



Islamabad POST

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US keeping close eye on Pakistan, India

Detailed News On Page-08



Naqvi gives Rs 1 million to hockey team

Detailed News On Page-06



KP releases Rs800m relief fund

Swabi cloudburst triggers flood; massive landslide

Authorities issue flood warnings along Indus as rain-swollen rivers surge; Peshawar reels under urban flooding

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD/PESHAWAR: Pakistan is reeling under one of the deadliest monsoon seasons in recent memory, with relentless rains and surging floodwaters inundating vast swathes of the country. At least 657 people have died and more than 920 injured since June 26 across the country, according to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), as cloudbursts, flash floods, house collapses and lightning strikes continue to batter communities. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) remains the worst-hit province, with over 300 deaths, where remote mountainous districts such as Buner have become the epicentre of tragedy. As flash floods continue to ravage Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the provincial government on Monday released Rs800 million in relief funds for all affected districts, with an additional Rs 500m specifically for worst-hit Buner. The recent catastrophic floods in KP have claimed at least 325 lives as of Monday and injured 156 people, as the nationwide toll from rain-related incidents since late-June rose to 657. The KP Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Monday announced Rs800m in relief funds to the administrations of affected districts on the instructions of the provincial government. Fresh rains gripped parts of the country on Monday, compounding the misery of millions. In Mardan, heavy showers drenched the city and its outskirts, while Nowshera recorded thunderous rainfall across different localities. Cloudburst and landslides wreaked havoc in Swabi, submerging several houses and leaving at least four people dead. According to hospital sources, two women and two children died and seven people were injured when the roof of a house collapsed in Sarkoi Payan area of Swabi. Deputy Commissioner Swabi Nasrullah Khan said several houses were submerged in Dalori village due to cloudburst-triggered

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Monsoon threat to persist by August end, says NDMA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider on Monday warned that monsoon conditions will remain precarious until the end of August, with normalization expected by late September. Speaking at a joint press briefing with Information Minister Attaullah Tarar and Climate Change Minister Dr Musadik Malik, NDMA chief stated that the ongoing monsoon spell is expected to subside by Friday. However, he warned that the country remains at risk of further torrential downpours, with two to three additional spells likely in the coming weeks. Last spells will be ended by September 10. He added that the overall situation is expected to normalize by the end of September. The NDMA chief revealed that the ongoing monsoon season—has triggered 670 deaths and over 1,000 injuries, with 80 to 90 individuals still missing. Search operations are underway, and if the missing are not found, they will be added to the official death toll. More than 425 relief camps have been set up in flood-hit areas, offering essential supplies and medical care. Displaced families are also being accommodated in government

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to review ongoing relief efforts by federal government in flood affected areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir in Islamabad on 18 August, 2025. – DNA

Atta Tarar says

Rescue, Relief Joint govt responsibility

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Monday that rescue, relief and restoration of affected areas of recent floods was a national obligation and the federal and provincial governments will work collectively to fulfil this responsibility. During a media briefing along with Minister for Climate Change Musaddiq Malik and Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Inam Haider here, he said an important meeting was chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif today on the recent flood situation caused by monsoon rains. The minister said the meeting thoroughly discussed the flood situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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PM Shehbaz says

Govt to shift all transactions to cashless system

Digital identifications to be created through Pakistan Digital Public Infrastructure for payments

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that the government was working on priority basis to digitise the economy and take all transactions to cashless and digital system. He stated this while chairing a review meeting on the cashless and digital economy in the federal capital on Sunday. He expressed satisfaction over the measures and progress made towards cashless economy. He directed that all chief secretaries should fully cooperate with the federal government in taking the Raast system to the level of district governments. The meeting was briefed on progress on steps to promote cashless economy. It was told that digital identifications will be created through Pakistan Digital Public Infrastructure,

Continued on Page 06

PM Orders Ministers to Lead Flood Relief

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Musadik Malik said on Monday that all federal ministers were directed to immediately move to flood-affected regions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu & Kashmir to personally supervise relief and recovery operations. "The Prime Minister has ordered that ministers be on the ground to coordinate efforts," Malik said while addressing a press conference here. Flanked by Minister for Information and

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Briefs

PAF responds to nation's call

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Upholding its legacy of responding to the nation's call during times of natural calamities, Pakistan Air Force, extended vital support to ongoing relief operations in flood-affected areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In this regard, a total of 48 tons of relief goods arranged by an NGO were airlifted from Karachi to Peshawar through an Air Eagle B-737 aircraft. By establishing an air bridge, PAF has ensured the swift transportation of urgently needed supplies to support relief efforts in the flood-hit districts of Buner and Shangla. The consignment comprising essential dry ration will be distributed among affected families in close coordination with National Disaster Management Authority.

Palestinian President extends condolences to Pakistan

DNA

RAMALLAH: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the leadership and people of Pakistan following the devastating floods, landslides, and torrents that struck northern areas of the country, claiming hundreds of lives, including a rescue crew whose helicopter crashed while performing its national duty. In separate messages addressed to President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif, President Abbas expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of life and destruction caused by the natural disaster. He emphasized the solidarity of the Palestinian people with their Pakistani brothers in this time of grief and hardship.

Dar meets UK Minister

Pakistan, UK mull bilateral cooperation

Senator Dar briefed his counterpart on Pakistan's ongoing economic reform agenda and highlighted Islamabad's perspective on regional security, including the need for peace and stability in South Asia

DNA / NEWS DESK

LONDON/ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, met on Monday with the UK's Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Middle East, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, Rt. Hon. Hamish Falconer, at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) in London. According to an official statement, the two sides reviewed the entire spectrum of Pakistan-UK bilateral relations and reaffirmed their shared commitment to further strengthening cooperation in political, economic, climate, and people-to-people domains. They also held an exchange of views on important regional and global developments. Senator Dar briefed his counterpart on Pa-

kistan's ongoing economic reform agenda and highlighted Islamabad's perspective on regional security, including the need for peace and stability in South Asia. He also reiterated Pakistan's principled stance on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, underscoring the importance of a just and peaceful resolution in line with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. Both leaders expressed satisfaction at the positive trajectory of Pakistan-UK relations and acknowledged the progress being made in multiple areas of collaboration. They emphasized the significance of maintaining regular high-level engagements to sustain momentum and to explore new avenues for strategic partnership. The meeting was described as cordial and constructive, reflecting the mutual desire of both countries to deepen bilateral ties and enhance cooperation on shared priorities.

Hamas accepts new Gaza truce plan: group official


Proposal comes days after Israel's security cabinet approved plans to expand the war into Gaza City

DNA

GAZA: Hamas has accepted a new ceasefire proposal for Gaza without requesting amendments, a source from the group told AFP Monday, after a fresh diplomatic push to end more than 22 months of war. Mediators Egypt and Qatar, backed by the United States, have struggled to secure a lasting truce in the conflict, which has triggered a dire humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. But after receiving a new proposal from mediators, Hamas said it was ready for talks. "Hamas has delivered its response to the mediators, confirming that Hamas and the factions agreed to the new ceasefire proposal without requesting any amendments," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Israel has yet to respond. A Palestinian source familiar with the talks said mediators were "expected to announce that an agreement has been reached and set a date for the resumption of talks", adding that guarantees were offered to ensure implementation and pursue a permanent solution. Another Palestinian official ear-

lier said mediators had proposed an initial 60-day truce and hostage release in two batches. The proposal comes more than a week after Israel's security cabinet approved plans to expand the war into Gaza City and nearby refugee camps, which has sparked international outcry as well as domestic opposition. An Islamic Jihad source told AFP the plan envisaged a 60-day ceasefire "during which 10 Israeli hostages would be released alive, along with a number of bodies". Out of 251 hostages taken during Hamas's October 2023 attack, 49 are still held in Gaza, including 27 the Israeli military says are dead. The Islamic Jihad source said "the remaining captives would be released in a second phase", with negotiations for a broader settlement to follow. They added that "all factions are supportive" of the Egyptian and Qatari proposal. US President Donald Trump wrote on Truth Social: "We will only see the return of the remaining hostages when Hamas is confronted and destroyed!!!" "The sooner this takes place, the better the chances of success will be."


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Passports to be delivered to applicants on time

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi Pays Surprise Visit to NADRA Kot Abdul Malik Centre and Shahdara Passport Office

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi today paid a surprise visit to the NADRA Centre in Kot Abdul Malik and the Passport Office in Shahdara. During the visit, the Minister reviewed the process of issuing national identity cards, other related documents, and passports. The NADRA office at Kot Abdul Malik was closed due to renovation work, while two mobile vans were stationed outside. However, both vans faced internet outages, resulting in long queues of citizens. NADRA staff explained that the system

was down, which caused delays. Citizens also complained that the helpline was not providing proper guidance.

Minister Naqvi listened to the grievances of people who had come to get their ID cards made and issued immediate instructions to resolve the issues. He directed that the internet problem be fixed without delay and ordered the Kot Abdul Malik centre to be made operational at the earliest. He further stressed that since the facility to issue ID cards is available at every centre, it is unacceptable to ask citizens to visit other centres.

At the Shahdara Passport Office, Minister Naqvi met citizens and in-

quired about the passport issuance process. People complained about delays in the delivery of passports. Expressing displeasure after seeing files and paperwork scattered in the office, the Minister ordered that all records be digitized immediately. He directed officials to ensure that passports are delivered within the stipulated timeframe. He emphasized that citizens should be able to obtain passports from any passport centre of their choice and that forcing them to move from one centre to another is intolerable.

The Interior Minister also instructed the formulation of a new policy for issuing passports to children whose fathers are working abroad.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan meeting with Ambassador of Sweden Alexandra Berg von Linde.

No plan to construct cricket stadium in F-9 Park, CDA clarifies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) clarifies misinformation circulating regarding the ongoing project at F-9 Park, Islamabad. It is categorically stated that there is no plan for the construction of a new cricket stadium within the F-9 Park. The project concerns only the upgradation of the existing cricket ground to international standards, aimed at improving the facility while preserving the overall recreational and green character of F-9 Park.

Concerns regarding environmental impact are also unfounded. No green area will be affected as part of the upgradation works. The natural landscape and green area of the park remains fully protected. In fact, additional landscaping and improved turf management are part of the plan to further beautify the site and enhance greenery. It is further clarified that children's play areas and family recreational spaces remain unaffected by the upgradation. Furthermore, it is being ensured that public recreational facilities are preserved. CDA also assures the public that the upgradation poses no additional security or accessibility concerns. The park continues to remain open, safe, and fully accessible to citizens during and after the completion of works.

Muqam visits flood-affected areas of Shangla

SHANGLA: Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam on Sunday visited flood-hit areas of Shangla district and inspected relief operations there. I am visiting the flood-affected areas on the instructions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif," said the Federal Minister while talking to flood victims at Puran Shangla. He reviewed the ongoing relief and rescue operations and issued orders for the immediate transfer of a severely injured child to Peshawar. The affected family was assured of financial assistance and full support on behalf of the Minister. The Federal Minister met with victims in Gunbad Chagam Dara and visited Tehsil Headquarters Hospital in Puran to check on citizens injured during the floods. He met affected families, expressed condolences, and personally provided financial assistance. Financial aid was given to the affected families on his behalf. Engr Amir Muqam visited the relief camp in Aloch, Puran and paid tribute to the volunteers. Amir Muqam said that the rehabilitation process will be expedited and the federal government stands with the people. He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is personally overseeing the relief operations. He said the federal government will provide all necessary resources and the victims will not be left alone.—APP

New cotton variety poised to revolutionize Pak's cotton sector

LAHORE: Pakistan's cotton sector may be on the verge of a major breakthrough as a newly developed seed variety has shown the potential to nearly triple per-acre yields and withstand extreme heat, raising hopes for revival of the country's struggling textile backbone. The new seed, named CEMB-33, had been developed after 25 years of research by the Centre for Excellence in Molecular Biology (CEMB) at the Punjab University in collaboration with a private agri research company, said a press release issued here on Monday.

It is Pakistan's first indigenously engineered genetically modified cotton seed. Field trials in southern Punjab districts, including Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Multan, and Vehari, recorded yields of 40-45 maunds per acre compared to the national average of 15 maunds. The variety maintained strong boll retention in temperatures above 47°C, produced 10-15 percent more than conventional seeds and delivered better fiber length and uniformity. Agricultural experts said the results could mark a turning point for cotton farmers who had faced declining production due to early boll drop, flower shedding and pest attacks worsened by climate change.

Cotton was cultivated in 15-18 districts of Sindh and Punjab and remains vital for the economy, contributing nearly 1% to GDP and more than 50% of export earnings through the textile sector.—APP

Bangladesh envoy, CDA chief discuss sister city relations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, met with Bangladesh High Commissioner Muhammad Iqbal Hussain Khan at the CDA Headquarters on Monday. The meeting was also attended by CDA Member Planning Dr. Khalid Hafiz, Member Engineering Syed Nafasat Raza and other senior officers. Chairman CDA welcomed the distinguished guest. During the meeting, Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa highlighted the friendly and brotherly relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh, emphasizing the

need to further strengthen bilateral cooperation.

