, Convener ICCI Standing Committee on HEC Adnan Mukhtar, advisor to ICCI President Naem Siddiqui as well as a large number of executive members.

China, Pak step up Bio-healthy
agri research collaboration

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation led by Professor Zhang Lixin, Chairman of the Silk Road Bio-Healthy Agriculture Industry Alliance at Northwest A&F University, reached a consensus on jointly building a joint research lab and a China-Pakistan Bio-Healthy Agriculture Science and Technology Demonstration Park during a visit to the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) and the Ayub Agricultural Research Institute (AARI). "Our goal is to share China's advanced agricultural technologies with our Pakistani partners to address the common food security challenges and improve farmers' lives," Zhang emphasized, according to a report carried by China Economic Net (CEN) on Thursday. Professor Rao Zahid Abbas, Professor, Department of Parasitology, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, noted: "We are honored to collaborate with our Chinese counterparts to establish the demonstration park and joint laboratory, which will serve as a hub for innovation and applied research. These efforts will directly contribute to Pa-

kistan's food security and agricultural modernization." "This initiative marks a new chapter in academic and research collaboration between the two universities, especially in the areas of sustainable agriculture and bio-health," Dr. Saddam Hussain from UAF, added. Pakistan's sesame seed exports to China have seen a significant surge in the first half of 2025, with a 300% increase in volume compared to the same period in 2024. This growth has propelled Pakistan to become the fourth-largest sesame supplier to China. "This surge is attributed to improved market access and increased demand for Pakistani agricultural products in China. More Pakistani farmers are now cultivating sesame, reflecting growing confidence and opportunity in the sector," Professor Zhang told CEN. "Now, Pakistan aims to further strengthen its sesame trade with China by enhancing seed quality, investing in value-added processing, and expanding its presence in the Chinese e-commerce market." Construction of a bio-healthy sesame order-based demonstration farm is in full swing at the China-Pakistan Bio-Healthy Agriculture Overseas Technology Demonstration Park, jointly established by the two sides in Sahiwal, Punjab Province.

Pakistan
showcases King of
Fruits in Beijing

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Embassy in Beijing, in collaboration with the Asia-Africa Trade Promotion Office of the China-Africa Economic and Trade Promotion Council, hosted the "Golden Silk Road Mangoes: A True Oriental Treasure" festival, celebrating Pakistan's rich agricultural heritage and its world-famous mangoes. China Economic Net reported on Thursday. Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, addressing the distinguished guests, described mangoes as more than just a fruit: "What we hold in our hands today is the mango - the most precious gift from Pakistan to the world. It carries the warmth of the Indus River Basin, the whisper of ancient orchards, and the promise of friendship with the Chinese people." "The golden peel shines with the light of history, the full pulp holds the rains that inspired poets, and the fragrance recalls the caravans of the Silk Road. It is not just food - it is a food ambassador of the Pakistani soul", he added. The event attracted diplomats, business leaders, academics, and media representatives, all of whom praised the festival as a vibrant symbol of Pakistan-China friendship and cooperation. Guests were invited to taste premium varieties of Pakistani mangoes and mango-based delicacies—a sweet reminder of the enduring bond between the two nations. The ceremony was also attended by Saleem Mandviwalla, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Pakistan; Long Yuxiang, Chairman of the China International Cultural Exchange Centre; Liu Guangyuan, Vice President of Dong'e Ejiao; and Zhang Qingfeng, Vice President of the China Fruit Marketing Association. The dignitaries commended the Embassy's efforts in organizing the festival and promoting Pakistan's cultural and agricultural products in China. The event also attracted a large number of diplomats, members of the business community, academia, and media representatives.—DNA

PM orders
early
completion
of IT Park

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday expressing displeasure over the slow pace of construction of the Technology Park, directed that the IT Park should be completed as soon as possible. "This project must be completed within the time frame specified in the initial instructions," prime minister said during his visit to the under-construction Technology Park here. He further instructed that the provision of facilities in the project must meet international standards. "All responsible stakeholders should accelerate their efforts for the completion of this project," the prime minister stressed. Briefing the prime minister, the officials informed that the IT Park consisted of two underground floors, a ground floor, and nine upper floors. The Park will include offices, an incubation center, a business support center, R&D laboratories, a Level III data center, an auditorium, and parking for 1,200 vehicles.—APP

ASHRAF INDUSTRIES (PVT) LTD
127 C, Industrial Estate
Sialkot-51340, Pakistan
Phones: +92-52-3255000 / 3255768
E-mail: info@ashraf.net.pk

The BRICS factor and geopolitical designs

THE Middle East stands on the brink of a wider conflagration, with tensions between Iran and Israel reaching dangerous heights. The recent Israeli attacks deep into Iranian territory, reportedly killing high-ranking military officials and nuclear scientists, are being seen not merely as acts of self-defense or retaliation, but part of a calculated strategy with much broader geopolitical implications. While many analysts attribute the hostilities to Iran's regional influence and nuclear ambitions, there is a growing belief among global observers that Iran's rising role in BRICS is an equally crucial factor in the Israel-US agenda to isolate and destabilize Tehran.

The United States and Israel, long-time strategic allies, have consistently opposed Iran's rise—politically, militarily, and economically. Iran's entry into BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) marked a significant turning point in the geopolitical order. For decades, the US has maintained global hegemony through military bases, economic sanctions, and international institutions. However, BRICS challenges this unipolarity by offering a counterbalance rooted in economic cooperation, multipolar diplomacy, and alternative financial systems like the proposed BRICS currency.

Iran's inclusion in BRICS was not just symbolic; it was strategic. Sitting at the crossroads of Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia, Iran is rich in natural resources, particularly oil and gas, and holds a key geographical position on the global trade routes, including the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). Iran also enjoys deep ties with Russia and China, both founding members of BRICS and strong advocates for a multipolar world.

With Iran in BRICS, the bloc not only gains energy security and a pivotal trade node, but also a strong political voice in the Muslim world. Iran is one of the few countries that actively defies the West's dictates and survives despite harsh sanctions. For China and Russia, Iran represents a vital bulwark against US-led interventions and regime change policies in the region.

Now consider the scenario that the US and Israel seek: A regime change in Tehran. If the current government is overthrown and replaced with a Western-aligned leadership, it would effectively insert a Trojan horse within BRICS. This new Iranian regime, possibly more compliant to Washington's directives, could subtly undermine BRICS from within, leaking sensitive information, obstructing multilateral economic plans, and ultimately disrupting the alliance's cohesion. Such a regime would also facilitate normalization of relations with Israel and possibly support the Abraham Accords, thus weakening resistance axes across Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine. It is not hard to see why the idea of a pro-West Iran is appealing to Tel Aviv and Washington.

Understanding the gravity of the situation, both China and Russia appear to be acting preemptively. Their support for Iran in the face of Israeli aggression signals that they will not allow Iran to fall, at least not without

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Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



a significant global cost. Both powers understand that if Iran collapses, it could destabilize the broader Eurasian integration efforts led by BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China has even issued warnings to its citizens to leave Israel, indicating that Beijing is preparing for possible escalation and may even get directly involved diplomatically or otherwise. Russia, already entangled in a war with Ukraine and facing off NATO pressure, cannot afford to lose Iran—its key regional ally and partner in counter-Western narratives. There are reports of increased defense cooperation between Moscow and Tehran, including arms supplies and strategic advisory roles. It would be remiss not to mention the nuclear issue. While Israel and the US loudly oppose Iran's nuclear ambitions, it is equally true that China and Russia also do not want a nuclear-armed Iran. The difference is in approach. While the West pushes for pressure, sanctions, and military threats, Beijing and Moscow prefer engagement, diplomacy, and regional integration as tools to moderate Iranian behavior. They believe that a cornered Iran is more likely to seek nuclear deterrence, while an empowered, economically integrated Iran has more to gain from global cooperation.

It is critical for the US and Israel to recognize that Iran is not Gaza, not Syria, and not Lebanon. It is a nation of nearly 90 million people with a land-mass of 1.6 million square kilometers, making it the 17th largest country in the world by area—over 75 times larger than Israel. It has a well-established state apparatus, indigenous military-industrial capabilities, a well-educated population, and strategic depth that allows it to absorb and respond to foreign aggression in a way smaller nations cannot. An open war with Iran would not be a short, surgical strike campaign. It would unleash region-wide chaos. Iran has the capability to disrupt oil shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, strike US bases across the Middle East, and unleash its network of allied non-state actors in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. The human, political, and economic toll of such a conflict would be catastrophic—not just for the region, but for the world economy.

