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Morocco envoy says his country keen to have closer links with Pak

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Indian narrative on Indus water treaty false

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Pakistan keen to take part in pro league

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Rana Sana house case

Omar, Shibli and 59 others face sentences

Former information minister Fawad Chaudhry, who quit PTI in the wake of the May 9 incidents, and Zain Qureshi (son of PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi) were among those freed of the charges

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: A Faisalabad anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Monday sentenced 59 PTI leaders and supporters to 10 years of imprisonment and acquitted 34 others in the case of an attack on former interior minister Rana Sanaullah's house during the May 9, 2023 riots. On May 9, 2023, military installations and state-owned buildings were vandalised as PTI supporters protested the arrest of ex-premier Imran Khan, who was released later but has been imprisoned in various cases since August 2023. Following the riots, thousands of protesters, including the party's top leadership, were arrested. Judge Javed Iqbal Sheikh presided over today's hearing of the case registered at the Samanabad police on May 9, 2023. PTI legal team head Malik Khalid Shafiq confirmed today's court decision to Dawn.com. He said that out of the total 109 accused, 59 were handed 10 years' rigorous imprisonment and 16 were given three years' jail time. PTI leaders Zartaj Gul, Shibli Faraz, Omar Ayub, Sheikh Rashid Shafique (nephew of former interior minister Sheikh Rasheed), Ashraf Khan Sohna, Rai Hassan Nawaz, Rai Murtaza Iqbal were among those convicted. Former information minister Fawad Chaudhry, who quit PTI in the wake of the May 9 incidents, and Zain Qureshi (son of PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi) were among those freed of the charges. PTI parliamentarians convicted would face automatic disqualification under Article 63(1)(g) of the Constitution.

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Raja decides to resign as PTI secy general

Sources say Salman decides to leave the post over a rift with Khan's sister Aleema Khan

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Salman Akram Raja has decided to step down from the party's Secretary General post, saying he will meet PTI founder Imran Khan tomorrow and request him to relieve him of his duties. "Today, an incident has occurred that now demands a clear-cut decision from me. My life is an open book. None of my actions conflicts with any principle. Tomorrow [Tuesday], I will request Imran Khan to step down from the position," he said in a post on X. The senior lawyer was appointed as PTI secretary general last year in September, following the resignation of

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ISLAMABAD: Outgoing Ambassador of UAE Hamad Alzaabi called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

UAE envoy pays farewell call on PM

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of United Arab Emirates (UAE) Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Al-Zaabi, the outgoing Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Pakistan, paid a farewell call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the Prime Minister House this evening. Defence Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kiyani, SAPM Tariq Fatemi and Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch were also present during the meeting. The Prime Minister congratulated the Ambassador on the successful completion of his tenure in Pakistan and thanked him for his contribution towards the strengthening of Pakistan-UAE relations.

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French govt to seek vote of confidence

DNA

PARIS: DFrance's embattled Prime Minister Francois Bayrou said on Monday that his government would request a vote of confidence on September 8, seeking parliamentary backing for his battle against soaring public debt. Farright National Rally (RN) leader Jordan Bardella immediately said his party would not back Bayrou's planned cuts, suggesting the minority government could face defeat in the vote. Bayrou told a news conference the National Assembly would be asked to "confirm the scale" of spending reductions, as the government seeks to save around €44 billion (\$51bn) a year.

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Slams Gaza genocide

Pakistan rejects 'Greater Israel' plan at OIC moot

Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar denounced the continued bombardment of Gaza, highlighting the deaths of tens of thousands of children and the worsening humanitarian crisis

NEWS DESK

JEDDASH: At the emergency meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Pakistan took a firm stand against Israel's so-called 'Greater Israel' plan, warning it posed a grave threat to peace in the region. Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar denounced the continued bombardment of Gaza, highlighting the deaths of tens of thousands of children and the worsening humanitarian crisis. Dar urged the global community to act decisively, calling for an unconditional and permanent ceasefire, immediate humanitarian access to besieged Palestinians, and a two-state solution based on pre-1967 borders.

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India cautions Pakistan of possible flooding under IWT

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Breaking a long silence since their May military standoff, India has reached out to Pakistan through the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), sharing details on potential flood threats, official sources revealed early on Monday. According to the sources, New Delhi warned Pakistan of a potential

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Briefs

China's new mega dam triggers fears of water war

Beijing has always maintained responsible attitude toward development of transboundary rivers, says spox

NEWS DESK

PARONG, INDIA: India fears a planned Chinese mega-dam in Tibet will reduce water flows on a major river by up to 85% during the dry season, according to four sources familiar with the matter and a government analysis seen by Reuters, prompting Delhi to fast-track plans for its own dam to mitigate the effects. The Indian government has been considering projects since the early 2000s to control the flow of water from Tibet's Angsi Glacier, which sustains more than 100 million people downstream in China, India and Bangladesh.