The High Commissioner of Bangladesh commended the beauty of Islamabad and the development initiatives undertaken under the leadership of Chairman CDA. Both leaders discussed progress on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish "Sister City" relations between Islamabad and Dhaka. Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa assured full support from the CDA in establishing sister city ties between Islamabad and Dhaka. He said that Pakistan holds its brotherly country, Bangladesh, in high esteem. Chairman

CDA also briefed the High Commissioner on ongoing development projects in Islamabad, including road infrastructure improvements, monsoon drainage systems, eco-friendly plantation, and other initiatives. Chairman CDA noted that both countries have vast opportunities to enhance mutual cooperation, which would benefit their people. The High Commissioner of Bangladesh reiterated his commitment to further strengthening collaboration and expressed his dedication to fostering closer ties between the two nations. He also expressed Bangladesh's keen interest in participating in Islamabad's tree plantation campaign.

Murad reviews preparations for monsoon rains

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, following the Pakistan Meteorological Department's forecast of imminent rainfall, chaired an emergency meeting to oversee preparations for the monsoon rains expected to impact Karachi and other parts of the province. Shah put all the local bodies, administration and traffic police on high alert, and directed them to strengthen coordination between the relevant departments and organisations. The meeting, held at CM House, was attended by Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani, Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoti, Secretary Local Govt Waseem Shamshad, MC KMC Afzal Zaidi and others.— The CM focused on ensuring the city's infrastructure is ready to handle the anticipated downpour. Mayor Wahab briefed the Chief Minister on ongoing efforts to improve drainage systems at 44 Nullah's critical choking points across Karachi, with approximately 150 drains under the control of Towns undergoing cleaning to facilitate the smooth flow of rainwater. The CM directed the Local Government Minister and the Mayor Karachi to take all necessary steps to minimize disruption and ensure the safety of the citizens. Mayor Murtaza Wahab told the CM that in addition to drainage improvements, 120 suction vehicles from the water board are strategically positioned in low-lying areas to clear any accumulated water quickly." The Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) is also working closely with the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) to secure additional machinery if needed, demonstrating a coordinated approach to disaster management. Directing all relevant agencies to remain vigilant, the chief minister instructed local government bodies to maintain a fully mobilised presence during the rain spell. He emphasized the importance of proactive measures by the city administration and urged the traffic police to ensure smooth traffic flow, even in the event of heavy downpours. "The provincial government is fully prepared to manage the rains, but constant vigilance and rapid response from all departments are crucial," Chief Minister Shah asserted. "Our priority is to protect our citizens and minimize any potential damage caused by the monsoon." Residents are advised to stay informed about weather updates and take necessary precautions to ensure their safety during the anticipated rainfall. The Sindh government has established emergency contact points and is urging citizens to report any issues or concerns promptly. While Karachi braces for potential challenges, Chief Minister Murad Shah highlighted the positive impact of recent rainfall in the Tharparkar region. "The heavy rainfall has replenished all local dams in Tharparkar, providing a vital source of water for the people," he noted. "This will significantly benefit local communities, particularly in agriculture and daily life," the CM concluded.—DNA

KTrade's Ali Farid Khwaja honored as Pride of Pakistan

KTrade has been a trail blazer in promoting financial literacy and providing access to investors to Pakistani stock market. KTrade app has more than a million downloads and is used by thousands of people daily for investing in stocks listed on Pakistan Stock Exchange

DNA

KARACHI: Ali Farid Khwaja, the Chairman of KTrade was recognized as a Pride of Pakistan by ISPR at the Independence Day and Marka-e-Haq Parade held on the 14th of August for his contributions for bringing investment in Pakistan. Ali co-founded KTrade, the leading investment bank and stock brokerage in Pakistan and is recognized as a thought leader on entrepreneurship, investments,

economy and technology. Travel packages to Pakistan In the Parade, his contributions to bringing investment in Pakistan in government bonds, stocks and startups was highlighted, along with his role as a speaker at conferences and on media platforms. KTrade has been a trail blazer in promoting financial literacy and providing access to investors to Pakistani stock market. KTrade app has more than a million down-



loads and is used by thousands of people daily for investing in stocks listed on Pakistan Stock

Exchange. KTrade has also helped raise money for Pakistani companies in areas such as food, steel, real estate, music, logistics, e-commerce, co-working, med-tech and education. In May 2025, during Marka-e-Haq, KTrade hosted Pakistan Investment Conference in London with participations from leading Pakistani companies and global investors. KTrade is also the only Pakistani investment firm which

is active in Saudi Arabia and has contributed to Saudi Vision 2030. Travel packages to Pakistan Ali Farid Khwaja was also recognized for his social contributions. He is a trustee of Friends of LUMS UK, and on the advisory boards of KASB Institute of Technology (Finance Committee), Center for Digital Asset Research at LUMS and a Foundation Council member of LUMS Entrepreneurship Center.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

AUGUST

Aug 01/China
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Switzerland
National Day

Aug 01/Lebanon
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01 /Syria
Armed Forces Day

Aug 4/Bukino Faso
National Day

Aug 09 /Singapore

Aug 15/DPR Korea
Independence Day

Aug 15/India
Independence Day

Aug 15/Poland
Armed Forces Day

Aug 17 /Indonesia
Independence Day

Aug 24/Ukraine
Independence Day

Aug 25/Uruguay
Independence Day

Aug 30 /Turkey
Armed Forces Day

Aug 31/Kyrgyz Republic
Independence Day

Aug 31/Malaysia
National Day

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Marriott.....051- 2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
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CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Special students of DGSE celebrate Marka-e-Haq

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Directorate General of Special Education (DGSE), under the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, successfully organized a Road Show/Walk today to celebrate Marka-e-Haq and Pakistan's Independence Day with the participation of special students. The walk commenced from the National Library & Resource Centre, F-7 Markaz, and concluded at Jinnah Super Market, F-7, Islamabad. The event was attended by a large number of special students, teachers, civil society members, officials from different ministries, NGOs, INGOs and dignitaries from different walks of life. On this occasion, DG Special Education, Capt. (Retd.) Asif Iqbal Asif expressed that the children with disabilities stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Pakistan Army, who achieved a historic victory over India in the Marka-e-Haq Operation Bunyanum Marsoos. He further stated that these children also expressed their solidarity with the flood victims of Buner and Swat (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), assuring them that they are not alone in this time of trial. The special students showcased their resilience, determination, and spirit, proving that they are not less than others and have the potential to excel in every field of life. Their active participation in the walk was a testament to their strength and commitment towards the prosperity and unity of Pakistan.

Sahiwal Power Plant marks a decade of reliable power

ISLAMABAD: The Sahiwal Coal Power Plant under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has completed ten years of successful operations, with its most recent performance test reaffirming its reputation for reliability. In the 2025 Annual Capacity Test, the plant delivered 1,252.03 MW against a benchmark of 1,243.517 MW, a result witnessed and verified by officials from the Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) and the National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC). According to a statement by Spokesman Muhammad Umair, the plant's consistent ability to exceed capacity tests "demonstrates not only engineering excellence but also a strong culture of preventive maintenance and operational discipline." Independent experts have noted that few thermal plants in Pakistan maintain such a steady performance record over a decade. Commissioned in 2017 after a record 22-month construction timeline, Sahiwal remains one of the fastest-built supercritical coal-fired power stations in the region, he added. Equipped with advanced turbines, flue gas desulfurization units, electrostatic precipitators, and continuous emissions monitoring systems, it has repeatedly been assessed as operating within both national and international environmental standards. He described Sahiwal as "an important case study in how environmental controls, when treated as mission-critical, can allow coal generation to remain compliant and responsible." Localization of expertise has been another hallmark of the plant's evolution. Over 70 percent of the workforce is now Pakistani, with many engineers who began as trainees in 2016 now leading control room operations and major maintenance schedules. "The handover of technical responsibility from Chinese specialists to local teams is one of the unsung successes of CPEC projects," he noted. Beyond electricity supply, the plant has contributed to local economic development. Thousands of jobs during construction, steady employment during operations, and a wide supply chain of contractors and SMEs in the Sahiwal-Okara region have created what local authorities describe as a "predictable multiplier effect" for nearby communities. He said as Pakistan debates its future energy mix and transitions toward renewables, experts argue that the Sahiwal experience offers important lessons: clarity in contracts, disciplined operations, knowledge transfer, and firm commitments to environmental safeguards. Entering its second decade, the plant faces new challenges of efficiency upgrades and evolving emissions standards, but its track record suggests it will continue to exceed expectations.—APP

Glacier melt blamed, new Monsoon spell starts August 26

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Director of the Meteorological Department, Anjum Nazir Zaigham, on Monday clarified that Pakistan has not yet witnessed a cloudburst, attributing the recent flooding to rising temperatures causing glacier melt and river overflow and forecast a fresh spell of monsoon beginning on August 26. Talking to a private news channel, Zaigham said the ongoing monsoon spell is expected to continue until August 23. He explained that this phase has brought widespread rainfall across various regions and is being closely monitored for any further developments. He added that after a two-day gap, a fresh and more intense monsoon spell is likely to begin around August 26, primarily affecting the southern parts of the country, including Karachi and Balochistan. Authorities have been advised to stay alert as heavier rainfall may increase the risk of urban flooding and water-logging in low-lying areas, he added. He said this second phase of the monsoon spell was more intense, causing flooding in several areas and covering almost the entire country, with particularly heavy impact in the northern regions, adding, the increased rainfall, combined with glacier melt, significantly raised water levels in rivers, contributing to widespread inundation. Responding to a query, he said there are three major reasons behind the worsening flood situation. First, deforestation remains a significant factor, as the removal of trees reduces the land's ability to absorb rainfall, leading to faster surface runoff and flooding. Second, the local infrastructure has not been adequately updated, with many roads and drainage systems still made of concrete, which prevents water absorption and increases water accumulation. Lastly, he pointed out that many people continue to build homes, hotels and structures near riverbanks and in flood-prone areas, putting lives and property at greater risk during heavy rainfall and rising water levels. He stressed the need for long-term planning and sustained investment to effectively tackle the growing threat of floods. He emphasized that large-scale tree plantation and the preservation of existing forests are essential not only for environmental balance but also for reducing the intensity and impact of future flooding events.—APP

ITP crack down: 9,400 violations, 287 rickshaws

"Strict legal action will be taken against one-wheelers and stunt performers," he said, urging citizens to co-operate with traffic personnel and prove themselves responsible citizens.

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) took strict action against more than 9,400 traffic violations during the past week as part of its rigorous enforcement campaign against motorists and motorcyclists flouting traffic laws. A police spokesperson told APP on Monday that during the week-long drive, action was taken against 1,433 vehicles and motorcycles, with 873 motorbikes and 560 vehicles shifted to police stations for serious violations committed during driving. He said 535 motorists were fined for lane violations, 53 for driving without a licence, 1,556 for illegal parking, and 630 for driving against the traffic flow. He said action was also taken against 828 vehicles with fancy number plates, 713 drivers involved in signal violations, 797 motorcyclists riding without helmets, and 52 vehicles operating without fitness certificates. To curb overloading of heavy transport, 2,738 challans were issued. According to the spokesperson, rickshaws remain prohibited in the federal capital and 287 rickshaws were impounded for violation. The

enforcement teams also utilised drone technology, issuing 73 challans and providing awareness to 45 drivers. CTO Captain (R) Zeeshan Haider directed that indiscriminate action must continue under the special campaign. He instructed traffic officials to adopt a zero-tolerance policy against underage drivers and those without licences. "Strict legal action will be taken against one-wheelers and stunt performers," he said, urging citizens to co-operate with traffic personnel and prove themselves responsible citizens.

Sherry urges action against Timber mafia

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Senator Sherry Rehman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) on Monday alarmed the nation by stressing the urgent need for large-scale tree planting and a strict crackdown on the timber mafia to protect the environment and reduce escalating disaster risks. In an exclusive interview with a local news channel, Senator Sherry Rehman highlighted the alarming activities of the timber mafia in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where large-scale tree felling and mountain cutting are severely damaging the environment. She also raised concerns about illegal riverbed mining, which is exacerbating the region's ecological imbalance and increasing vulnerability to floods. Rehman stressed the urgent need for extensive tree plantation campaigns to restore the natural landscape and prevent further degradation. She emphasized that protecting these vital resources is essential to safeguarding communities and strengthening the country's resilience against future natural disasters. Senator Rehman also stressed the need for sustainable alternatives to plastic, calling for stronger policies to reduce plastic pollution nationwide. She emphasized the importance of comprehensive environmental planning and responsible urban development to safeguard vulnerable areas from climate-related disasters. Furthermore, she underlined the necessity of investing in early warning systems and establishing robust de-watering mechanisms to effectively tackle flooding. She also urged the governments to ensure that no international grants for climate resilience go unused, advocating for the active pursuit of funding from foreign countries to strengthen Pakistan's disaster management infrastructure. Addressing the query, she lauded Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and PPP Bilawal Bhutto for their leadership in obtaining funds to tackle climate challenges. She reaffirmed her role in raising early warnings, pointing out that the urgent need for investment has been clear to her since the start. Highlighting her written work against the timber mafia, she stressed the importance of finding substitutes for plastic bottles and bags as well. She urged journalists and media outlets to intensify their reporting on timber mafia activities to increase public scrutiny and accountability. Answering the question, she warned that the flood death toll in northern regions is distressingly high and stressed that the lack of proper planning has significantly contributed to the crisis.