The G7 summit in Canada recently called for restraint and a ceasefire, reflecting growing unease among Western allies. President Donald Trump, despite his many controversies, continues to claim he can broker peace in the Middle East. If he truly seeks a legacy of peace, now is the time to act. He must engage with all parties, not just Israel, and offer an inclusive diplomatic track. A broader war will not only destroy Iran or Israel—it will damage US credibility and expose its declining ability to enforce global order.

The Middle East has suffered enough. Decades of war, foreign interventions, and authoritarian misgovernance have made it a graveyard of peace initiatives. The new geopolitical landscape demands maturity. If BRICS is to be a serious contender to Western hegemony, it must stand firm against efforts to sabotage its unity through regime change and destabilization. Likewise, the US and Israel must realize that not every defiant state can be bombed into submission. Iran, with its size, population, and geopolitical value, is not a pushover. War will not bring regime change; it will bring chaos. The time has come to prioritize diplomacy, economic cooperation, and global stability over ambition, vendetta, and military adventurism. A balanced Middle East, where no one state seeks to dominate, is in everyone's interest—including Israel and the United States.

Trump's Realist Turn and the Geopolitical Backlash

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Perhaps the most disturbing of Trump's statements is the suggestion that the United States could "take ownership" of Gaza after the mass expulsion of its Palestinian population. This idea not only violates international humanitarian law but also evokes comparisons to some of the darkest episodes in modern history, including the forced population transfers of World War II and the Israeli-Palestinian Nakba of 1948.

Such a proposal ignores international protections for occupied territories and displaced populations, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits forced displacement and collective punishment

IN the initial months of returning to office, Donald Trump has reignited global controversy with a series of inflammatory and legally contentious statements. These include threats to use military force to seize Greenland and the Panama Canal, insinuations about U.S. "ownership" of Gaza following the hypothetical expulsion of its over two million Palestinian inhabitants, and an overt suggestion that Ukraine should cede sovereign territory to Russia in exchange for a cease-fire. While these proclamations may appear at first glance to be manifestations of Trump's signature rhetorical excess widely characterized as erratic, nationalistic, and improvisational they in fact amount to a direct assault on a foundational tenet of the international legal order: the prohibition on the acquisition of territory by force. The prohibition against territorial conquest is enshrined in the United Nations Charter, particularly Article 2(4), which mandates that all member states refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. It represents one of the bedrock principles of the post-World War II international system, designed to avert a return to the lawlessness and territorial expansionism that defined earlier eras of imperialism and global war. Trump's recent positions signal not just a departure from diplomatic norms but a challenge to the very architecture of global order, suggesting a reversion to a power-centric, realist logic where might again makes right.

In suggesting the military seizure of Greenland a semi-autonomous Danish territory Trump harkens back to a time when imperial powers laid claim to foreign lands with impunity. Although Trump had floated the idea of purchasing Greenland as early as 2019, his revival of the notion through military means represents a dangerous escalation. Such rhetoric disregards the principles of self-determination and non-aggression, and evokes historical parallels to 19th-century territorial expansionism. The idea that the United States could forcibly take Greenland not only violates Denmark's sovereign rights but also disrespects the Inuit population's autonomy and collective identity. Moreover, it trivializes the long-standing norms that prohibit territorial acquisition by coercion, not only breaching international law but undermining U.S. credibility as a normative power. This proposal is not merely symbolic: Greenland is of increasing geostrategic importance due to its location in the Arctic and its natural resources, thus revealing how economic and military consid-

erations might tempt powers to revive expansionist doctrines under the veil of national interest.

Trump's threat to militarily retake control of the Panama Canal is equally unsettling. The canal was officially transferred to Panama in 1999 following the Torrijos-Carter Treaties, marking a rare instance of voluntary decolonization and symbolic respect for Latin American sovereignty. Trump's remarks suggest a revanchist attitude, one that not only disregards binding bilateral agreements but also undermines the decades-long struggle of Latin American nations to assert political and economic autonomy vis-à-vis the United States. Such a posture recalls the Monroe Doctrine and the subsequent Roosevelt Corollary, which were used throughout the 20th century to justify U.S. interventions across the Western Hemisphere. Trump's rhetoric thus threatens to revive neocolonial dynamics, transforming what should be an equal relationship between sovereign states into one defined by coercion and control. Were the United States to act on such rhetoric, it would violate both the principle of pacta sunt servanda the obligation to honor treaties—and the broader prohibition on the use of force.

Perhaps the most disturbing of Trump's statements is the suggestion that the United States could "take ownership" of Gaza after the mass expulsion of its Palestinian population. This idea not only violates international humanitarian law but also evokes comparisons to some of the darkest episodes in modern history, including the forced population transfers of World War II and the Israeli-Palestinian Nakba of 1948. Such a proposal ignores international protections for occupied territories and displaced populations, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits forced displacement and collective punishment. Trump's vision for Gaza effectively legitimizes ethnic cleansing, presenting it as a geopolitical solution rather than a war crime. Furthermore, the notion that the United States could then assume control of the territory contradicts its legal status as an occupying power and upends the principle of self-determination enshrined in international law. This rhetoric also risks normalizing violent and exclusionary ideologies, framing the removal of entire populations as viable policy options. If left unchecked, such statements could embolden other revisionist regimes to justify their own campaigns of territorial acquisition and ethnic displacement under the guise of national interest or regional stability. Trump's suggestion that Ukraine should relinquish

territory to Russia in exchange for a cease-fire serves as a particularly egregious violation of international law and post-Cold War norms. It implicitly recognizes Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its de facto control over portions of eastern Ukraine, thereby legitimizing aggression and undermining the sovereignty of smaller states. This proposal directly contradicts multiple international legal instruments, including the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, wherein Russia guaranteed Ukraine's territorial integrity in exchange for its denuclearization. By promoting such a resolution, Trump effectively supports the return of "spheres of influence" politics, in which great powers determine the fates of weaker states based on strategic calculations rather than legal or moral principles. This vision undermines the UN Charter and the principle of equal sovereignty among states, which seeks to shield smaller nations from predation by larger ones. This approach also sets a dangerous precedent. If a major power like the United States can propose the partition of a sovereign state as a peacekeeping measure, it signals to autocratic regimes that might can still override right. It also discourages resistance to aggression by signaling that violations of international law can result in territorial rewards.

Trump's statements reflect a broader return to realpolitik a worldview in which power, rather than law or norms, determines international outcomes. This worldview is fundamentally at odds with the liberal international order that emerged after 1945, which was based on the belief that law could and should constrain the behavior of states. While realpolitik has never been absent from international affairs, what is novel and particularly dangerous about Trump's iteration is its open disdain for legal constraints and multilateral institutions. Instead of engaging with the UN, NATO, or the International Court of Justice, Trump's preferred mode of diplomacy appears to be transactional, unilateral, and coercive. This approach not only undermines international law but corrodes the moral authority of the United States, inviting accusations of hypocrisy and imperialism. Moreover, these statements come at a time of growing global instability, when rising authoritarian powers such as Russia and China are already challenging the international order. By echoing their tactics and legitimizing their narratives, Trump's rhetoric inadvertently strengthens their hand. It also weakens the collective ability of the international community to respond to acts of aggression, as it fosters division, cynicism, and resignation in the face of norm violations.

Pakistan's month at the helm of UN Security Council

Ahmad Farooq

Pakistan's leadership of the UNSC offered a timely reminder that multilateralism remains the most reliable way to address our collective challenges — both imminent and distant. Pakistan's focus was not on picking sides but on building bridges. We are committed to remaining the leading voice in support of dialogue and diplomacy, especially in cases of foreign occupation and the denial of fundamental human rights. Along with other members of the council, as well as our regional and international partners, Pakistan will continue its...

PAKISTAN, a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council, assumed the presidency of the council in July. This was not just another rotation of a customary role. It was a demonstration of what principled, proactive and inclusive leadership looks like at a time of great global turbulence. By firmly placing the focus on multilateralism, respect for international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes, Pakistan steered the council's work with clarity of purpose and a sense of urgency. That Pakistan was able to deliver concrete results reflects the strength of its diplomatic credentials. This is the eighth time that Pakistan has been elected by the UN membership to serve on the Security Council as a nonpermanent member. There is a long tradition of excellence and leadership that the Pakistani delegation has been able to draw from. From peacekeeping to peacebuilding, Pakistan has always remained a forceful voice calling for dialogue and diplomacy, championing the rights of the unrepresented, underprivileged and marginalized.

From Day 1, Pakistan's approach has been anchored in its long-standing commitment to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter. As president, Pakistan's brief to the council was rooted in familiar themes: upholding transparency, remaining constructive, and promoting cooperation to deliver the fundamental elements of the UNSC's mandate. Pakistan effectively used both formal and informal spaces to press for concrete outcomes. From peacekeeping to peacebuilding, Pakistan has always remained a forceful voice calling for dialogue and diplomacy. Pakistan convened two signature events during its month-long presidency. The first

was the high-level open debate on "Promoting International Peace and Security through Multilateralism and the Peaceful Settlement of Dispute," chaired by Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed Ishaq Dar. The meeting underscored the UN's collective commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes and greater utilization of the tools available in the UN Charter to address various ongoing challenges. The Security Council also adopted by consensus the Pakistan-sponsored Resolution 2788 that reflected this common objective.

The second key event was a briefing on the collaboration between the UN and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, also chaired by Pakistan's deputy prime minister and foreign minister. The briefing contributed to amplifying the Islamic world's collective voice at the UN. It also resulted in a presidential statement calling for deeper and more structured engagement between the two organizations. This initiative reflected Pakistan's long-standing belief that regional organizations are indispensable partners in achieving peace and stability. Both these marquee events, as well as the open debate of the UNSC on the Middle East and the Palestinian question organized by the Pakistani presidency, provided an ample opportunity for UN member states to highlight the plight of the people of Gaza, who are braving the worst atrocities in recent memory at the hands of an occupying power. These formal meetings augmented pro-Palestinian voices and gave them a platform to urge for more concrete and urgent efforts to end the genocide in Gaza.

Pakistan was able to leverage its leadership role to shine a spotlight on the plight of the besieged people of Gaza. The Palestinian cause has always been a top priority for Pakistan. It is a sacred trust

for every Pakistani diplomat, not only in the UNSC but around the world. Notwithstanding the obvious deadlock in the council, Pakistan was able to leverage its leadership role to shine a spotlight on the plight of the besieged people of Gaza.

In his official pronouncements, Dar insisted on three urgent priorities: an immediate ceasefire, unhindered humanitarian access and the protection of civilians under international humanitarian law. We also lobbied, together with other like-minded countries, and coordinated closely with Saudi Arabia and members of the Joint Arab-Islamic Ministerial Committee to further the case for Palestinian rights, including the early establishment of an independent, viable and contiguous Palestinian state based on internationally agreed parameters. Both within the council's hallowed chamber, as well as during numerous closed-door consultations, Pakistan's message has remained clear and unambiguous: silence in the face of suffering is complicity. Pakistan's leadership of the UNSC offered a timely reminder that multilateralism remains the most reliable way to address our collective challenges — both imminent and distant. Pakistan's focus was not on picking sides but on building bridges. We are committed to remaining the leading voice in support of dialogue and diplomacy, especially in cases of foreign occupation and the denial of fundamental human rights. Along with other members of the council, as well as our regional and international partners, Pakistan will continue its efforts to preserve and promote international peace and security, focusing on international law and the UN Charter.

— Ahmad Farooq is Pakistan's ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

Briefs

Donald Trump says Vladimir Putin ready to make deal on Ukraine

FROM PAGE 01
very, very, very important. This meeting sets up like a chess game. This [first] meeting sets up a second meeting, but there is a 25 per cent chance that this meeting will not be a successful meeting," he said. He said it would be up to Putin and Zelensky to strike an agreement. "I'm not going to negotiate their deal. I'm going to let them negotiate their deal," he said. Earlier today, Putin spoke to his most senior ministers and security officials as he prepared for a meeting with Trump in Anchorage, Alaska, that could shape the endgame to the largest war in Europe since World War Two. In televised comments, Putin said the US was "making, in my opinion, quite energetic and sincere efforts to stop the hostilities, stop the crisis and reach agreements that are of interest to all parties involved in this conflict". This was happening, Putin said, "in order to create long-term conditions for peace between our countries, and in Europe, and in the world as a whole – if, by the next stages, we reach agreements in the area of control over strategic offensive weapons." His comments signalled that Russia will raise nuclear arms control as part of a wide-ranging discussion on security when he sits down with Trump.

Field Marshal, PAF chief, PPP chief...

FROM PAGE 01
UK and other European countries to present Pakistan's stance to the world. Members of the parliamentary delegation include Hina Rabbani Khar, Sherry Rehman, Dr Musadik Malik, Khurram Dastgir Khan, Jalil Abbas Jilani, Tehmina Janjua, Bushra Anjum Butt and Syed Faisal Subzwari. The delegation held various key meetings with high-ranking officials during their tour and played a significant role in propagating and strengthening Pakistan's narrative and countering Indian propaganda – for which Bilawal was bestowed with Nis-han-e-Imtiaz.

Five cops martyred in KP terrorist...

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the Bajaur Amn Jirga failed. Under the talks, tribal elders had put up three demands, including the expulsion of militants from the tribal area. The official sources said there are about 300 terrorists present in two areas of Tehsil Mamund of Bajaur and more than 350 in Khyber district. The development came as the country has witnessed an uptick in terror activities since 2021, especially in KP and Balochistan. According to a report released by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), an Islamabad-based think tank, there were 78 terrorist attacks across the country during June, which resulted in at least 100 deaths.

PM Shehbaz hoists flag

FROM PAGE 01
cultural dresses, presented him bouquets. Prime Minister Shehbaz, who wore black sherwani over white shalwar and kameez, hoisted the national flag as the crowd stood in respect. The ceremony also marked the playing of the national anthem and national songs. Later, the prime minister laid a wreath at the monument, offering prayers for Pakistan's development, progress, and prosperity. The Independence Day was dawned with the booming of 31-gun salutes in Islamabad and 21-gun salutes in all provincial capitals.

Rohit overtakes Babar in latest ICC ODI rankings

Most Pakistan players drop in ICC ODI rankings after series loss against WI

PAKISTAN'S top-order batter Babar Azam has dropped to third place in the latest ICC Men's ODI Player Rankings, following a below-par performance in the recent series against the West Indies. Babar managed just 56 runs across three matches, averaging 18.66, which led to a dip in his overall rating points to 751. As a result, he has been overtaken by India's ODI captain Rohit Sharma, who now holds the second spot. Among other Pakistani players, ODI captain Mohammad Rizwan has also dropped one place, moving from 21st to 22nd with 602 points. Opening batter Fakhar Zaman, who missed the West Indies ODIs due to injury, fell four places to 27th with 590 points. Imam-ul-Haq and Agha Salman also saw their rankings decline, slipping to 37th and 41st, respectively.