Rawal Dam spillways open

ISLAMABAD: The administration opened the spillways of Rawal Dam following a rise in the water level up to 1,751 feet. According to the statement on Monday, Assistant Commissioner Nilore personally supervised the operation, while rescue teams, police and ambulance services have been stationed at key points to ensure safety. In light of the situation, authorities have directed all concerned institutions to adopt precautionary measures. The administration has also urged citizens to stay away from rivers and canals to avoid any untoward incident.—APP

ITP Facilitation vans to serve citizens from Aug 18-23

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has issued the facilitation van schedule to provide licensing and other services to citizens from 08:30 am to 03:30 pm daily (till 02:30 pm on Saturday) between August 18 and 23, 2025. A police spokesperson told APP on Monday that two facilitation vans, GAG-709 and GAC-656, will remain available across various city points during the week to assist citizens at their doorsteps. He said the first van (GAG-709) will serve residents at Media Town Head Office on August 18, Bahria Phase V on August 19, B-17 Multi Garden Society Office on August 20, Islamabad High Court premises on August 21, F-8 near Ali Medical on August 22, and Benazir Chowk Tarnol on August 23. He said the second van (GAC-656) will facilitate citizens at R-Block Pak Secretariat on August 18, Naval Complex E-8 on August 19, Rawat near Masjid Gulzare-Madina on August 20, F-11 Markaz on August 21, G-15 Main Society Office on August 22, and Ali Pur Bank Stop UC Office on August 23. He said citizens can contact Abdul Qadeer (0300-2322883) for van GAG-709 and Yasir Idrees (0332-7100620) for van GAC-656, while helpline 1915 or 051-9260072 is also available for public assistance.—APP

WASA flood management boosted by funds, tanks

ABID LATIF

ISLAMABAD: Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Chairman Chaudhry Shahbaz Ahmad on Monday said that under CM Maryam Nawaz, the department's increased funding and installation of new water tanks have significantly helped control flooding in Punjab, with rainfall intensity being closely monitored through a devitalized, solar-powered control room. In an exclusive interview with a state-run news channel, WASA Chaudhry Shahbaz Ahmad explained that proactive measures were taken this year to address flooding issues in Punjab. He mentioned that this year there has been no water-logging on the roads, as rainwater is being drained promptly and efficiently. He highlighted that nearly 10 new water tanks were installed in critical, high-risk areas prone to water-logging and standing water after rainfall. These areas include Lakshmi Chowk, Johar Town, Waris Road, and several other vulnerable locations across the region. Vice Chairman also emphasized that these installations are part of a broader effort under CM Maryam Nawaz's leadership to improve flood management and reduce water-related disruptions. He noted that by targeting the most problematic spots, WASA aims to enhance water drainage and prevent the persistent issues caused by heavy rains, ensuring safer and more resilient communities.

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Briefs

Two new
Polio cases
reported

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health (NIH) has confirmed two new cases of Polio. According to the official of Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication, one case was reported from District Kohistan Lower, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the other from District Badin, Sindh. The latest cases involve a 72-month-old girl from Union Council Matti-2 in District Badin. With these detections, the total number of polio cases in Pakistan in 2025 has reached to 21 with 13 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, six from Sindh, and one each from Punjab and Gilgit-Baltistan. He said that Polio is a highly infectious and incurable disease that can cause lifelong paralysis. The only effective protection is through repeated doses of the Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) for every child under five during each campaign, alongside timely completion of all routine immunizations. He said that despite significant progress, the continued detection of polio cases shows that children remain at risk in areas with low vaccine acceptance. He added from September 1 to 7, 2025, a Sub-National Polio Vaccination Campaign will take place, targeting more than 28 million children under the age of five in 99 districts across all provinces and regions.—APP

NDMA
dispatches
relief
consignment to
flood-hit Buner

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Monday sent a detailed relief consignment to Buner district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to assist communities severely impacted by recent flooding and rain-induced destruction. The consignment, dispatched early Monday morning, comprises essential relief items including tents, blankets, 7KVA generators, dewatering pumps, ration bags, and medicines. It will be handed over to the Deputy Commissioner of Buner for onward distribution among flood-affected families. The relief operation, being carried out on the directives of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, forms part of NDMA's co-ordinated response in collaboration with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), the armed forces, and partner relief agencies. NDMA is closely monitoring the evolving situation and coordinating with civil and military teams to ensure timely assistance reaches all flood-affected areas. NDMA has reaffirmed its commitment to delivering prompt support and facilitating efficient relief operations throughout the province.

Ethiopia–Pakistan green dialogue
held at COMSTECH Secretariat

The event was graced by H.E. Senator Yusuf Raza Gillani, Chairman Senate of Pakistan, who attended as Chief Guest. In his address, he said climate change is an urgent reality for Pakistan. Despite contributing less than one percent to global emissions, Pakistan is among the most climate-affected countries, facing floods, glacial melt, and droughts

SAIFULLAH ANASR

ISLAMABAD: The OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), in collaboration with the Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, organized the "Ethiopia–Pakistan Green Dialogue: Lessons from Ethiopia's Green Legacy" at the COMSTECH Auditorium, Islamabad. The programme began with recitation from the Holy Qur'an, followed by the national anthems of both countries and a special video presentation on Ethiopia's flagship "Green Legacy" initiative.

In his welcome remarks, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General, OIC-COMSTECH, highlighted the importance of green diplomacy and collective action in tackling global challenges such as climate change, deforestation, and environmental degradation. Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula underlined Ethiopia's remarkable achievements through the Green Legacy campaign, which has set an international benchmark for combating climate change through mass tree plantation and sustainable practices.

The event was graced by H.E. Senator Yusuf Raza Gillani, Chairman Senate of Pakistan, who attended as Chief Guest. In his address, he said climate change is an urgent reality for Pakistan. Despite contributing less than one percent to global emissions, Pakistan is among the most climate-affected countries, facing floods, glacial melt, and droughts. He praised Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative as a global model of reforestation and sustainability, noting that both nations face common challenges but can find solutions through South-South cooperation. He underlined Pakistan's active role in global climate diplomacy, including championing the Loss and Damage Fund at COP27 and advancing climate finance at COP29.



Mr. Gilani called for practical collaboration through joint task forces, parliamentary exchanges, and research partnerships, while inviting Ethiopia's parliamentary leadership to the upcoming Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference. He concluded: "Together, we can build a greener, safer, and sustainable future." Other distinguished speakers, including heads of delegations and guest dignitaries, emphasized the urgency of regional and global cooperation for sustainable

development and climate action. As part of the proceedings, Green Legacy Awards were presented, followed by a symbolic tree plantation ceremony and a group photograph, reflecting the shared commitment of Pakistan and Ethiopia towards a greener future. A thought-provoking panel discussion on Green Legacy Initiatives brought together experts and policymakers who shared innovative strategies, policy frameworks, and community engagement models to promote

long-term environmental sustainability. The session concluded with a lively Q&A and networking lunch, where participants expressed strong support for further enhancing Pakistan–Ethiopia collaboration in climate resilience, ecological restoration, and sustainable development. The dialogue successfully underscored the shared vision of both countries in advancing environmental diplomacy and building a greener, sustainable future for generations to come.

Sitara-i-Imtiaz for
Arshad Wali Muhammad

DNA



ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has officially announced that Arshad Wali Muhammad, Group Director of Gerry's Group and former Caretaker Minister for Tourism, Environment, Climate Change, and Coastal Development (Sindh), will be conferred with the prestigious Sitara-i-Imtiaz, one of the

country's highest civilian honors.

This national recognition is being awarded in acknowledgment of Mr.

Muhammad's outstanding professional achievements, philanthropic contributions, and his impactful work across various sectors. During his tenure as Caretaker Minister, he championed initiatives to promote Sindh's cultural heritage, historical landmarks, and coastal assets. His efforts significantly boosted eco-tourism, encouraged community participation, and enhanced the province's visibility on the international tourism

map. As Group Director of Gerry's Group – Pakistan's largest aviation and travel services company – Mr. Muhammad played a pivotal role in strengthening Pakistan's global air connectivity, introducing modern aviation technologies, and contributing to national economic growth. The Sitara-i-Imtiaz will be formally presented to him at a state ceremony in Islamabad on March 23, as part of the official Pakistan Day celebrations.

Collaborative tree planting
urged to tackle deforestation

By taking collective action to protect and restore forests, experts believe that communities can enhance their resilience to climate change and safeguard their natural resources for future generations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Environmental experts on 'National Tree Plantation Day' sounded the alarm over timber mafia activity and unchecked riverside construction, urging all citizens, from government to communities, to unite in planting trees as our strongest shield against floods. Speaking to a local news channel, environmental expert Asia Salam emphasized the urgent need for collective action on National Tree Plantation Day. She highlighted the detrimental effects of illegal logging by timber mafias and unchecked riverside development, which have significantly reduced Pakistan's green cover and increased the risk of flooding. Salam called for collaboration among all segments of society, including government bodies, civil society organizations and local communities to combat these environmental threats. Salam stressed that tree planting is not merely a symbolic gesture but a critical measure to restore ecological balance and enhance flood resilience. Expert urged citizens to actively participate in afforestation efforts and support policies that protect forests from exploitation. By working together, Salam believes Pakistan can mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change and safeguard its natural resources for future generations.

erations. Another expert, Jawad Memon, also warned that rampant deforestation in regions like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has heightened the risk of flooding and other natural disasters. The timber mafia's illegal activities, coupled with inadequate forest cover, have left communities vulnerable to the devastating effects of climate change. Addressing these challenges requires a unified approach, with stakeholders at all levels prioritizing environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Environmental experts are sounding the alarm over the rapid deforestation occurring in various regions, including Pakistan, highlighting its detrimental effects on ecosystems and communities. They emphasize that forests are essential for maintaining ecological balance, supporting biodiversity and mitigating climate change impacts. The loss of tree cover exacerbates the risk of natural disasters such as floods and droughts, disrupts water cycles, and contributes to soil erosion, they added. Experts also stress the importance of recognizing the economic value of forests, as they contribute to industries such as wood production and paper manufacturing. They advocate for sustainable forest management practices and policies that protect forests from exploitation. By taking collective action to protect and restore forests, experts believe that communities can enhance their resilience to climate change and safeguard their natural resources for future generations.

Pak's climate
defences fail as
monsoon floods
wreak havoc

ISLAMABAD: Weeks of torrential monsoon rains have caused widespread devastation across Pakistan. Flash floods in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have killed at least 323 people, injured hundreds, left over 150 missing, and displaced thousands, officials said. Buner was the worst-hit district, with entire villages destroyed. Mudslides in Azad Kashmir buried families, and glacier-fed torrents in Gilgit-Baltistan demolished homes, bridges, and farmland, said Shahid Rasheed Butt, former president of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce (ICCI). Over 159 houses and 57 schools were damaged, while landslides blocked key roads, hampering rescue efforts. Thousands remain in makeshift shelters, and a rescue helicopter crash in Mohmand killed five crewmembers. The National Disaster Management Authority reported 657 deaths since late June, with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa hardest hit. Fresh rains threaten to worsen the devastation. Shahid Rasheed Butt said much of Pakistan's suffering stems from weak preparedness. The Meteorological Department issued warnings on August 12, but evacuation and preventive measures were minimal. Poor enforcement of land-use restrictions and unsafe construction in flood-prone areas amplified the destruction. The crisis highlights chronic underinvestment in resilience. Global natural disaster losses reached USD 320 billion in 2024, of which USD 140 billion were insured. In Pakistan, insurance penetration remains below 2 percent of GDP, leaving reconstruction almost entirely dependent on emergency budgets. Pakistan's 2022 floods caused over USD 30 billion in losses and affected 33 million people, yet preventive reforms remain stalled.