Saim Ayub suffered the biggest drop among Pakistan's batters, falling nine places to 46th. Meanwhile, opening batter Abdullah Shafique improved, climbing seven places to reach 90th spot with 428 points. In the ICC ODI bowlers' rankings, left-arm pacer Shaheen Afridi dropped one place to 13th with 599 points after taking just four wickets in three matches. Harris Rauf fell three places to 27th, while Naseem Shah dropped one step to 43rd with 493 points. Spinner Abrar Ahmed climbed three places to 54th, Mohammad Nawaz retained his 64th position, and Mohammad Wasim Jr fell four places to 71st. Sri Lanka's Maheesh Theekshana continues to dominate as the world's number one ODI bowler, followed by India's Kuldeep Yadav at second, and South Africa's Keshav Maharaj in third. – Agencies

PSG defend title, Pogba returns, Paris rise

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain will be hoping a severely curtailed summer break does not come back to bite them as the Ligue 1 season begins this weekend, headlined by the newly-crowned European champions and featuring the return to France of Paul Pogba. It is just the second time that the French top flight has boasted the Champions League winners among its ranks, with PSG's success against Inter Milan in May following Marseille's triumph in 1993. Luis Enrique's team added the UEFA Super Cup on Wednesday as they came from two goals down against Tottenham before winning on penalties. The nature of that success was made all the more remarkable given they had

just a week's pre-season training under their belts, and no friendly matches. That is after they went all the way to the Club World Cup final in the United States, their 3-0 defeat against Chelsea on July 13 bringing the curtain down on a marathon 65-game season. That did not take the shine off their achievement in winning the Champions League, but those exertions risk having an impact on Luis Enrique's players further down the line. "What we did last season had been the objective for all PSG supporters, for the whole club, and for everyone who played for the club," PSG's coach said this week. "Now we want to keep on making history, and that means winning

consecutive Champions Leagues, so that is our objective. That is the dream." Put another way, continued European success is the priority over winning a 12th domestic title in 14 years. PSG are nevertheless overwhelming favourites to do that as they attack the season having added goalkeeper Lucas Chevalier from Lille to replace Gianluigi Donnarumma, and Ukrainian centre-back Illia Zabarnyi from Bournemouth. French football has been mired in crisis due to difficulties finding a domestic broadcast partner willing to offer the kind of money needed to help teams beyond PSG compete with their European counterparts. At the end of last season, the French league

pulled the plug on a cut-price deal with streaming platform DAZN. Instead it has launched its own platform, a bold step which may succeed in the long run but for now means clubs have no guaranteed television income. Seven-time champions Lyon's woes almost led to them being relegated – they were initially demoted to Ligue 2 by French football's financial watchdog before successfully appealing that punishment. However, they were told they would have to cut their wage bill and transfer budget for this campaign and the future still looks uncertain – key players such as Rayan Cherki, Alexandre Lacazette and goalkeeper Lucas Perri have all departed. – Agencies

Tottenham condemns racist abuse of Mathys Tel after UEFA Super Cup

Tottenham said the club will work with the authorities and social media platforms to take "the strongest possible action against any individual we are able to identify"

LONDON: Tottenham has slammed the "cowards" who racially abused French forward Mathys Tel after the team's loss to Paris Saint-Germain in a penalty shootout in the UEFA Super Cup. The 20-year-old Tel, who is Black, was one of two Tottenham players who failed to convert their penalties as they lost the shootout 4-3 to PSG after a 2-2 draw. "We are disgusted at the racial abuse that Mathys Tel has received on social media following last night's UEFA Super Cup defeat," Tottenham said in a statement. "Mathys showed bravery and courage to step forward and take a penalty, yet those who abuse him are nothing but cowards – hiding behind anonymous user names and profiles to spout their abhorrent views." "We stand with you, Mathys," Spurs added. Tel, who joined the team on a permanent basis from Bayern Munich in the offseason after a loan spell last season, came on as a substitute in the 79th minute when Tottenham was 2-0 ahead. He hit his penalty wide of the goal in the shootout. – APP

Sports legends hail Marka-e-Haq, urge unity

ISLAMABAD: National cricketers and Olympic gold medalists Thursday proudly marked Pakistan's Independence Day, celebrating Marka-e-Haq as a beacon of pride and urging every citizen to rise with sincerity and strength for the nation's future. In exclusive video messages aired by a leading media channel on the eve of Pakistan's Independence Day, national women cricketers Shawal Zulfiqar and Sidra Noor delivered heartfelt messages to the nation. Both athletes expressed immense pride in representing Pakistan and paid tribute to the sacrifices made for freedom, urging all citizens especially the youth to embrace unity, sincerity and hard work for the nation's continued progress. Shawal Zulfiqar highlighted that true independence lies not just in celebration but in fulfilling one's responsibilities toward the country. "Every contribution, no matter how small, adds strength to our national fabric," she said, encouraging young Pakistanis to rise above divisions and play their part in shaping a better future. Sidra Noor echoed same sentiment, emphasizing that patriotism should be reflected through action, discipline, and a shared commitment to national goals. Both athletes praised Marka-e-Haq as more than a historic movement calling it a living reminder of Pakistan's just foundation and a pillar of strength that continues to inspire generations. Olympic gold medalist Arshad Nadeem also congratulated the nation on the occasion of Pakistan's Independence Day, expressing deep pride in representing the country on the world stage. In his message, he emphasized the importance of unity, discipline and sincere efforts from every citizen to drive Pakistan toward lasting progress and prosperity. He called on the youth to stay focused, work hard and uphold the values that make Pakistan strong, adding that true patriotism lies in contributing meaningfully to the nation's future. Former cricketer Mushtaq Ahmad also extended his warm wishes to the nation on Pakistan freedom day, paying heartfelt tribute to the heroes and forefathers whose sacrifices made freedom possible. – Agencies



Pakistan women's team celebrates nation's Independence Day

United in Green: Women's Cricket Team Celebrates Independence Day

ISLAMABAD: The players and coaches of the Pakistan women's cricket team have extended their warmest congratulations to the nation on the occasion of the Independence Day. In a statement issued here, Alia Riaz said, "Congratulations to all on Independence Day. May Allah bless Pakistan with peace, prosperity, and progress." Emaan Fatima said,

"Let's work hard for the progress of our country. Happy Independence Day to all. Pakistan Zindabad!" Junaid Khan said, "I pray that Pakistan continues to achieve success and prosperity." Tahir Khan said, "Let's all play our part in Pakistan's success. Pakistan Zindabad!" The team wishes the nation a joyous celebration of freedom and patriotism. – DNA

Sinner, Sabalenka reach Cincinnati quarters

"This match was my best so far of the tournament," Alcaraz said. "At the start I wanted to get better each day and I've done that"

CINCINNATI: Defending champions Jan-nik Sinner and Aryna Sabalenka led the way into the Cincinnati Open quarter-finals on Wednesday with Carlos Alcaraz hot on their heels with a straight-sets victory of his own. Sinner shrugged off a mid-match weather delay lasting nearly three hours as he advanced 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) over Adrian Mannarino. Sabalenka, taken to three sets in her previous match with Emma Raducanu, regrouped after surrendering a second-set service break to defeat Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro 6-1, 7-5. Alcaraz, the second seed who has reached the finals of his last six tournaments, hammered Italian lucky loser Luca Nardi 6-1, 6-4. After sweeping the opening set in 28 minutes, Alcaraz hit a speed bump, dropping his serve to trail 2-4. He promptly regained the break, then fought through a marathon ninth game that went to deuce eight times to take a 5-4 lead, Nardi coughing up a double-fault on break point. Alcaraz double-faulted on his first match point before producing a volley winner to complete the job. "This match was my best so far of the tournament," Alcaraz said. "At the start I wanted to get better each day and I've done that. I'm proud of that and happy with how I felt the ball and how I moved," added Alcaraz, who next faces ninth-seeded Russian Andrey Rublev. World number one Sinner, playing his first tournament since winning Wimbledon, notched his 24th consecutive

hardcourt match victory. The Italian won the first set and they were on serve in the second when they returned after the rain. Frenchman Mannarino's tricky game took a toll as Sinner was broken while trying to serve out the match. The second set went to a tiebreak, with Sinner firing his 11th and 12th aces to clinch victory. "He's a very difficult opponent, different from the other players," Sinner said. "He can read the op-



ponent well. It was a struggle to close it out but I'm happy to be in the quarter-finals." Sinner next faces Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime, who beat Benjamin Bonzi of France 6-4, 6-3. French qualifier Terence Atmane sprung the surprise of the day, shocking fourth seed Taylor Fritz 3-6, 7-5, 6-3 to win the biggest match of his career. After putting a winner into the corner on match point, Atmane sank to his knees and



shed a few tears. "I can't believe this, I was shaking," the 136th-ranked Atmane said. "I cannot describe this feeling." He'll fight for a semi-final berth against seventh-seeded Holger Rune, who led 6-4, 3-1 when home hope Frances Tiafoe retired with back trouble. After her marathon victory against Raducanu, world number one Sabalenka was pleased to get off the court in straight sets against Bouzas Maneiro. "The key was to focus and put as much pressure as possible on her serve," said Sabalenka. "I'm glad to win in straight sets, I didn't want to stay for three hours." Sabalenka will face former Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina, who beat Australian Open champion Madison Keys 6-7 (3/7), 6-4, 6-2. - Zverev at the double – Third-seeded Alexander Zverev had to take to the court twice on Wednesday to reach the quarters – although both outings were relatively short-lived. The German started his day by polishing off a 6-4, 6-4 third-round victory over Brandon Nakashima in a match continued from Tuesday. The entire one-game exercise, with 2021 Cincy winner Zverev leading 6-4, 5-4 when play resumed, took less than two minutes. Hours later Zverev advanced to the quarters when Karen Khachanov retired with Zverev leading 7-5, 3-0. Fifth seed Ben Shelton, last week's Toronto champion, reached the last 16 with a 7-6 (7/3), 6-3 victory over Roberto Bautista Agut in a match rescheduled from Tuesday. – Agencies