Health
Ministry
dispatches
medicallaid
to GB flood
victims

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On the request of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the Ministry of Health has dispatched a consignment of medicines and medical supplies to support flood-affected communities in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). According to a spokesperson of the Ministry of Health, the essential medicines and health kits were transported aboard a C-130 aircraft to the affected districts to ensure timely access to life-saving assistance. Federal Minister for Health, Syed Mustafa Kamal, reaffirmed the government's commitment to standing by the victims in this time of crisis. "The Ministry of Health is determined to provide urgent medical relief to flood-hit populations. We are in constant coordination with NDMA—APP

Seminar held on 80th anniversary
of China's victory against Japan

The Chinese people ultimately secured a great victory in this unprecedented struggle, restored Taiwan from Japanese colonial occupation, and proclaimed the complete triumph of the World Anti-Fascist War

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Consul Acting General (ACG) in Lahore, Mr. Cao Ke, stated that 80 years ago, over a span of 14 years, the Chinese people waged an indomitable struggle against Japanese militarism during the Second World War, sacrificing more than 35 million soldiers and civilians. China's heroic resistance broke the backbone of the Axis powers in the East and accounted for 70 percent of Japan's total casualties in the war. He made these remarks at a seminar titled "The 80th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, the World Anti-Fascist War, and the Restoration of Taiwan," organized by the Institute of International Relations and

Media Research (IIRMR) at a local hotel. The seminar was chaired by IIRMR Chairman Muhammad Mehdi, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Monday. "China's resistance, the first to break out and the last to conclude, profoundly altered the course of the Second World War. The Chinese people ultimately secured a great victory in this unprecedented struggle, restored Taiwan from Japanese colonial occupation, and proclaimed the complete triumph of the World Anti-Fascist War. The light of peace once again illuminated the land," Mr. Cao noted. He emphasized that China was the main Eastern battlefield of WWII. "China's perseverance rewrote the timeline of the war and made decisive contributions to the global victory against fascism. As early as 1931, China suffered an unprovoked invasion by the Japanese Army. This marked not only the begin-

ning of China's War of Resistance, but also the opening chapter of the World Anti-Fascist War. At a time when Europe was still wavering over appeasement, the Chinese people stood firm, demonstrating unyielding resolve against a formidable enemy. Despite atrocities such as the Nanjing Massacre of 1937 and the relentless bombing of Chungking, China never capitulated. By holding the line, the Chinese people shattered Japan's ambition of conquering China in three months and bought precious time for the Allied powers." He stressed that the restoration of Taiwan was a historic victory of WWII and an integral part of the post-war international order. "Taiwan has always been part of China. Its status has never changed and will never be allowed to change. Historical facts cannot be denied. Eighty years ago, the founding of the United Nations became the cornerstone of the post-war

international system. As a victorious country, China was among the first to sign the UN Charter. Taiwan's return to China was an important outcome of the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War and a vital component of the post-war international order," he said. On the Taiwan issue, Mr. Cao reiterated that the facts are crystal-clear. "In the late 19th century, Japan seized Taiwan through a war of aggression. The Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation, both legally binding under international law, clearly stipulated that Taiwan stolen by Japan must be returned to China. These provisions have affirmed China's sovereignty over Taiwan and form an integral part of the post-war international order." Turning to current challenges, he said: "Today, it is imperative for the international community to jointly safeguard the outcomes of the World Anti-Fascist War and the post-war international order.

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SAARC: A Regional Dream Deferred

THE South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), formed in 1985 with great promise, was envisioned as a platform for promoting peace, prosperity, and mutual development among the eight member states: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Nearly four decades later, the organization remains largely dysfunctional, unable to deliver on its core objectives. Despite being home to nearly a quarter of the world's population, SAARC has not even come close to becoming an effective regional bloc like the European Union or ASEAN. The reasons for this failure are both political and structural. At the heart of SAARC's ineffectiveness lies the enduring rivalry between India and Pakistan. Political hostility, repeated military stand-offs, and zero-sum diplomacy between the two nuclear neighbors have cast a long shadow over the organization. No SAARC summit has been held since 2014, with the 2016 summit in Islamabad indefinitely postponed following India's boycott after the Uri attack. This bilateral antagonism consistently hijacks regional agendas and paralyzes progress on initiatives that require unanimity. Unlike other regional blocs, SAARC lacks strong institutional mechanisms. Its decisions are made by consensus – a model that is difficult to sustain when member states have deep political divides. The absence of a dispute resolution framework further handicaps SAARC. While economic cooperation, people-to-people connectivity, and regional development are the goals on paper, the lack of trust between member states makes implementation virtually impossible. Another reason behind SAARC's failure is its narrow scope and minimal funding. The organization has failed to evolve into a robust institution with the capacity to execute projects independently. Most of its initiatives exist only on paper or in pilot stages. For instance, the SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) and its proposed successor, SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Area), have not meaningfully increased intra-regional trade, which remains among the lowest in the world – less than 5% of total trade of member states. Contrast this with ASEAN, where members, despite historical disputes, have prioritized economic interdependence and regional integration. In SAARC, by comparison, smaller nations are often caught between India and Pakistan's rivalry, leading them to seek bilateral partnerships outside the SAARC framework – further weakening the organization. Moreover, China's increasing influence in South Asia has led to geopolitical recalibrations. Countries like Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Maldives are forging closer economic ties with Beijing, making SAARC less relevant to their immediate priorities. India, too, has shifted its focus toward other regional groupings like BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), where Pakistan is not a member and hence friction is lower.

“Putin’s Plan: A Chance for Peace or Escalation?”

Qamar Bashir



The human cost of the conflict adds urgency. Millions of Ukrainians have been displaced, thousands of lives lost, and entire cities reduced to rubble. The war has devastated supply chains for energy, grain, and minerals, driving up food and oil prices, fueling inflation, and worsening hardship across the globe. Developing nations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have been particularly hard hit, with rising bread prices triggering political unrest and shortages of fuel crippling fragile economies. Sanctions on countries trading with Russia...

THE meeting between President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Anchorage, Alaska, set the stage for a whirlwind of diplomatic maneuvering among all stakeholders in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. More than thirty European nations that have supported Ukraine against Russian aggression were forced to reassess their strategies in light of the unexpected opening that emerged from the summit. The encounter did not yield a ceasefire or an immediate breakthrough, but it opened a fragile doorway toward a potential peace settlement, one that has already triggered frantic consultations across capitals and drawn in leaders who fear being sidelined in the process.

At the heart of the Alaska talks was a dramatic pivot by Trump, who abandoned the initial idea of negotiating a temporary ceasefire and instead pressed for a comprehensive peace deal. Putin's proposal, which Trump appeared willing to explore, was stark and uncompromising. It required Ukraine to cede Donetsk and Luhansk in their entirety, recognizing them as Russian-controlled regions, while Russia would agree to withdraw from small pockets it still occupies in the northern oblasts of Kharkiv and Sumy. The deal also demanded that Ukraine renounce NATO membership permanently, accept international recognition of Russian sovereignty over Crimea, and agree to lift certain sanctions. Further conditions included granting official status to the Russian language and the Russian Orthodox Church within Ukraine. Perhaps most controversially, Putin made it clear that a ceasefire would not precede the agreement but would only take effect after its implementation, making Ukrainian concessions a precondition to ending the war. This land-for-peace proposal was quickly labeled unacceptable in Kyiv, yet Trump described the discussions as “productive” and even suggested the two sides were “close to a deal.” He left the impression that if Zelensky accepted the plan, Trump would claim credit for ending the war, while still insisting Ukraine must make the final choice. Trump's envoy later revealed that Putin had agreed in principle to allow the United States and Europe to extend NATO-style security protections to Ukraine. This appeared to be a potential breakthrough, though it was far from clear whether such guarantees would amount to anything as robust as Article 5 of the NATO treaty, which treats an attack on one member as an attack on all. The ambiguity was deliberate: Trump sought to preserve flexibility, while Putin insisted that border changes be recognized internationally, a condition flatly rejected by Kyiv and its allies. The immediate reaction from Europe was alarm. France's Emmanuel Macron, Germany's Friedrich

Merz, the European Commission's Ursula von der Leyen, and the UK's Keir Starmer, among others, pressed urgently to be included in the next round of talks. They feared that a one-on-one Trump-Zelensky meeting in Washington could result in Zelensky being humiliated or pressured into territorial concessions under duress. The White House initially resisted but eventually relented under mounting pressure, confirming that the meeting in Washington would now be a multilateral summit involving European leaders alongside Trump and Zelensky. Europe's stance was clear: there could be no peace imposed without Ukraine's consent, no recognition of territorial conquest, and no settlement without a verifiable ceasefire as a starting point. For Europe, the stakes go beyond solidarity with Ukraine. The concern is existential. If Ukraine is forced into surrender, Russia would feel emboldened to threaten Poland, the Baltic states, and perhaps even Central Europe. This explains why European leaders have demanded not only robust NATO-style guarantees for Ukraine but also assurances that Russia will not use any peace settlement as a staging ground for further expansion. They know that if the United States withdraws its military and financial support under Trump's threats, the burden will shift onto Europe alone. That prospect is politically and financially untenable, and so the Europeans are determined to anchor themselves firmly in the negotiations.

The human cost of the conflict adds urgency. Millions of Ukrainians have been displaced, thousands of lives lost, and entire cities reduced to rubble. The war has devastated supply chains for energy, grain, and minerals, driving up food and oil prices, fueling inflation, and worsening hardship across the globe. Developing nations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have been particularly hard hit, with rising bread prices triggering political unrest and shortages of fuel crippling fragile economies. Sanctions on countries trading with Russia have further compounded the crisis, choking commerce and punishing populations far from the battlefield. A resolution, however imperfect, could lift these burdens, stabilize markets, and release billions of dollars currently being spent on weapons back into reconstruction, humanitarian relief, and development. Trump himself framed the Alaska meeting as an opening rather than an outcome, claiming progress on “many points” but offering few specifics. His tone was optimistic yet evasive, carefully avoiding commitments that might limit his room to maneuver. Putin, meanwhile, presented his maximalist plan as if it were already the only acceptable solution. Zelensky, speaking from Kyiv, rejected the idea of trading land for peace and emphasized that Ukraine's sovereignty

and territorial integrity were not negotiable. His message was clear: no deal could be reached if it forced Ukraine to concede regions without the consent of its people. In this tension lies the fragility of the moment. Trump sees an opportunity to present himself as a peacemaker and deal-maker, potentially reshaping his image at home and abroad. Putin sees a chance to lock in gains achieved by force, turning temporary occupation into permanent sovereignty. Zelensky faces the impossible task of defending his nation's survival while resisting pressure from allies who may be tiring of war. Europe, caught between solidarity with Ukraine and fear of abandonment by Washington, must walk a fine line between supporting Kyiv and securing guarantees for its own security. The way forward demands wisdom. Ceasefire must come first, for as long as bombs fall, peace talks are built on sand. Territorial disputes could be managed through international mechanisms such as supervised referenda or peacekeeping deployments, ensuring decisions are not taken under the shadow of guns. Robust, legally binding security guarantees must replace vague assurances, ensuring Ukraine cannot again be left exposed to invasion. Sanctions could be lifted in phases, tied directly to verified steps by Russia toward compliance, maintaining leverage while rewarding genuine progress. Above all, leaders must recognize that ego and pride cannot outweigh the suffering of millions. History rarely offers golden opportunities, and when they appear, they must be grasped with courage. The Alaska summit has opened such a door, but it will slam shut if mistrust, humiliation, or unilateralism dominates the talks. If this moment is squandered, the war will not only continue but risk spreading across Europe, drawing in NATO and igniting catastrophe on a continental scale. Yet if leaders embrace compromise, soften hardened positions, and commit to saving lives rather than scoring victories, the world may remember Anchorage not as another failed summit but as the first step toward peace. War is cruel, and its wounds are long-lasting, but peace—even fragile peace—is always worth the risk. The lives saved, the economies revived, and the trust restored will outshine any battlefield victory. The world now watches as Trump, Putin, Zelensky, and Europe decide whether to rise to the occasion or condemn millions to further destruction. The choice is theirs, and history will judge them accordingly.

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

Cloudbursts: A Growing Threat in the Age of Climate Change

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The causes of cloudbursts are both natural and aggravated by human action. Naturally, they occur in areas where monsoon winds meet high-altitude mountains. Warm moist air, rising rapidly, collides with cold air, leading to an explosive release of precipitation. However, scientists now argue that environmental pollution and climate change have intensified these phenomena

CLOUSBURSTS have long remained one of nature's most mysterious and destructive phenomena. They are sudden and violent downpours, often releasing several centimeters of rain within an hour over a small geographical area. The very term suggests the bursting of clouds, as if the sky itself has cracked open to let loose an overwhelming torrent. But in reality, a cloudburst is caused when warm air currents force dense clouds upward, where they become super-saturated. Unable to hold the accumulated moisture any longer, the clouds release it all at once in the form of an extraordinary deluge. Unlike ordinary rain, a cloudburst does not last long, yet in that brief span, it can cause devastation greater than a week of monsoon showers.

The question of when and where the first cloudburst was ever recorded is difficult to answer precisely, for ancient communities had no scientific means to document weather in detail. Yet historical accounts from India, Tibet, and parts of the Middle East speak of sudden rainstorms that washed away villages centuries ago. In modern records, cloudbursts have been observed more consistently in mountainous regions such as the Himalayas, where geography and weather conditions combine to create the perfect stage for their occurrence. Their violence is such that when they strike valleys or steep slopes, flash floods and landslides follow, sweeping away lives, livestock, homes, and farmlands in moments. Pakistan, lying in the shadow of the Himalayas and Karakoram, has not been spared from this wrath of nature. Several cloudbursts have occurred in its northern regions, particularly in Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Kashmir, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In 2010, a cloudburst in Hunza caused massive flooding that destroyed villages and left thousands displaced. Similar events have struck Chitral, Skardu, and the Neelum Valley, each time leaving behind stories of sorrow and resilience. These incidents, though sporadic, are reminders of how vulnerable mountainous communities are to sudden shifts in

weather. Roads, bridges, and communication lines are often severed, complicating rescue efforts, while farmlands and orchards are swept away in the torrents, undermining local economies. The destruction cloudbursts have caused in Pakistan, though not always documented with full accuracy, is immense. Entire communities have been washed away in minutes, and the loss of human life has been grievous. These disasters not only disrupt the lives of those directly affected but also place a heavy burden on the national exchequer in terms of rehabilitation, reconstruction, and emergency relief. The pattern suggests that cloudbursts, once rare, are becoming more frequent, pointing towards changes in the environment that demand serious reflection.