Pakistan may move UNSC against BLA, affiliate

FROM PAGE 01
the morale of Pakistan's security forces as they prepare to intensify operations against these groups. The Majeed Brigade, the deadliest affiliate of the BLA, is notorious for employing suicide bombings – an uncommon tactic among secular militant groups – and has even deployed female bombers to target military convoys and installations. A diplomatic source told The News that Pakistan intends to raise the issue at the UNSC, emphasising that there is no better moment than now, following Washington's designation. Pakistan's position as vice-chair of the UNSC's Counter-Terrorism Committee enhances its influence and access to key decision-makers. However, the source cautioned that such processes are time-consuming, and immediate action should not be expected.

CJP's letter reveals split among SC judges

FROM PAGE 01
Munib Akhtar, in the CJP's absence, convened a committee meeting on October 31 and decided to fix the case before a full court on November 4, 2024. CJP Afridi objected to the move, stating in his letter that under the Constitution, petitions filed under Article 184(3) can only be heard by a constitutional bench. He disclosed that after personally consulting all 13 Supreme Court judges, nine supported hearing the matter before a constitutional bench rather than a full court. Despite repeated calls from Justices Mansoor and Munib for a full court hearing, CJP Afridi assigned the case to a constitutional bench, arguing that convening a full court was unnecessary and could harm essential judicial harmony while exposing the court to public criticism. The released minutes also include CJP Afridi's written response to Justice Mansoor's earlier letter, in which he cited constitutional provisions – including Article 191A and its sub-sections – to support his stance that only a constitutional bench could hear the matter. He stressed that under the 2023 Committees of Judges Act, only the constitutional committee of judges may decide case fixation. According to the documents, CJP Afridi noted that two judges favoured a full court, while the majority disagreed. He communicated this to Justices Mansoor and Munib, along with the reasoning provided by the other judges. The CJP's letter further revealed that two sealed letters from the "brother judges" advocating for a full court were received late in the afternoon, prompting him to place them – along with his sealed replies – in the custody of the Judicial Commission's secretary until its meeting on November 5, 2024.

UEFA pays tribute to slain Palestinian footballer Suleiman Al-Obeid

DUBAI: UEFA unfurled a banner with the message "Stop Killing Children. Stop Killing Civilians" on the pitch on Wednesday ahead of the UEFA Super Cup showdown between Paris Saint-Germain and Tottenham Hotspur in Udine, Italy. The message came as a tribute following the death of Palestinian footballer Suleiman Al-Obeid, known as the "Palestinian Pele," who was killed by Israeli gunfire while awaiting aid in Gaza earlier this month. Nine child refugees from Palestine, Afghanistan, Ukraine, and Iraq carried the banner onto the pitch before the game. The international football community failed to publicly condemn Al-Obeid's killing at first, but UEFA later posted a tribute without mentioning or explaining the circumstances surrounding his death. In a brief post on X, UEFA said the former national team member was "a talent who gave hope to countless children, even in the darkest of times." – APP

Briefs

LCCI celebrates I-Day with flag-hoisting, cake-cutting ceremony

LAHORE: The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) celebrated Pakistan's Independence Day here on Thursday with a grand ceremony featuring a flag hoisting and cake cutting. The event commenced with recitation from the Holy Quran followed by the national anthem. LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad, Senior Vice President Engineer Khalid Usman, Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry, former LCCI president Muhammad Ali Mian, former vice president Faheem-ur-Rehman Saigol and Executive Committee members jointly hoisted the national flag. A large number of members of the business community were also present. Special prayers were offered for the security, progress and prosperity of Pakistan, while the atmosphere echoed with chants of "Pakistan Zindabad" and "Quaid-i-Azam Zindabad." In his address, LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad said that Independence Day is not just a celebration, but a reminder of the sacrifices, unity and hard work of our forefathers who struggled for this homeland. He stressed that Pakistan's development requires collective efforts from all segments of society. —APP

Pakistan Movement's heroes eulogized

LAHORE: Coordinator to Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Saifur-Rehman Thursday said Pakistan was carved on the globe after the immense sacrifices of our forefathers. Addressing an Independence Day event organised by family food products manufacturers here, he highlighted the struggles and unwavering commitment of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and other heroes of Pakistan Movement in achieving an independent homeland. He stressed the importance of honoring these sacrifices by upholding the principles of justice, unity, and progress envisioned by Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He urged Pakistanis, especially the youth, to contribute positively to the country's development and protect its sovereignty. He also reiterated the FTO commitment to addressing public grievances, particularly in tax-related matters, ensuring fairness and transparency under the leadership of Federal Tax Ombudsman Dr Asif Mahmood Jah. —APP

Marka e Haq, Independence Day Celebrated at HCSTSI

HYDERABAD: The Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry hosted a grand cake-cutting ceremony on the occasion of the "Marka e Haq" and Pakistan's Independence Day. The event was attended by chamber members, the business community, distinguished guests, social figures, and media representatives in large numbers. Prayers were offered for the progress and prosperity of the beloved homeland, and participants filled the air with spirited chants of "Pakistan Zindabad." In his address, Chamber President Saleem Memon said that the "Marka e Haq" teaches us that sacrifice, courage, and determination are the greatest strengths in upholding the truth. Pakistan's independence is also the result of countless sacrifices, and even after years, we must continue to value these sacrifices by playing our role in the country's development. He added that over the past years, the business community has stood as a backbone of the economy in every difficult time, contributing to Pakistan's growth by creating industries, trade, and employment opportunities. He further stated that the Chamber not only actively participated in but also sponsored the "Marka e Haq - Independence Day Family Festival" held at Rani Bagh. —APP

Embassies celebrate Pak 78th IDay with traditional zeal

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani embassies across the world celebrated Pakistan's 78th Independence Day with traditional zeal and fervour by holding flag hoisting ceremonies and highlighting historical significance of the day.

SAUDI ARABIA: On the national occasion of Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, a graceful flag hoisting ceremony was held at the under construction Chancery building of the Consulate General of Pakistan in Jeddah. Consul General of Pakistan Khalid Majid led the ceremony, joined by a large Pakistani community and legendary cricketer Javed Miandad who witnessed with great pride and honour as the National Flag rose amidst the national anthem. Special messages from the President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan were read out during the occasion. Students from Pakistani School delivered patriotic speeches portraying Pakistan's vibrant history, cultural heritage and remarkable accomplishments. Consul General Khalid Majid, in his remarks, highlighted the significance of the day, and paid tribute to the founding fathers of Pakistan. He highlighted country's achievements in various fields and underlined the paramount success achieved recently in Marka-e-Haq which will go down in the history as a golden chapter when our nation stood the test of the time and proved its worth as an independent nation. Prominent community members Mr. Masood Ahmad Puri and Ch Shahabaz Hussain also addressed the gathering and highlighted significance of this day and blessings of freedom.

EGYPT: The Embassy of Pakistan in Cairo celebrated Pakistan's 79th Independence Day with traditional zeal. Ambassador Aamir Shouket hoisted the national flag



at the Chancery, followed by the National Anthem, recitation from the Holy Quran, and messages from the President, Prime Minister, and Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister. In his address, Ambassador Shouket paid tribute to the sacrifices of Pakistan's founding fathers under the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He lauded the nation's unity and resilience, particularly during Operation Bunyan-Al-Marsoos in May 2025, which he said enhanced Pakistan's global standing as a responsible

and dignified state.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: The Embassy of Pakistan in Abu Dhabi hosted a flag-hoisting ceremony to mark the 78th anniversary of Pakistan's Independence Day with national zeal and enthusiasm. A large number of Pakistani community members, along with their families, attended the event. Messages from the leadership of Pakistan were read out on the occasion. Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Pakistan's Envoy to the United Arab Emirates, warmly welcomed

the guests and congratulated the community on the auspicious occasion. He underscored the guiding principles of unity, faith, and discipline as the foundation for Pakistan's continued socio-economic progress, and offered prayers for the peace, prosperity, and stability of the beloved homeland. Paying tribute to the nation's strength, resilience, and unity in the face of recent external aggression, the ambassador highlighted the success in Marka-e-Haq and Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos as historic milestones.