The causes of cloudbursts are both natural and aggravated by human action. Naturally, they occur in areas where monsoon winds meet high-altitude mountains. Warm moist air, rising rapidly, collides with cold air, leading to an explosive release of precipitation. However, scientists now argue that environmental pollution and climate change have intensified these phenomena. Rising global temperatures increase the capacity of the atmosphere to hold moisture, and when released, the rainfall is far heavier than in the past. Deforestation, unplanned urbanization, and the destruction of natural drainage systems further compound the problem, turning heavy rain into catastrophic floods. In this sense, humanity has become a partner in its own peril. Can cloudbursts be predicted in advance? This remains one of the most pressing questions. Modern meteorology has advanced to the point where short-term forecasts can detect atmospheric instability, but predicting the exact time and place of a cloudburst is still beyond reach. The phenomenon occurs too suddenly, over too small an area, for traditional weather models to capture accurately. Yet research continues, and satellite monitoring, combined with artificial in-

telligence, offers some hope that the warning time may be improved in the future. For Pakistan, investing in such technology is essential, for even a few hours' notice could mean the difference between life and death for hundreds.

It is clear, however, that prevention is as important as prediction. Cloudbursts cannot be stopped, but their impact can be reduced. The world, and Pakistan in particular, must take concrete steps. At the global level, reducing carbon emissions to slow climate change is vital, for it is the root cause of extreme weather. Nations must adhere to environmental agreements, transition towards renewable energy, and adopt sustainable patterns of living. At the national level, Pakistan must strengthen its disaster management institutions, improve forecasting systems, and ensure that vulnerable communities are trained and prepared for emergencies. Early warning systems, evacuation plans, and community awareness campaigns can save countless lives.

Equally important is the restoration of nature's balance. Reforestation in mountain areas, the protection of watersheds, and the development of proper drainage systems are indispensable. Traditional wisdom, where villagers-built homes on higher ground and left floodplains for cultivation, must be revived and respected. Unchecked construction along riverbanks and in valleys prone to flooding only increases the toll of disaster. Good governance, strict regulation, and public cooperation are necessary to minimize risks. Cloudbursts remind us of the fragile relationship between humankind and nature. While they are natural events, their increasing frequency and intensity are signals of a planet under stress. Pakistan, situated in a region prone to climatic extremes, cannot afford complacency. The lessons of past tragedies must not be ignored. To safeguard lives and livelihoods, the nation must invest in science, respect the environment, and cultivate resilience among its people. Only then can the damage of cloudbursts be lessened, if not entirely avoided.

Briefs

Swabi cloudburst triggers flood:...

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flash flood, while landslides have also occurred at various places due to the mountainous area. In Swat's Mingora, torrential downpours paralysed daily life, while nearby Malakand also recorded significant rainfall. In Buner, relief operations faced major hurdles, with volunteers struggling to reach affected villages as a makeshift bridge connecting a cut-off settlement risked collapse. Parachinar witnessed flash floods that swelled streams and the Kurram River, damaging roads and embankments. Officials confirmed no casualties but said restoration work was underway. In Nowshera's Chakki Marez area, tragedy struck when a room roof caved in during the downpour, killing a husband and wife. The provincial capital Peshawar faced severe urban flooding after intermittent rain since Sunday night. Overflowing drains inundated Saddar Bazaar, University Road, Baza Road, Gulbahar, Kotla Mohsin Khan, Phando, Zaryab Colony, Gulberg, Fakirabad, Pajjagi Road, Hayatabad and Sheheedabad. Streets turned into rivers, paralysing traffic and submerging vehicles, while water also entered the Western Police Station and numerous houses. In Punjab, persistent downpours lashed Multan, Kabirwala, Jhang and Khushab, bringing both relief from heat and flooding in low-lying areas. In Chakwal, heavy rainfall was measured at Wahali Zair (25mm), Choa Saidan Shah (67mm), Lillandi (11mm) and Kusk (35mm). Bhakkar and Miani reported inundated neighbourhoods after continuous rainfall. Quetta and parts of Balochistan remained cloudy and humid, with the Met Office predicting rain in Zhob, Musakhail, Mastung, Loralai, Kohlu, Kalat, Barkhan and Sibi, and scattered showers in Dera Bugti, Nasirabad, Khuzdar, Awaran, Ormara, Pasi and Lasbela. In Azad Kashmir, thunderstorms lashed Dhirkot and various parts of Poonch division.

Rescue, Relief Joint govt...

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and Gilgit-Baltistan and reviewed the ongoing rescue and relief activities in flood hit areas. Attaullah Tarar said coordination was going on with the provincial governments in a better way. He said that several meetings were held at the National Command and Control Center before the monsoon, in which representatives of all provincial governments participated. "Data has been regularly provided by the NDMA to the relevant authorities through the Early Warning System," Tarar remarked. Efforts are being made at the national level to deal with the current situation and on the instructions of the Prime Minister, the NDMA is in touch with the provincial governments, Tarar said. He said that rescue activities and relief supplies were being carried out in a vigorous manner and the federal government was playing its role under national responsibility. He said that relief activities were being carried out by Armed Forces and several other organizations in floods and rain affected areas of KP, AJK, and Gilgit-Baltistan. The minister said that Secretary Communications was already in Gilgit-Baltistan to supervise restoration of Skardu-Gilgit Road. He said Chairman National Highway Authority was in Malakand Division and leading the efforts of restoration of roads. Similarly, he said that Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engineer Amir Musqam was also in Bunair and monitoring the rescue and relief work. Tarar said the Prime Minister has instructed the ministers for water, power and communications to ensure their presence in these areas for personally monitoring restoration work of infrastructure related to their respective ministries.

Chairman PCB announces Rs 1 million each for hockey players

Ammad Butt briefed Minister Naqvi on the challenges faced by players, including welfare, rehabilitation, medical support, and international travel concerns

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The captain of the Pakistan national hockey team, Ammad Sha-keel Butt, called on Federal Minister Mohsin Naqvi to congratulate him on being awarded the prestigious Nishan-e-Imtiaz. During the meeting, Ammad Butt also highlighted key issues facing the national hockey team, particularly concerning Pakistan's participation in the upcoming Pro Hockey League and the broader re-

vival of the sport in the country. Ammad Butt briefed Minister Naqvi on the challenges faced by players, including welfare, rehabilitation, medical support, and international travel concerns. In response, Mohsin Naqvi announced a generous reward of PKR 1 million (Rs. 10 lakh) for each member of the national hockey team, recognizing their dedication and performance. Taking immediate steps towards addressing the concerns, Minister Naqvi announced that the Pakistan Cricket

Board's professional medical team will now be tasked with managing the fitness and rehabilitation of national hockey players. He also assured that logistical and visa-related hurdles faced by the team for international tournaments will be resolved on a priority basis, with full support from the government's logistics team. Minister Naqvi expressed firm commitment to the complete revival of hockey in Pakistan. He emphasized that hockey, once the pride of the nation, deserves

every possible support to reclaim its glory. "Qualifying for the Pro Hockey League is a matter of great pride for Pakistan, and we will ensure our team competes with full support and preparation," he stated. The meeting ended on a positive note, with Ammad Butt expressing gratitude for the minister's encouraging steps and renewed commitment. Mohsin Naqvi reaffirmed that the government stands firmly behind the national hockey team and is committed to providing every necessary facility for its success.

Babar Azam urged to improve strike rate for T20 comeback

Babar Azam in action against India during the ICC Men's Champions Trophy, Dubai International Stadium, Dubai, United Arab Emirates



DNA

LAHORE: Former captain Babar Azam has been told to improve his batting against spin and boost his overall strike rate to be considered for Twenty20 Internationals, coach Mike Hesson said. Babar is the national team's batting mainstay in other formats but has not played a T20 International since

their tour of South Africa late last year. The 30-year-old could not find a place in the Pakistan squad for the Asia Cup next month as the team management showed faith in rising players such as Sahibzada Farhan. "There's no doubt Babar's been asked to improve in some areas around taking on spin and in terms of his strike rate," Hesson

said of the top-order batter who has a modest strike rate of 129 in T20 Internationals. "Those are things he's working really hard on. But at the moment the players we have, have done exceptionally well. "Sahibzada Farhan has played six games and won three player-of-the-match awards." Babar should use the Big Bash League in Australia to improve his 20-overs

batting and stage a comeback, Hesson said. "A player like Babar has an opportunity to play in the BBL and show he's improving in those areas in T20s. He's too good a player not to consider," he said. Pakistan will begin their Asia Cup Group A campaign against Oman in Dubai on September 12 before meeting arch-rivals India at the same venue two days later.

Pak get 8 gold medals at Hero Taekwondo Open

The Pakistani players from different academies managed to get 11 medals in Malaysia

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan taekwondo players Syed Ameer Hamza, Muhammad Umar, Hammad Nadeem, and Shamil Ali secured four medals at the 7th International Taekwondo Cup 2025 in Nilai, Malaysia, last week. The Karachi Taekwondo Academy players raised the Pakistani flags high in the senior, junior, and cadet categories in the tournament, which featured more than 2000 athletes from 25 countries. They won two gold medals and two silver medals. Other gold medalists include Syed Hadi Jafri in 45 kg event, while Tayiba Ashraf clinched three gold medals in virtual fight, pair poomsae, and 49 kg fight, and Sumbul Fatima bagged two gold medals and a silver in different events. While talking to The Express Tribune the athletes listed their aspirations, but the most fascinating feature was, at least three of them want to pursue careers in sports but also in medical professions. Hamza took the gold medal in the 51 kg juniors event, which had players aged between 15 and 17 competing for the top prize. "I am so happy to be here, and win this title, it is the hard work and the dedication of my coach that helped me win this gold medal," he told The Express Tribune with excitement in his voice. "I had a tough event, I fought two opponents and both of them were very good. "Hamza had previously competed in Fujera Open as well, but he did not win in 2019 juniors event. "I wasn't very good at the sport then, but I know I am improving, and this result shows it," said the 15-year-old, who aims to become a doctor when he grows up. "I want to carry on with taekwondo, but I also want to study to become a doctor. I am hoping to be able to find success in both of these things," Ameer is also the son of the Karachi Taekwondo Academy owner and coach Syed Rehman Shah, who has dedicated his life to training children in the Korean martial arts. His other student, Umar, on the other hand, won the all-important final fight to clinch the senior title in 64 kg event. He competed with a Chinese athlete and he deemed the event to be challenging but rewarding. "Chinese athletes are usually very tough to beat and they have great technique.

Australia beat China to complete three-peat in FIBA Asia Cup

Australia Clinches Third Straight FIBA Asia Cup Title with Thrilling 90-89 Win Over China

SPORTS DESK

JEDDAH: Australia took the FIBA Asia Cup for the third time in a row with a dramatic 90-89 victory over China at the King Abdullah Sports City in Jeddah on Sunday. The Boomers trailed for most of the game, with China leading by 15 points early in the game. Xavier Cooks pumped in 30 points and grabbed nine rebounds, Jaylin Galloway contributed 23 points and five rebounds, and William Hickey added 15 points as the Boomers steadily narrowed China's lead. With just 1 minute, 9 seconds remaining in the last quarter, Hickey scored the basket that turned the tide. China had a chance to win but Hu Mingxuan's buzzer-beater attempt bounced off the rim. Hu led his team with 26 points. With the victory, Australia became the second team in Asia Cup history to achieve a three-peat. The Boomers also extended their unbeaten run to 18 games since they joined the tournament in 2017. China won the title three times in a row in 2003 when it captured its 13th tournament title. China has won 16 Asia Cup championships. Aside from Hu, three of China's players scored double figures, with Hu Jinqiu pouring in 20 points and 10 grabbing rebounds, Cheng Shuaipeng making 12 and Zhao Rui adding 10 points. China's second-place performance was, nonetheless, a remarkable comeback after a decade without a medal since it last won the Asia Cup title in 2015. Speaking to the press after the game, Australia head coach Adam Caporn said: "The main thing is I am so proud of the character of our guys. We were down by 15, but we saw our players' toughness, their problem-solving attitude."

Pakistan's Ashab Irfan bags Johns Creek Open title

Ashab Irfan Triumphs Over Nathan to Win Johns Creek Open Squash Title in the USA



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's squash sensation Ashab Irfan showcased exceptional skills in the Johns Creek Open at the United States as he downed Nathan from Malaysia in the tournament. Irfan displayed top notch performance and defeated Nathan by 3-1 (8-11, 11-2, 11-2, 11-6) and claimed the title, said a statement. The tournament, which boasted a prize purse of \$12,000, saw Irfan deliver a stellar performance.