Telenor secures No. 1 position in Cybersecurity excellence

ISLAMABAD: Telenor Pakistan has once again received top honors at the Telecom Cyber Security Awards 2025, organized by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). The company was recognized in Category (1)—industry's benchmark for cyber threat defense, information security, and resilience—for its outstanding compliance with the Critical Telecom Data and Infrastructure Security Regulations (CTDISR) said a news release. This achievement follows PTA's rigorous annual audit and revalidation process, which assesses operators on their adherence to stringent cybersecurity protocols safeguarding Pakistan's national telecom infrastructure. Telenor Pakistan achieved one of the highest compliance percentages in the industry, reaffirming its position as a leader in cybersecurity readiness. The award was presented to Awais Vohra, Chief Technology Officer and Shan ul Haq, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer at Telenor Pakistan, by Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Federal Minister for IT & Telecommunication, during a ceremony attended by senior government officials, the PTA Chairman, and industry leaders from the telecom and technology sectors. Commenting on the recognition, Awais Vohra, Chief Technology Officer, Telenor Pakistan said: "Winning this award for the second year in a row reflects Telenor Pakistan's strong commitment to protecting our customers' data, network, and systems from evolving cyber threats. We ensure that security is embedded from the design phase whenever we develop a product or service, enabling us to build trust and resilience from the ground up. We will continue to strengthen our security measures, work closely with industry partners, and introduce new solutions to help create a safer digital future for Pakistan."

This consecutive win underscores Telenor Pakistan's commitment to setting new industry standards for cybersecurity excellence and its continued contribution to building a secure, resilient, and trusted digital ecosystem in Pakistan. —DNA

NWC implements 22 projects in Jeddah Governorate

JEDDAH: The National Water Company (NWC) has started implementing 22 capital projects in Jeddah Governorate at a cost of over SAR1.8 billion. These projects include the construction of pipelines and networks totaling approximately 984 kilometers in length. The projects are part of NWC's strategic plans to reinforce the infrastructure of the water and environmental services sectors, expand service coverage rates, and improve service quality in line with the urban renaissance witnessed by the governorate. According to NWC, these ongoing projects will increase operational efficiency in the water and sanitation sectors and expand services to unserved districts, aligning with and accelerating the rapid development witnessed in Jeddah, helping to achieve environmental and water sustainability targets and improving the quality of life, all of which are key goals of Saudi Vision 2030. NWC stated that the projects launched include main and feeder water lines, water transmission lines, environmental service lines and networks, and surface water level drawdown networks. They also include the construction of a tanker filling station in the northern reservoir. It also said that these projects will serve 30 districts in Jeddah Governorate and contribute to meeting the needs of approximately 260,000 people. It noted that this new package of projects builds upon the 15 initiatives announced in May 2025, valued at over SAR2.3 billion. These efforts are part of the company's ongoing commitment to strengthening the water distribution system, mitigating environmental damage, and promoting water security and environmental sustainability. —APP

Water shortages plague Beirut as low rainfall compounds woes

BEIRUT: People are buying water by the truckload in Beirut as the state supply faces its worst shortages in years, with the leaky public sector struggling after record-low rainfall and local wells running dry. "State water used to come every other day, now it's every three days," said Rima Al-Sabaa, 50, rinsing dishes carefully in Burj Al-Baranjeh, in Beirut's southern suburbs. Even when the state water is flowing, she noted, very little trickles into her family's holding tank. Once that runs out, they have to buy trucked-in water — pumped from private springs and wells — but it costs more than \$5 for 1,000 liters and lasts just a few days, and its brackishness makes everything rust. In some areas, the price can be twice as high. Like many Lebanese people, Sabaa, who works assisting the elderly, relies on bottled water for drinking. But in a country grappling with a yearslong economic crisis and still reeling from a recent war between Israel and Hezbollah, the costs add up. "Where am I supposed to get the money from?" she asked. Water shortages have long been the norm for much of Lebanon, which acknowledges only around half the population "has regular and sufficient access to public water services." Surface storage options such as dams are inadequate, according to the country's national water strategy, while half the state supply is considered "non-revenue water" — lost to leakage and illegal connections. This year, low rainfall has made matters even worse. Mohamad Kanj from the meteorological department told AFP that rainfall for 2024-2025 "is the worst in the 80 years" on record in Lebanon. Climate change is set to exacerbate the county's water stress, according to the national strategy, while a World Bank statement this year said "climate change may halve (Lebanon's) dry-season water by 2040. Energy and Water Minister Joseph Saddi said last week that "the situation is very difficult." The shortages are felt unevenly across greater Beirut, where tanks clutter rooftops, water trucks clog roads and most people on the ramshackle state grid lack meters. Last month, the government launched a campaign encouraging water conservation, showing dried or depleted springs and lakes around the country. North of the capital, levels were low in parts of the Dbayeh pumping station that should have been gushing with water. "I've been here for 33 years and this is the worst crisis we've had for the amount of water we're receiving and can pump" to Beirut, said the station's Zouhair Azzi. Antoine Zoghbi from the Beirut and Mount Lebanon Water Establishment said water rationing in Beirut usually started in October or November, after summer and before the winter rainy season. But this year it has started months early "because we lack 50 percent of the amount of water" required at some springs, he told AFP last month. Rationing began at some wells in June, he said, to reduce the risk of overuse and seawater intrusion. Zoghbi emphasized the need for additional storage, including dams. In January, the World Bank approved more than \$250 million in funding to improve water services for greater Beirut and its surroundings. In 2020, it canceled a loan for a dam south of the capital after environmentalists said it could destroy a biodiversity-rich valley. In south Beirut, pensioner Abu Ali Nasreddine, 66, said he had not received state water for many months. "Where they're sending it, nobody knows," he said, lamenting that the cost of trucked-in water had also risen. His building used to get water from a local well but it dried up, he added, checking his rooftop tank. Bilal Salhab, 45, who delivers water on a small, rusted truck, said demand had soared, with families placing orders multiple times a week. —DNA

Gaza's young musicians sing and play in the ruins of war

GAZA CITY: A boy's lilting song filled the tent in Gaza City, above an instrumental melody and backing singers' quiet harmonies, soft music that floated into streets these days more attuned to the deadly beat of bombs and bullets. The young students were taking part in a lesson given on August 4 by teachers from the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, who have continued classes from displacement camps and shattered buildings even after Israel's bombardments forced them to abandon the school's main building in the city. "When I play I feel like I'm flying away," said Rifan Al-Qassas, 15, who started learning the oud, an Arab lute, when she was nine. She hopes to one day play abroad. "Music gives me hope and eases my fear," she said. Al-Qassas hopes to one day play abroad, she said during a weekend class at the heavily shelled Gaza College, a school in Gaza City. Israel's military again pounded parts of the city on August 12, with more than 120 people killed over the past few days, Gazan health authorities say. The conservatory was founded in the West Bank and had been a cultural lifeline for Gaza ever since it opened a branch there 13 years ago, teaching classical music along with popular genres, until Israel launched its war on the Mediterranean enclave in response to the October 7, 2023 Hamas attacks. Before the fighting, Israel sometimes granted the best students exit permits to travel outside Gaza to play in the Palestine Youth Orchestra, the conservatory's touring ensemble. Others performed inside Gaza, giving concerts

in both Arabic and Western traditions. After 22 months of bombardment, some of the students are now dead, said Suhail Khoury, the conservatory's president, including 14-year-old violinist Lubna Alyaan, killed along with her family early in the war. The school's old home lies in ruins, according to a video released in January by a teacher. Walls had collapsed and rooms were littered with debris. A grand piano had disappeared. Reuters asked the Israeli military about the damage. The military declined to comment without more details, which Reuters could not establish. During last week's session, over a dozen students gathered



under the tent's rustling plastic sheets to practice on instruments carefully preserved through the war and to join together in song and music. "No fig leaf will wither inside us," the boy sang, a line from a popular lament about Palestinian loss through generations of displacement since the 1948 creation of Israel. Three female students practiced the song Greensleeves on guitar outside the tent, while another group of boys were tapping out rhythms on Middle Eastern hand drums. Few instruments have survived the fighting, said Fouad Khader, who coordinates the revived classes for the conservatory. Teachers have bought some from other displaced people for the students to use. But some of these have been smashed during bombardment, he said. Instructors have experimented with making their own percussion instruments from empty cans and containers to train children, Khader said. Early last year, Ahmed Abu Amsha, a guitar and violin teacher with a big beard and a broad smile, was among the first of the conservatory's scattered teachers and students who began offering classes again, playing guitar in the evenings among the tents of displaced people in the south of Gaza, where much of the 2.1 million population had been forced to move by Israeli evacuation orders and bombing. Then, after a ceasefire began in January, Abu Amsha, 43, was among the tens of thousands of people who moved back north to Gaza City, much of which has been flattened by Israeli bombing. For the past six months, he has been living. —DNA