China Concludes Chengdu Games with Breaking, Skating Golds

China Ends World Games 2025 in Chengdu with Record Golds, Breaking, Skating, and Beach Korfball Triumphs

CHENGDU: Host nation China capped The World Games 2025 in style, sealing a record 36 gold medals after Day 11 victories in breaking and inline freestyle skating, while Chinese Taipei stunned beach korfball giants Netherlands on the final day (late Sunday). On Day 11 they too were successful in the Inline Freestyle Skating grabbing gold in both the Men's and Women's Classic Slalom's. Chinese Taipei were another major story of the day, upsetting Beach Korfball giants Netherlands and the TWG event debut of MotoSurf (Powerboating) also took place. Beach Korfball: The World Games debut of Beach Korfball took place in Chengdu, and what a way it was to begin as Chinese Taipei stunned Netherlands – the historically dominant nation by a long way – getting gold with a tight 8-6 victory. In the bronze medal match, Belgium decisively defeated Hungary 10-5 to take third place. As well as a huge shock, Chinese Taipei's win adds to their recent regional dominance—they were Asian champions and secured top spot in the IKF's Beach Korfball World Rankings. The Netherlands will still remain a powerhouse across Korfball disciplines, but not living up to their traditional strength at the sands of Xinglong Lake is a major disappointment for them. Boules: At Chengdu's Sancha Lake Campus, Tunisia's Mo-

hamed Khaled Bougriba and Mouna Béji Ep Matoussi edged out Thailand 10:9 to claim gold in the mixed Pétanque Classic Doubles—a victory that adds another prestigious international title to Béji's stellar résumé of World, African, and Mediterranean championships. In the bronze match, France's Lucas Desport and Sandrine Poinot delivered a commanding 13:4 win over Italy, securing their spot on the podium. In the Women's Lyonnaise Progressive discipline, China's Wang Chenyi triumphed 40:37 against Türkiye's Inci Öztürk, and able to celebrate as the crowd favorite. The battle for bronze was equally nail-biting, with Slovenia's Jacqueline Kosir narrowly topping Lisa Gouiloud of France 34:33 to claim her medal. Breaking: China delivered a dominant performance across the Breaking finals as B-Girl Royal (Guo Pu) toppled her compatriot Liu Qingyi (671) – Paris 2024 bronze medallist - 3-0 to secure gold, while Nicka (Lithuania's Olympic silver medallist) claimed bronze with a 3-0 win over Syssy (France). In the B-Boys category, China's Lithe-ing (Qi Xiangyu) edged out Japan's Issin (Isshin Hishikawa) 2-1 in a packed Chenbei Gymnasium, fuelled by hometown support. The bronze medal went to Shigekix of Japan, who beat fellow countryman Hiro10 2-1 for the third podium spot. – **Agencies**

Monsoon threat to persist by...

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buildings, including schools. Food distribution under the Prime Minister's Ration Programme is ongoing, in coordination with provincial governments and relevant authorities. Lt Gen Haider said special Army units have been deployed on the directions of the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), critically injured individuals were being airlifted to hospitals. Field ambulances are actively transporting patients, and major hospitals are fully engaged. The National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC) remains on high alert, continuously releasing multi-source data to support relief efforts.

Hamis accepts new Gaza truce...

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Last week, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel "will agree to an agreement in which all the hostages are released at once and according to our conditions for ending the war". Meanwhile, in a now familiar scene in Gaza, AFP footage from the southern city of Khan Yunis showed crowds of mourners kneeling over the shrouded bodies of their loved ones who were killed seeking aid the day before.

Govt to shift all transactions to cashless..

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which will contain information about every person's national identity card, biometrics and mobile phone numbers. Digital payments will be made through these digital IDs. The meeting was informed that provincial governments have made significant progress to link the system of payments, from public to government and government to public, with the Raast system. Regarding the construction of digital infrastructure, the Capital Development Authority has given the right-of-way for fiber connectivity, while discussions are underway with Pakistan Railways and the National Highway Authority on the issue. Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Perwaiz Malik, Adviser to the Prime Minister Dr Tauqir Shah, Minister of State for Finance and Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani and relevant senior government officials attended the meeting.

PM Orders Ministers to Lead...

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Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and National Disaster Management Authority Chairman Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik, Musadik said every minister will be responsible for ensuring that electricity, water supply, and road networks are restored quickly in the affected areas. He said major highways would be reopened within 24 hours, while special teams were working to fix badly disrupted power grids and water systems. "Our goal is to ensure that every federal resource reaches those who need it most," Malik said. He pledged that the federal government will provide immediate relief and long-term support to communities devastated by recent floods, stressing that no distinction will be made between federal and provincial responsibilities in tackling the crisis. "I want to express my condolences to all those who have lost their loved ones, their homes, or their livelihoods," Malik said adding that "No one can truly compensate for such losses, but the federal government will do its utmost, alongside the provinces, to restore homes and support the affected families."

Bangladesh replaces Pakistan for hockey Asia Cup

DNA

DHAKA: The Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) has officially invited Bangladesh to participate in the upcoming Asia Cup, Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) confirmed on Monday. The federation accepted the invitation and formally confirmed its participation in the tournament. The invitation letter was sent by Hockey India. Notably, Bangladesh has been invited to join the Asia Cup in place of Pakistan. The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) recently announced its withdrawal from the tournament, citing security concerns. Pakistan-themed clothing A Hockey India official told an Indian newspaper that the government was prepared to issue visas for the Pakistani contingent. However, the PHF formally declined participation in a letter sent to the AHF on Wednesday. "In light of Pakistan's decision, we have now extended an invitation to Bangladesh to participate in the Asia Cup," the Hockey India official added. The timing of Pakistan's withdrawal raised questions, as visa applications had reportedly been submitted at the end of July.

Uncertainty also surrounds Pakistan's participation in the Junior Hockey World Cup later this year in India, with the junior team's status still unclear. The PHF is expected to make an official announcement regarding its Asia Cup withdrawal within the next day or two. The Asia Cup is scheduled to be held in Jharkhand, India, from August 27 to Sep-

tember 7. Earlier this month, PHF president Tariq Bugti rejected reports circulating in Indian media suggesting Pakistan would not participate in the upcoming Asia Cup. He clarified that no official decision has been made, and the final call lies with the Government of Pakistan. Pakistan-themed clothing Speaking to the media, Bugti emphasised



that no discussion has taken place regarding Pakistan's participation in the Asia Cup. He reiterated that participation depends entirely on the government's decision, and the federation is prepared to abide by whatever directive is issued. "No talks have been held regarding participating or not participating in the Asia Cup. It's not PHF's decision; it's the government's. Whatever decision the Government of Pakistan makes, we will follow. We are waiting for the government's announcement," he said. Bugti also denied reports of any communication with Hockey India, asserting that no such contact has occurred. "There was no communication with Hockey India in the past, nor has there been any now. So how can it be said that Pakistan has refused to play? Our correspondence is with the Asian Hockey Federation, not with Hockey India," he clarified. He further dismissed reports that Bangladesh would be replacing Pakistan in the tournament, asserting that no such information has been shared with the PHF. Pakistan-themed clothing "Hockey India can say whatever it wants and invite whoever it wants. We are unaware of any invitation extended to Bangladesh in our place," he concluded.

Briefs

Jordan opens field hospital in Gaza

AMMAN: A new Jordanian field hospital began operating in Gaza on Sunday, providing medical and therapeutic services across multiple specialties as part of the kingdom's continued support for the health sector in the Palestinian enclave, the Jordan News Agency reported. The commander of the Jordanian Field Hospital Gaza/83 said medical teams immediately set up clinics and equipped them with the necessary devices to begin operations. The facility includes departments for general medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, orthopedics, dentistry, pediatrics, internal medicine and pre-operative care. Gazans expressed appreciation for Jordan's ongoing assistance, noting that medical and humanitarian aid delivered through airdrops and ground convoys has helped ease their suffering amid Israel's invasion, JNA added.—APP

Greek island sees surge in migrant boat arrivals

ATHENS: Authorities in Greece say more than 120 migrants were intercepted off the island of Crete early Monday, the latest in a series of arrivals despite a suspension of asylum claims and plans for tougher detention rules. Two boats, carrying 58 and 68 people and believed to have departed from Libya, were stopped and the passengers placed under guard at temporary shelters. More than 100 other migrants arrived on Crete over the weekend after strong winds eased. Greece's conservative government last month suspended all asylum claims for migrants arriving by sea from North Africa, a move it argued helped deter crossings that peaked in July at more than 2,500 in a single week.—APP

Rupee gains 05 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 05 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 282.01 against the previous day's closing of Rs 282.06. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 283.5 and Rs 284.5, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 0.30 to close at Rs 329.28 against the last day's closing of Rs 329.58, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.91, while the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of 53 paise to close at Rs381.83 against the last day's closing of Rs 382.36. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 01 paise each and closed at Rs 76.78 and Rs 75.16, respectively.—APP

Gold price increases by Rs.1,500 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed an increase of Rs1,500 on Monday and was sold at Rs357,700 against its sale at Rs356,200 on the previous trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also increased by Rs 1,286 to Rs.306,670 from Rs 305,384 whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 Karat went up by Rs 1,179 to Rs 281,124 from Rs 279,945. The rates of per tola and ten gram silver remained stagnant at Rs.4,031 and Rs 3,455 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$15 to \$3,350 from \$3,335 whereas silver remained constant at \$37.98, the Association reported.—APP

Pak for forging regional pact of climate solidarity

In 2025, fresh GLOFs in Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral have once again destroyed villages and vital infrastructure, while the ongoing monsoon season is unleashing destructive floods across Punjab and Sindh, submerging farmland and displacing thousands

KATHMANDU: Chairperson National Assembly Climate Body Munaza Hassan on Monday called for forging a regional pact of climate solidarity: to legislate together, to innovate together and to speak with one voice in global negotiations. "The world must know—the mountains that unite us are not only our shared heritage, they are our shared line of defence and history will not forgive hesitation," she said while speaking at a two-day Hindu Kush Himalaya Parliamentarians' meet here today. The high-level gathering brings together around 70 parliamentarians—primarily chairs, co chairs and members of the environment and climate related parliamentary committees and experts from across the Hindu Kush Himalaya (KKH) region to foster collaboration and cooperation on urgent climate, environmental and development issues. The meets provides an effective platform for members of the Parliaments from the KKH countries to come together, across the latest knowledge and information about the KKH region's issues, challenges and opportunities, share experiences, best practices and to discuss forward looking policy actions. Munaza Hassan in her speech said: "We gather here in Kathmandu in the shadow of the great Hindu Kush Himalaya, mountains that feed our rivers, shape our climate, and sustain nearly two billion lives. And yet, these mountains are bleeding ice.

This is not the slow march of nature—it is an existential war being fought in real time, against forces unleashed by human hands." For Pakistan, she said that this war is not abstract, "we are a frontline state of the climate crisis. In 2022, floods drowned one-third of our land, displacing 33 million people—a population larger than many nations. In 2024, heat waves scorched our plains with record temperatures, while our northern valleys endured glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) that swept away entire communities." In 2025, fresh GLOFs in Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral have once again destroyed villages and vital infrastructure, while the ongoing monsoon season is unleashing destructive floods across Punjab and Sindh, submerging farmland and displacing thousands. She said more than 300 people have died in Pakistan after days of monsoon rains triggered floods and landslides in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. At the same time, she said climate-linked droughts are crippling agriculture in Sindh and Balochistan, while smog chokes our cities. "We have learned a brutal truth: climate change is no longer a challenge of tomorrow—it is the disaster of today, she added. But she said Pakistan has chosen not to surrender. "We have chosen to fight—through law, through policy, through innovation. We amended our Constitution, enshrining climate as a fundamental right of every citizen—the right to breathe clean

air, to drink safe water, to inherit a liveable planet. She said Pakistan had moved from words to war-like action. In 2025, the government introduced a Carbon Levy on polluting industries—sending a clear signal that the polluter will pay, and the people will no longer subsidize their own destruction. The chairperson of climate body said Pakistan had also accelerated the shift to electric mobility through the National EV Policy 2025–2030, setting a clear direction for clean transport. EV uptake is rising, supported by incentives and charging infrastructure—but for Pakistan, this is part of a broader transition, not the whole story, she added. She said renewable energy is no longer a slogan in Pakistan—it is a revolution in motion, adding that in 2025, solar has risen to provide over one-quarter of our national electricity, placing Pakistan among the rare "25% solar club." With more than 17 gigawatts added in 2024 alone, and with wind and hydropower scaling alongside, we have nearly doubled our renewable capacity in just three years, putting clean energy at the very frontlines of our national security and economic future. Our citizens and businesses have taken the lead, propelling net-metered solar capacity past 5.3 GW by April 2025—a testament to unprecedented grassroots clean energy adoption, she added. "We are restoring nature with ambition: the 10 Billion Tree has regenerated vast

landscapes, and new protected areas are conserving biodiversity under threat. And we are building resilience: Pakistan was instrumental in creating the global Loss and Damage Fund—from leading its negotiation at COP27 to shaping its operationalization at COP28," she added. She said Pakistan government is financing communities to rebuild stronger after climate shocks. But no country, however determined, can win this war alone, she said and added that the Hindu Kush Himalaya is a single ecosystem, shared by Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Afghanistan and Pakistan. "Our rivers do not stop at borders; our glaciers do not ask for visas; our air does not recognize sovereignty. We rise or fall together," she added. She said the Parliamentarians' Meet is more than dialogue—it is the call to arms of our generation. We The farmer in Chitral, the herder in Bhutan, the fisher in Bangladesh, the child in Kathmandu, the mother in Delhi struggling through smog, and the communities along the Yangtze headwater—they are all waiting, not for promises, but for protection. Munaza Hassan said Pakistan comes to Kathmandu with determination: to share lessons, to learn, and to lead where leadership is required. "Let us prove that together, we can sustain nature, and by doing so, empower our people," she concluded.—Agencies

More than 62,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza war

CAIRO: The Palestinian Health Ministry said on Monday that more than 62,000 Palestinians have been killed in the 22-month Gaza war. At least 60 people were killed in the past 24 hours, bringing the death toll from the Israel-Hamas war that started on Oct. 7, 2023 to 62,004. Another 156,230 have been wounded, it said. The Health Ministry said 1,965 people were killed while seeking aid from aid convoys or killed close to aid distribution sites. At least seven Palestinians were killed attempting to access aid on Monday morning. The ministry, which doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count, is staffed by medical professionals. The United Nations and other independent experts view its figures as the most reliable count of casualties. Israel has disputed its figures, but hasn't provided its own account of casualties.—APP

Four migrants found dead off Turkiye

ISTANBUL: At least four migrants died after falling into the sea from their rubber dinghy on Monday off the western coast of Turkiye, officials said. The incident took place off the coast of the Karaburun district, the coast guard command said in a statement. Officials rescued two migrants and found four bodies, and were still searching for more missing with the help of a helicopter, drone, five boats and a larger vessel. It was not immediately clear how many migrants the boat carried or what their nationality was. Many migrants embark on the short but perilous route between the Turkish coast and the nearby Greek islands of Samos, Rhodes and Lesbos, which serve as entry points to the European Union. Dubai police retrieve stolen diamond worth \$25 m

DUBAI: Dubai police said on Monday they caught three thieves just hours after they stole a precious pink diamond worth \$25 million. "The Dubai Police General Command has foiled the theft of a very rare pink diamond, valued at \$25 million," the police said in a statement shared by the United Arab Emirates' official news agency WAM. A diamond trader who had brought the jewel from Europe was lured to a villa by a crime gang under the pretense of a viewing by a potential wealthy client, police said. But the gem was stolen when the diamond dealer arrived for the bogus inspection, the statement added. Within eight hours three people from an unspecified Asian country were arrested "thanks to the efforts of specialized and field teams, and by using the latest artificial intelligence technologies," police said. Video footage shared by the Dubai Media Office showed the three men with their faces blurred after their arrest as well as CCTV footage of the gang. Dubai is an important hub for diamond trading. Tightly controlled and policed, the UAE prides itself on its security and stability.—APP

German minister says China 'increasingly aggressive'

TOKYO: Germany's foreign minister hit out Monday at what he called China's repeated threats to "unilaterally change" borders in the Asia-Pacific region, calling Beijing "increasingly aggressive." "China repeatedly threatens, more or less openly, to unilaterally change the status quo and shift borders in its favor," Johann Wadepuhl said in Japan, citing China's behavior in the Taiwan Strait and the East and South China Seas. "Any escalation in this sensitive hub of international trade would have serious consequences for global security and the world economy," Wadepuhl said after talks with Japanese counterpart Takeshi Iwaya. A statement issued on Sunday before Wadepuhl's visit to Japan—and later Indonesia—said that China was "increasingly asserting its regional supremacy and, in doing so, is also questioning principles of international law." "China's increasingly aggressive behavior in the Taiwan Strait and the East and South China Seas also has implications for us in Europe: fundamental principles of our global coexistence are at stake here," the statement quoted Wadepuhl as saying. In the joint press statement in Tokyo, Wadepuhl also criticized "China's support for the Russian war machine" in Ukraine. "Without it, the war of aggression against Ukraine would not be possible. China is Russia's largest supplier of dual-use goods and Russia's best oil and gas customer," Wadepuhl said.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Malik meeting with Ms. Laura Jalasjoki, Country Representative GGGI.

Australia cancels far-right Israeli politician's visa

SYDNEY: The Australian government canceled the visa of a far-right Israeli politician on Monday ahead of a speaking tour. Simcha Rothman, whose party is part of Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's governing coalition, had been scheduled to speak at events organized by the Australian Jewish Association. But Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke said Australia would not accept people coming to the country to "spread division." "If you are coming to Australia to spread a message of hate and division, we don't want you here," he said. "Australia will be a country where everyone can be safe, and feel safe." As an automatic condition of the visa cancellation, Rothman is unable to travel to Australia for three years. Rothman is a member of the far-right Religious Zionist Party, whose leader Bezael Smotrich, is under sanctions by the Australian government. In an interview earlier this year with Britain's Channel 4 News, Rothman denied Palestinian children in Gaza were dying of hunger due to Israel's limitations of food and aid. When asked by a reporter why Israel won't let Palestinian children flee to Israel, he replied: "Because they are our enemies." Australian Jewish Association chief executive Robert Gregory said the purpose of Rothman's visit was to "show solidarity with Australia's Jewish community, which is facing a wave of antisemitism." "The visit was not in any way connected to current events in the Middle East," he posted on social media. Gregory said cancellation of Rothman's visa was "a viciously antisemitic move," accusing the Australian government of being "obsessed" with targeting the Jewish community and Israel.—APP

easypaisa secures multiple accolades

With a customer base representing 1 in every 5 Pakistani adults, a 31% female user base, and over 2.7 billion transactions processed in 2024, worth PKR 9.5 trillion, approximately 9% of Pakistan's GDP, easypaisa continues to set new benchmarks for digital banking and financial empowerment across Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: easypaisa digital bank won big yet again at this year's Dragons of Pakistan awards, bagging 2 Gold and one Bronze award for its easycash and donations campaign. easypaisa secured multiple accolades, winning Gold in the Integrated Marketing Category for the Donations campaign, alongside Gold in the Product Launch or Relaunch category, and Bronze in the Influencer/Content Creation category for easycash. Winning at the Dragons of Pakistan, known for recognizing the most effective and creative marketing communications, is a significant achievement for easypaisa. It serves as a testament to the impactful work and how the brand is redefining the use of digital finance to create a positive impact. Commenting on this achievement, Farhan Hassan, Chief Digital Officer, easypaisa digital bank, said, "As a digital bank, easypaisa is playing its role in democratizing access to innovative digital financial services, which require creative yet on-point marketing. Winning at the Dragons of Pakistan 2025 signifies how, as a brand, our campaigns resonate with multiple audiences and are hitting the nail on the head by getting the recognition and accolades they deserve." Rifah Qadri, Executive Director of Marketing & Corporate Communications, easypaisa digital bank, commented, "Winning at Dragons of Pakistan 2025 is a proud moment. I've always believed that marketing should simplify, not complicate. For us, it's not just about big campaigns, it's about shifting perspectives and making digital banking feel intuitive and effortless. Grateful to our customers, agency partners, and in-house teams who help bring this vision to life. Here's to building more work that connects deeply, drives impact, and makes finance feel a little less like finance." This latest win follows a series of other awards and recognitions for easypaisa in the global arena, for various globally acknowledged campaigns such as the Audio Nikhanama. This newest set of Awards at the Dragons of Pakistan further solidifies its position as a pioneer in using technology for the greater good and creating positive impact. With a customer base representing 1 in every 5 Pakistani adults, a 31% female user base, and over 2.7 billion transactions processed in 2024, worth PKR 9.5 trillion, approximately 9% of Pakistan's GDP, easypaisa continues to set new benchmarks for digital banking and financial empowerment across Pakistan.—DNA

The eternal flame of Al-Aqsa

TANVEER HUSSAIN



ACCORDING to traditions, Al-Aqsa Mosque was first built around four thousand years ago, i.e. in 2000 BCE, by Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim) peace be upon him. Later, during the era of Prophet Solomon (Sulayman) peace be upon him, it was rebuilt. In 957 BCE, he constructed the Temple of Solomon (Bayt al-Maqdis). When Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar invaded Palestine, he destroyed this sacred temple. In 70 CE, the Roman Empire under Titus

attacked Jerusalem and destroyed the temple for the second time. Many memories of the noble Prophets are associated with Al-Aqsa Mosque. It also holds the honor of being the First Qiblah of the Muslims. The journey of Isra and Mi'raj also began from here, and on that blessed night, in this very mosque, the Prophets offered prayer behind the Noble Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). During the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, in 637 CE, Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA) peacefully conquered Jerusalem. He purified the site of Al-Aqsa and built a simple mosque with palm trunks and a wooden roof. During the Umayyad dynasty, in 691 CE, Caliph Abdul Malik ibn Marwan constructed the Dome of the Rock within the precincts of Al-Aqsa. Later, in 705 CE, Caliph Al-Walid ibn Abdul Malik laid the foundation of the present-day Al-Aqsa Mosque and built a grand structure, which was destroyed in the 746 CE earthquake. Between 754–780 CE, the Abbasid caliphs Al-Mansur and Al-Mahdi rebuilt the mosque. Another devastating earthquake struck in 1033 CE, destroying much of it again. In 1035 CE, the Fatimid Caliph Al-Zahir recon-

structed Al-Aqsa in its current form, with seven aisled halls. During the Crusades, in 1099 CE, the Crusaders captured Jerusalem and converted Al-Aqsa Mosque into the "Palace of Solomon's Temple." Nearly ninety years later, in 1187 CE, the great Muslim leader Salahuddin Ayyubi (Saladin) liberated Jerusalem from the Crusaders, restored Al-Aqsa to the Muslims, and repaired it. During the Mamluk period (13th–15th centuries), large-scale renovations were carried out: new gates, madrasas, and mihrabs were built. Under the Ottoman Empire, Al-Aqsa was frequently restored; Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent reinforced its walls and courtyard. After World War I, Jerusalem fell under British occupation. During this period, the Supreme Muslim Council managed Al-Aqsa and undertook repairs. Even after the creation of Israel in 1948, the mosque remained under the supervision of the Jordanian Waqf. In the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel captured East Jerusalem, but the religious and administrative control of Al-Aqsa remained with Jordan and the Palestinian Waqf. In 1969, an Australian extremist set fire to the mosque, burning the historic pulpit (minbar) built by Salahuddin

Ayyubi. In 2000, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon visited Al-Aqsa in a provocative move, triggering the Second Intifada. In 2009, large-scale clashes erupted between Palestinians and Israeli forces over the forced displacement of Muslims from Jerusalem. Between 2021–2023, repeated confrontations took place between Israeli forces and Palestinian worshippers inside the mosque, heightening regional tensions. In 2025, Israel's National Security Minister announced the performance of Jewish prayers inside Al-Aqsa, provoking anger and grief among Muslims worldwide and escalating the situation further. For the last 75 years, the whole of Palestine has been suffering under Israeli occupation, with Gaza witnessing atrocities at their peak. Three generations of Palestinians have sacrificed their lives for freedom, yet their determination has not weakened. They continue to shed blood for the liberation of their first Qiblah (Al-Aqsa). To crush this spirit of resistance, Israel carries out military operations and aerial bombings, massacring Palestinians on a large scale. It imposes restrictions on Muslim worshippers entering Al-Aqsa, thereby violating their religious freedom.

Young Palestinians are often prevented from attending Friday and Eid prayers. Age restrictions are set to bar thousands of Muslims from worshipping. Israeli forces frequently storm the mosque, assaulting worshippers under the pretext of "counter-terrorism," using tear gas, rubber bullets, and live ammunition. Restoration work is obstructed, with building materials blocked by Israeli authorities. Alongside the army, extremist Jewish settlers, under police protection, enter the compound and commit provocations, desecrations, and assaults on worshippers. Despite worldwide condemnation, Israeli ministers and politicians repeatedly visit Al-Aqsa, challenging its sanctity and attempting to impose new realities. Al-Aqsa Mosque is not only the heart of the Palestinians but also a symbol of faith for the entire Muslim Ummah. Israeli actions are not just violations of religious freedom but also a breach of international law. The repeated assaults are part of a systematic policy to undermine the mosque's status. Unless the Muslim world unites to apply effective diplomatic, political, and economic pressure, the future of Al-Aqsa Mosque remains in grave danger.

Briefs

New polio case confirmed in KP

DNA

PESHAWAR: One new poliovirus case was confirmed each in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh, bringing Pakistan's total count this year to 21, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) said on Monday. Pakistan is one of the last two countries in the world, alongside Afghanistan, where polio remains endemic. Despite global efforts to eradicate the virus, challenges such as security issues, vaccine hesitancy, and misinformation have slowed progress. A statement from the Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at Islamabad's NIH said the latest cases involve a six-year-old girl from Union Council Pattan in KP's Kohistan district, and a 21-month-old girl from UC Mati-2 in Sindh's Badin. "With these detections, the total number of polio cases in Pakistan in 2025 has reached 21, including 13 from KP, six from Sindh, and one each from Punjab and Gilgit-Baltistan," the statement noted. Polio was a highly infectious and incurable disease that could cause lifelong paralysis. The only effective protection against the debilitating virus is through the repeated administration of the oral polio vaccine (OPV) for every child under five during each campaign, alongside timely completion of all routine immunisations, the statement said.