Turkiye to help Syria with weapon systems

ANKARA: Turkiye will help Syria with the provision of weapons systems and logistical tools under a military cooperation accord signed on Wednesday, a Turkish defense Ministry source said on Thursday, adding that Ankara would also train Syria's army in the use of such equipment if needed. In a first step toward a comprehensive military cooperation agreement, Turkiye and Syria signed a memorandum of understanding on military training and consultancy after talks between their foreign, defense ministers, and intelligence chiefs. The source told reporters in Ankara that the Kurdish-led and US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) had not met any of the conditions set out in a March agreement with Damascus on the group's integration into Syria's state apparatus, and added Ankara expected it to urgently respect the deal. —APP

At least 40 dead in Sudan's worst cholera outbreak in years

TAWILA: At least 40 people have died in Sudan's Darfur region in the country's worst cholera outbreak in years, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said on Thursday. The medical charity said the vast western region, which has been a major battleground over more than two years of fighting between the regular army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, had been hardest hit by the year-old outbreak. "On top of an all-out war, people in Sudan are now experiencing the worst cholera outbreak the country has seen in years," MSF said in a statement. "In the Darfur region alone, MSF teams treated over 2,300 patients and recorded 40 deaths in the past week." The NGO said 2,470 cholera-related deaths had been reported in the year to August 11, out of 99,700 suspected cases. Cholera is an acute intestinal infection that spreads through food and water contaminated with bacteria, often from faeces. It causes severe diarrhea, vomiting and muscle cramps. Cholera can kill within hours when not attended to, though it can be treated with simple oral rehydration, and antibiotics for more severe cases. There has been a global increase in cholera cases, which have also spread geographically, since 2021. MSF said mass displacements of civilians sparked by the war in Sudan had aggravated the outbreak by denying people access to clean water for essential hygiene measures, such as washing dishes and food. "The situation is most extreme in Tawila, North Darfur state, where 380,000 people have fled to escape ongoing fighting around the city of El-Fasher, according to the United Nations," MSF said. —APP

Australian scientists target frost losses threatening wheat industry

CANBERRA: Australian scientists are leading efforts to protect grain growers from frost damage, costing the wheat industry over 360 million Australian dollars (about 235 million U.S. dollars) a year. Field trials are being combined with laboratory and controlled-environment studies to develop genetic solutions to frost, according to a statement released Wednesday by Australia's Charles Sturt University (CSU). Crop scientists are studying novel wheat germplasm in fields and frost-simulation chambers to uncover genetic links to frost damage, which has risen by 30 percent in southern Australia since 2000, with climate models predicting both frequency and severity will intensify, it said. "This presents a challenge to breeders to improve crop tolerance to stress and for industry to integrate new genetic potential into farming systems to continually adapt to climate change, thus increasing productivity," said CSU Senior Lecturer in Crop Science Felicity Harris. —APP

Briefs

Another flood severs Karakoram Highway

DNA

GILGIT/LAHORE: Hundreds of travellers and tourists were stranded in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) on Wednesday after a glacial lake outburst flood (Glof) swept away part of the Karakoram Highway (KKH), while authorities in Punjab ordered communities along the Sutlej River to evacuate amid forecasts of heavy monsoon rains and floods. In Gulmit, Gojal, Hunza, a powerful torrent surged through the Juchar nullah on Tuesday evening, triggered by accelerated glacier melt. The floodwaters destroyed a women-owned restaurant, a government tourist facilitation centre, orchards, farmland, and critical infrastructure including electricity and internet poles, according to Rescue 1122 officials.

Daesh network dismantled in Peshawar

DNA

PESHAWAR: The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of police on Wednesday claimed to have successfully dismantled Daesh Khorasan network in Peshawar and has achieved major operational successes in several cases, including the killing of religious scholar Mufti Munir Shakir. Mufti Munir Shakir, founder of the banned Lashkar-i-Islam, was killed in a blast outside his seminary in Urmur area on the outskirts of the provincial capital on March 15 this year. They said the department identified the gang involved in this heinous act while efforts were under way to apprehend the culprits in the near future.

Three killed during aerial firing in Karachi

DNA

KARACHI: A minor girl was among three people killed while more than 100 people were injured by aerial firing in Karachi on the eve of Independence Day, according to hospital officials. Incidents of aerial firing are a routine occurrence on occasions such as Independence Day and New Year's Eve despite bans imposed in the past, often leaving dozens injured. According to a statement issued by police surgeon Dr Summaiya Syed, a total of 109 people with bullet injuries from aerial firing were brought in from different areas across the metropolis to three major hospitals. Three people were said to be in critical condition. However, police put the injury toll as 67, according to a statement from the office of the Karachi Additional Inspector General (AIG) Javed Alam Odho. Azizabad SHO Waqar Kaiser told Dawn.com, "A seven-year-old girl was watching Independence Day fireworks from the second floor gallery of her house in Azizabad Block-8 when a bullet struck her in the head."

Tarar highlights Info Ministry role in countering enemy propaganda

Tarar conferred with Sitara-e-Imtiaz Award for effectively presenting national narrative

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Thursday that the role played by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Pakistan Television in projecting national narrative and countering the enemy's propaganda during the military standoff with India in May this year will always be remembered. Delivering his speech at the Independence Day flag hoisting ceremony at PTV Headquarters, he said, besides victory on the military and diplomatic front, Pakistan successfully projected an Information narrative domestically and at the global level. The role of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and its attached departments in narrative warfare will be written in golden words.

"The aim of digital warfare was to keep the nation's morale high and highlight Pakistan's narrative at the global level," he added. The minister said that in May, the Marka-e-Haq once again reestablished the importance of the Two-Nation theory and it reemerged as a reality. Attaullah Tarar said the enemy imposed aggression on Pakistan under the guise of the Pahalgam false flag operation and tried to tarnish Pakistan's image. The Pakistani nation and its Armed Forces not only foiled the enemy's nefarious designs, but forced it on a ceasefire, which was tantamount to accepting its defeat. This year's historic victory of Marka-e-Haq is being celebrated with the Independence Day celebration, which



was a unique feat. "We protected freedom and sent a message to the world that the Pakistani nation knows how to defend itself", Attaullah Tarar remarked. The Pakistani Armed Forces, he added, had proven their capabilities by adopting the best strategy in war. He said in the 1965 war, the songs produced by PTV played a role in boosting the morale of the soldiers and the nation. He said that the efforts of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and

the PTV in building and projecting the national narrative will always be remembered.

He said times have changed and Information warfare and narrative warfare have evolved and wars are fought on ideological frontiers.

"The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Pakistan Television Corporation passed the test of defence of ideological frontiers in flying colours".

He appreciated the role of Secretary of Information and Broadcasting Ambreen Jan and her entire team, especially the Digital Communication Department, in countering fake news and propaganda and defeating the enemy in digital warfare. He said that when India banned Pakistan's YouTube channels, Pakistan adopted a strategy through which its national songs were being played on Indian YouTube channels, which baffled India.

Meanwhile, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday was conferred with the Sitara-e-Imtiaz award for effectively and successfully presenting the national narrative at the global level during the recent Pakistan-India tensions.