Afghan leaders, women to host dialogue in Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad research institute is set to host Afghan leaders and women activists this week to discuss the regional peace and stability, organisers said on Monday. Pakistan and Afghanistan have witnessed an improvement in bilateral relations after taking steps to improve ties, such as the revival of the Joint Coordination Committee and upgrading diplomatic ranks. The South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (Sassi) University will organise the dialogue on August 25 and 26, according to Dr Maria Sultan, the think tank's chairperson and director general. While both neighbouring countries have held bilateral engagements at the government level, this will be the first such Pak-Afghan dialogue since the 2021 Taliban takeover of Kabul. Some Afghan TV channels and media run by Afghan journalists in exile contended that Pakistan has invited anti-Taliban leaders. However, the Sassi University chairperson denied that the dialogue was against the Taliban or other Afghan political parties.

Air Canada grounded after strike

DNA

TORONTO: Air Canada's fleet of hundreds of planes remained grounded on Monday morning after striking flight attendants refused a government-backed order to get back to work and called on the airline to return to the bargaining table. The carrier, which normally carries 130,000 people daily and is part of the global Star Alliance of airlines, had planned to start ramping up operations on Sunday evening, after a labour relations board ordered the union to return to work and start binding arbitration. The union said no, setting up an almost unprecedented standoff with the Canadian government, which had requested the back-to-work order. The Canadian Union of Public Employees, which represents 10,000 Air Canada cabin crew, had pushed for a negotiated solution, saying binding arbitration would take pressure off the airline.

Trump-brokered ceasefire

Rubio says US keeping 'eye on Pakistan, India'

US secretary of state stresses constant vigilance, saying "ceasefires can fall apart very quickly"

CENTRELINE REPORT

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said that the United States was closely monitoring the Pakistan-India situation despite the halt in hostilities under a ceasefire agreement following the recent deadly conflict between the rival countries. The secretary of state pointed to the relations between Pakistan and India while discussing how fragile ceasefire arrangements can be, highlighting the difficulties of sustaining truce agreements in conflict zones. Speaking in an interview on Sunday, Rubio noted: "Every single day we keep an eye on what's happening between Pakistan and India, what's happening between Cambodia and Thailand. Ceasefires can fall apart very quickly, especially after a three-and-a-half-year [Russia-Ukraine] war like what we're facing now." He added that while Washington continues to push for a truce in Ukraine, lasting peace can only be en-



sured through a negotiated settlement rather than temporary halt in hostilities. Earlier this year, Pakistan and India narrowly averted a

dangerous escalation. On May 7, Indian forces carried out airstrikes on Pakistani territory under the guise of "Operation Sindoor," an act of aggression strongly condemned by Islamabad. In a swift and decisive response, Pakistan launched "Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos," targeting multiple Indian military sites, downing six fighter jets — including three Rafales — and dozens of drones. The confrontation, which lasted 87 hours, ended only after the United States intervened to broker a ceasefire. President Donald Trump later announced the truce on social media, crediting US diplomacy for defusing the crisis. While New Delhi sought to downplay Washington's role, Pakistan openly acknowledged Trump's efforts and even recommended him for the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize. Security sources have since revealed that India has launched "Operation Mahadev" — a covert campaign to stage fake encounters and frame illegally detained Pakistanis as cross-border militants in a bid to cover up its battlefield failures and suppress the Kashmiri freedom movement.

PSX hits record high amid bullish sentiment, upbeat earnings

Stability, liquidity, good corporate results, upgrading of Pakistan's ratings contributing to new highs, says expert

DNA

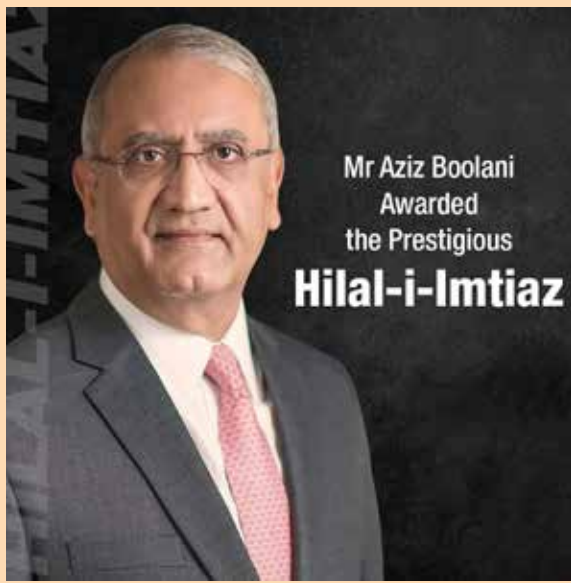
KARACHI: The equity market rose to a new record high on Monday, with investors encouraged by improving corporate earnings, favourable macroeconomic indicators, and expectations of further progress on structural reforms. The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index settled at 148,196.42 points, up 1,704.79 points, or 1.16%, from the previous close of 146,491.63. During the session, the index climbed to an intraday high of 148,395.71, gaining 1,904.08 points, or 1.3%, registered a low of 146,403.64, reflecting a drop of 87.99 points, or 0.06%. "Stability, liquidity, good corporate results, upgrading of Pakistan's ratings and expectations of tame inflation numbers are all contributing towards market making new highs," said Ahfaz Mustafa, CEO of Ismail Iqbal Securities. The stock market is expected to remain buoyant in the coming week, supported by optimism over corporate earnings and anticipated progress on circular debt reforms. Sentiment is also expected to stay upbeat with corporate results season in full swing and further clarity awaited on the government's industrial policy measures, particularly the phasing out of the super tax. In the energy sector, the power division is set to present its final proposal on debt re-profiling with Chinese independent power producers (IPPs), whose outstanding



dues stand at Rs475 billion. Supporting liquidity in the financial system, deposits at commercial banks reached Rs33.756 trillion as of August 1, 2025, up 12.51% from a year earlier. The rise was driven by stronger remittance inflows and a shift towards formal savings amid easing inflation and reduced cash hoarding, according to central bank data. Remittances from overseas Pakistanis increased by 7.4% year-on-year to \$3.2 billion in July, the highest ever inflow recorded for that month, although they fell 6.0% compared to June. Meanwhile, Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) edged up by \$11 million to \$14.243 billion as of August 8. The country's total liquid reserves rose by just \$1 million to \$19.497 billion, with commercial banks' reserves slipping by \$10 million to \$25.254 billion. The slight improvement followed Moody's upgrade of Pakistan's credit rating by one notch, from 'Caa2' to 'Caa1', with a 'stable' outlook.

The Moody's revision, alongside earlier upgrades by Fitch and S&P, is expected to enhance Pakistan's ability to secure external financing. The government maintains that the economy is on a recovery path, supported by a \$7 billion IMF bailout. On Friday, the KSE-100 Index had declined by 37.67 points, or 0.03%, to close at 146,491.63, after trading between a high of 147,534.41 and a low of 146,269.59. Over the course of the outgoing week, the index posted a gain of 1,109 points, or 0.76% week-on-week.

Global CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani awarded prestigious Hilal-i-Imtiaz



Mr Aziz Boolani
Awarded
the Prestigious
Hilal-i-Imtiaz

ISLAMABAD: Aziz Boolani, Global CEO of Serena Hotels and a leading figure in the hospitality industry, has been conferred with the prestigious Hilal-i-Imtiaz, one of Pakistan's highest civilian awards. Widely respected for his visionary leadership, Boolani has played a pivotal role in transforming Serena Hotels into a benchmark of excellence in the region and elsewhere. Beyond business success, he has championed numerous initiatives that go far beyond hospitality. His contributions to community development, education, sports, cultural preservation, and heritage protection have earned him admiration at home and abroad. Under his stewardship, Serena Hotels has actively promoted youth sports, hosted cultural events, and supported initiatives aimed at protecting Pakistan's diverse traditions. Boolani has also been deeply committed to humanitarian causes, ensuring that Serena's platforms serve not only guests but also the wider community. Industry leaders, cultural ambassadors, and civil society have lauded this recognition, calling it a well-deserved honor for a man whose vision blends hospitality with service to humanity. The award of Hilal-i-Imtiaz underscores the government's acknowledgment of Boolani's outstanding contributions to both the nation's hospitality sector and its broader social fabric. — DNA

Balochistan CM Bugti hails security forces for foiling suicide attack

Suicide bombers had planned to target innocent citizens celebrating Independence Day, says Balochistan CM

DNA

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti said on Monday that security forces, including the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), had thwarted a large-scale plan of destruction on Independence Day, crediting their efforts for saving the province from major devastation. Speaking at a press conference in Quetta, "On August 14, the suicide bombers had planned to target innocent citizens who were celebrating Independence Day," the chief minister said while addressing a press conference. Bugti praised law enforcement agencies and urged parents to closely monitor their children to prevent them from being misled. He stressed that Balochistan's people must remain cautious and stay away from elements spreading propaganda. The chief minister revealed that those involved in the Quetta Railway Station attack in November 2024 were the same individuals behind the recent plot. He said investigations were ongoing and more propaganda tools would be exposed. Bugti underlined that while society would not be subjected to collective punishment, those targeting "our innocent children and citizens" would be dealt with firmly. Bugti also disclosed the confession of a BUITEMS University lecturer, who admitted to using the Telegram application for terrorist activities. The lecturer confessed that he had received targets, facilitated terrorist operations, and betrayed the state. According to Bugti, the

arrested lecturer held a PhD in Pakistan Studies and had been teaching students, while his wife was also a teacher and his mother a pensioner. "Where is the deprivation here?" he asked, criticising the exploitation of narratives of marginalisation. He further alleged that such elements were also exploiting women to prepare them for suicide attacks. Bugti warned that those opposing the state should be tried under separate laws, affirming that "terrorists will be dealt with an iron hand". He said that the issue of missing persons was being systematically used as a propaganda tool against the state and clarified that "there is no forced disappearance from our side." The chief minister stressed that parliament was the supreme institution of the country and all powers were derived from it. Bugti confirmed the arrest of a facilitator of the banned BLA from Quetta and said around 2,000 individuals who seek to break the country would not be pardoned. He added that investigations had also identified government employees among suspects. Commenting on the kidnapping of two assistant commissioners, Bugti admitted it was concerning but assured that operations were underway, including one in Khalifat Hills the previous night, to ensure their safe recovery. He maintained that security forces had the capacity to combat terrorism, while the provincial government would handle legal and administrative matters. "Those who wish to talk to us will find our doors open," Bugti said. He urged all political parties to stand against terrorism and to acknowledge the state's sacrifices in countering it.

ANP-led APC ends in discord as ruling parties refuse to sign declaration

APC declaration highlights worsening law & order situation, political grievances in merged districts, Balochistan

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: An All Parties Conference (APC) hosted by the Awami National Party (ANP) ended in discord on Sunday after the ruling parties, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), declined to sign the joint declaration, laying bare sharp political divisions despite calls for unity on issues facing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

The conference, convened by ANP President Aimal Wali Khan and attended by representatives of 19 parties, sought to highlight the worsening law and order, resource exploitation and political grievances in the merged districts and Balochistan. The News reported. However, when the declaration was read out, PML-N parliamentary leader in the Senate, Senator Irfan Siddiqui and PPP Secretary General Nayyar Hussain Bukhari refused to endorse it, exposing rifts between the two government allies and opposition parties. Defending their stance, Senator Irfan Siddiqui explained that the two parties disagreed with certain demands and therefore could not be part of the declaration. He urged leaders to rise above grievances, stressing that "ridiculing Punjab will not resolve national issues" and calling instead for a broad-based national dialogue.

He emphasised that the Constitution belongs to all citizens and vowed that no one would be allowed to undermine it. "If martial law had been imposed, there would not have been this freedom to speak in an APC in Islamabad," he added. He praised the armed forces as guardians of the federation, noting that the Pakistan Army had defeated an enemy five times larger. Siddiqui also called for all parties' commitment to the Constitution and democracy despite their political grievances or differences. Condemning sectarian killings in Balochistan, he noted that civilians were targeted after their ID cards were checked.

US adviser Navarro says India's Russian crude buying has to stop

"If India wants to be treated as a strategic partner of the US, it needs to start acting like one," says Navarro

DNA

WASHINGTON: White House trade adviser Peter Navarro said India's purchases of Russian crude were funding Moscow's war in Ukraine and had to stop, adding that New Delhi was "now cozying up to both Russia and China." "If India wants to be treated as a strategic partner of the US, it needs to start acting like one," Navarro wrote in an opinion piece published in the Financial Times. India's Foreign Ministry has previously said the country is being unfairly singled out for buying Russian oil while the United States and European Union continue to purchase goods from Russia. US President Donald Trump imposed an additional 25% tariff on Indian goods earlier this month, citing New Delhi's continued purchases of Russian oil, taking total tariffs on imports from India to 50%. "India acts as a global clearinghouse for Russian oil, converting embargoed crude into high-value exports while giving Moscow the dollars it needs," Navarro said. The adviser also said it was risky to transfer cutting-edge US military capabilities to India as New Delhi was "now cozying up to both Russia and China." Longtime rivals China and India are quietly and cautiously strengthening ties against the backdrop of Trump's unpredictable approach to both. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping at the end of the month while Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will visit India from Monday for talks on the disputed border between the two countries. A planned visit by US trade negotiators to New Delhi from August 25-29 has been called off, a source said over the weekend, delaying talks on a proposed trade agreement and dashing hopes of relief from additional US tariffs on Indian goods from August 27.