The award was conferred on him by President Asif Ali Zardari at a ceremony held at the President House to confer high level national awards on civil and military figures. During the stand off between Pakistan and India, Attaullah Tarar successfully thwarted Indian propaganda by creating perfect coordination in the dissemination of information by civil and military institutions. The minister highlighted Pakistan's position in a powerful and effective manner at international forums.

Over 100 children die from Israeli-enforced starvation



UNITED NATIONS: At least 100 children in Gaza have died from malnutrition and hunger, prompting humanitarian workers to underscore the need to speed up medical evacuations from the enclave while also allowing more food to enter. These young deaths are "the latest in the war on children and childhood in Gaza," Philippe Lazzerini, head of UN Palestine refugee agency, UNRWA, said in a tweet. The toll also includes some 40,000 boys and girls reported killed or injured due to Israeli bombardment and airstrikes, at least 17,000 unaccompanied and

"The first time I met her was in the IMC Field Hospital in southern Gaza in April 2024. Back then, she was severely malnourished and was getting treatment. And she gradually became better and was released eventually and went home"

separated children, and one million deeply traumatized youngsters who are not getting an education.

"No one should stay silent when children die, or are brutally deprived of a future, wherever these children are, including in Gaza." Thousands of sick children in Gaza need urgent medical evacuation, according to UN aid coordination office, OCHA. Olga Cherevko, a spokesperson for the agency, recalled the moment she recognized a young girl requiring treatment in a Gaza hospital after a year's interval, once again suffering from malnourishment.

"I remembered her long eyelashes," the veteran humanitarian told UN News, an international media website, describing seven-year-old Janah, who she came across at Gaza City's Patient Friendly Hospital on Tuesday.

"The first time I met her was in the IMC Field Hospital in southern Gaza in April 2024. Back then, she was severely malnourished and was getting treatment. And she gradually became better and was released eventually and went home." However, Janah was now back in hospital "because the malnutrition became aggravated and the condition that she has also is not properly diagnosed and cannot be properly diagnosed." The girl is on a list of people to be medically evacuated for treatment outside Gaza. The most recent evacuations took place last week when the WHO supported the transfer of 15 critically ill children to Jordan, but more than 14,800 people are still waiting. - DNA

Govt, PTI explore dialogue

PML-N, PPP have privately conveyed PTI leaders their readiness to help party in normalising its politics

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: In a significant political development, representatives of the federal government and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) held a meeting at the National Assembly Speaker's Office on Wednesday, where both sides discussed the possibility of dialogue - with the speaker skipping a disciplinary vote against PTI's Waqas Akram Shaikh as a goodwill gesture. Sources revealed that Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, alongside Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, accommodated PTI's delegation by withholding a resolution to penalise Shaikh for his over 40-day absence from the House. The move was seen as an attempt to ease tensions ahead of potential negotiations. During the meeting, the speaker reportedly emphasised the need for political engagement. Tarar and Chaudhry also supported, while the PTI side was also keen and assured that they would discuss the matter with their parliamentary party and other leaders. They

assured they would get back on this.

Meanwhile, senior Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Syed Naveed Qamar also approached PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and former speaker Asad Qaiser on the opposition benches, urging them to resort to political options so that the PPP could help them. At the Speaker's Office, while both sides favour the talks' option, sources confirmed that any formal process would require approval from jailed PTI founder Imran Khan, who has been resisting engagement with the government parties. Interestingly, the PTI's parliamentary party in its meeting on Wednesday overwhelmingly supported dialogue, a source said, adding, "But the final call rests with Imran Khan".

Government allies, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and PPP, have privately conveyed to PTI leaders their readiness to help the party in normalising its politics, which is considered possible only through structured dialogue. In the past, PTI missed repeated opportunities of dialogue because of Imran Khan's rigidity to hold dialogue only with the establishment, which has not been interested to engage.

India and China eye border trade resumption after 5-year hiatus

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: India and China are discussing resuming border trade five years after it was halted, foreign ministry officials on both sides have said, as US tariffs disrupt the global trade order. Past trade across the icy and high-altitude Himalayan border passes between the neighbours was usually small in volume, but any resumption is significant for its symbolism. The two major economic powers have long competed for strategic influence across South Asia. But caught in global trade and geopolitical turbulence triggered by US President Donald Trump's tariff regime, the countries have moved to mend ties. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is expected to hold talks in New Delhi on Monday, according to Indian media, after his counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar visited Beijing in July. That, as well as agreements to resume direct flights and issue tourist visas, has been seen as an effort to rebuild a relationship damaged after a deadly border clash in 2020 between their nations' troops. "For a long time, China-India border trade cooperation has played an important role in improving the lives of

people living along the border," China's foreign ministry said in a statement to AFP on Thursday.

It added that the two sides have "reached a consensus on cross-border exchanges and cooperation, including resumption of border trade".

New Delhi's junior foreign minister, Kirti Vardhan Singh, told parliament last week that "India has engaged with the Chinese side to facilitate the resumption of border trade". No restart date was given by either side.

Successive US administrations have seen India as a long-standing ally with like-minded interests when it comes to China. India is part of the Quad security alliance with the United States, as well as Australia and Japan.

But ties between New Delhi and Washington have been strained by Trump's ultimatum for India to end its purchases of Russian oil, a key source of revenue for Moscow as it wages its military offensive in Ukraine.

The United States will double new import tariffs on India from 25 per cent to 50pc by August 27 if New Delhi does not switch crude suppliers. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, according to Indian media, might also visit China in late August. It would be Modi's first visit since 2018, although it has not been confirmed officially.

US extends Independence Day greetings

ISLAMABAD: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has extended warm congratulations to the people of Pakistan on the occasion of their Independence Day, celebrated annually on August 14. In a statement issued on Thursday, Rubio praised Pakistan's cooperation with the United States in areas such as counterterrorism and trade. He expressed hope for expanding bilateral ties, particularly in emerging sectors like critical minerals and hydrocarbons. "We look forward to fostering dynamic business partnerships that will promote a prosperous future for both Americans and Pakistanis," Rubio said. The message underscores Washington's intent to strengthen strategic and economic engagement with Islamabad, as both nations explore fresh opportunities for collaboration in regional and global markets. - APP

Chairman senate Advisor briefs Iranian diplomats

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Chairman Senate, Misbah Khar, visited the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Islamabad, where she met with Nabi Shirazi, Minister Counsellor/Deputy Head of Mission, and Dr Mahdi Bahmani, Secretary in the Political Section. During the meeting, she presented an overview of the Inter-Parliamentary Speakers Conference (ISC), a newly established multilateral forum aimed at strengthening cooperation and dialogue among national parliaments. She said that the ISC has already brought together 45 presiding officers from legislatures around the world and that, in elections recently held in Malaysia, Senate Chairman Yousuf Raza Gillani was unanimously elected as the forum's inaugural President. She extended an official invitation to the Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran to attend the first full session of the ISC, scheduled for November 11-12, 2025, in Islamabad. The event will focus on the theme "Peace, Stability, and Security" and will promote dialogue among parliamentary leaders to address shared global challenges. - APP

Bitcoin hits record high above \$124,000

Favourable US legislation, rise in US equities behind crypto currency's value hike



DNA

TOKYO: Bitcoin hit a record high on Thursday during early Asian trading, surpassing \$124,000, driven by favourable US legislation

and a rise in US equities. The cryptocurrency rose above its previous July record, briefly exceeding \$124,500 before retreating. US stocks ended higher Wednesday, with the S&P 500 index and the tech-heavy Nasdaq reaching new heights this week, contributing to the cryptocurrency's rise. Bitcoin's value has recently soared, fuelled by US regulatory changes under US President Donald Trump, a strong backer of the crypto sector.

Its price has also been boosted by large holders of cryptocurrency, referred to as "whales". "The crypto market is enjoying a period of highly favourable fundamentals," said Samer Hasn, senior market analyst at XS.com.

"President Trump has moved to end restrictions that previously prevented banks from doing business with companies flagged for reputational risk concerns, a category in which crypto firms were often unfairly placed," he added.

Trump may also be inclined to "accelerate the integration of cryptocurrencies into the national financial system and lift additional restrictions, given his and his family's growing involvement in the sector", Hasn said.

Trump's media group and Tesla, the electric carmaker owned by tech billionaire Elon Musk, are among an increasing number of companies buying huge amounts of Bitcoin.

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