Trump 'not happy' about Israeli strike on Gaza hospital

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump says he is "not happy" about the Israeli strike on Gaza's Nasser Hospital, which killed five journalists. Fielding questions in the Oval Office, Trump said he "did not know" about the strike and said, "I'm not happy about it and I don't want to see it ... at the same time, we have to end that whole nightmare." Meanwhile, The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has condemned the Israeli attack that killed five journalists at Nasser Hospital, calling for the international community to hold Israel accountable for its "continued unlawful attacks on the press", Al Jazeera reports.

Three FC personnel martyred, 17 injured in Hangu terrorist attack

Terrorists attack FC fort in Torawari area of KP's Hangu; injured FC soldiers shifted to hospital

BUREAU REPORT

HANGU: At least three soldiers were martyred and 17 others were injured on Monday after terrorist attacked a Federal Constabulary fort in Torawari area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Hangu. Superintendent of Police (SP) Operations Asad Zubair said that said that the police along with the FC retaliated against the terror attack, forcing the militants to flee. The police officer further added that the injured personnel shifted to the Doaba Hospital. After the incident, the police gunned down one of the terrorists' facilitator in an encounter after he opened fire on the security personnel. Also, a police search operation is underway after attack on the FC fort, said the district police officer (DPO). The development comes amid a surge in terrorist attacks across the country, particularly in KP and Balochistan - both of which share a rather porous border with neighbouring Afghanistan. According to a report released by the Pakistan

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Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi Praises KP Police

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has lauded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) for their successful operation against terrorists of Fitna Al-Hindustan in Upper Dir. In a statement, Naqvi commended the professional skills of the security forces for eliminating five terrorists during the operation. He said the KP Police and CTD have thwarted the nefarious designs of the terrorists and once again proved their operational strength. "Our brave forces are resolute in their

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Shukria Pakistan

HAMAD OBAID AL ZAABI

AS I am concluding my mission as the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to the dear and friendly Islamic Republic of Pakistan, I find myself filled with a mixture of emotions: gratitude, reflection, and pride. The years I have spent here have been far more than a diplomatic assignment—they have been a deeply human journey, rich with experiences, friendships, and mutual understanding. This journey encompassed challenges and inspiring achievements, constructive partnerships, and bonds that will remain etched in my heart for a lifetime. Pakistan's rich and diverse culture has been a constant source of inspiration to me. From its vibrant traditions to its remarkable history, I have learned so much from the people here, and I have come to admire the resilience and warmth that define Pakistan's identity. It has been a joy to witness how deeply rooted values of hospitality, unity, and kindness resonate across the nation. I have seen firsthand how sincere dialogue and mutual respect can make a meaningful impact in our world. When I first arrived in Islamabad on 17 September 2017, I came as a representative of my country—but never felt like a stranger. In this generous land and among its noble people, I found open hearts and genuine hospitality. I felt embraced by a sense of belonging, surrounded by warm hearts, kind smiles, and hands extended with goodness and humanity. I discovered a



people who greet strangers with affection and treat others with grace and noble character. The years I spent here will forever live in my memory. They were not merely diplomatic duties—they were a full chapter of life. I learned, I reflected, I laughed, and I was moved. In the people of Pakistan, I witnessed a living proof that beautiful values still thrive: loyalty, honor, tolerance, and dignity. Today, as I prepare to depart, I do not leave with only my passport and suitcases. I carry something much deeper: I carry real friendships, priceless memories, and a love for this country that will always remain a part of me, wherever I may go. I write these final words to you while overwhelmed with emotion, as if bidding farewell to a second homeland—not just concluding a diplomatic post in my career.

Though I am leaving, my second home, as Ambassador of the UAE to Pakistan, the seeds of friendship and trust that we planted together will endure. Diplomatic relations may be governed by agreements, but they are sustained by sincere sentiments and mutual respect. You have always been, and continue to be, the bearers of this goodwill. I leave today with the fondest of memories, and with heartfelt appreciation for everyone I met and worked with. To all who played a role in my journey here officials, diplomats, colleagues, friends, and citizens, I say sincerely: thank you. You were more than partners; you were a family. I would like to extend my deepest thanks to all those who accompanied me in


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Kundi stresses immediate relief, rehabilitation for flood victims

BARCELONA: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, while addressing a luncheon hosted by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Spain in Barcelona during his ongoing European visit, said that his tour was delayed due to the devastating floods in the province. However, he fulfilled his commitment to attend the Kashmir Conference in Brussels and the Independence Day "Marka-e-Haq" Convention in Barcelona.

The Governor said that he held meetings with international humanitarian and relief organizations regarding flood victims, stressing that both immediate relief and long-term rehabilitation must be ensured. Highlighting Pakistan's defense achievements, he said that the nuclear program initiated by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the missile program under Benazir Bhutto had made the country's defense invincible, while victory in a brief conflict with India further elevated Pakistan's global stature.

He added that Bilawal Bhutto, like his mother, strongly represented Pakistan and Kashmir's cause on the world stage.

Kundi also lauded the role of political parties and media during the recent war and emphasized the crucial role of overseas Pakistanis in the country's progress and appealed to them to support flood victims in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through the Red Crescent.

The event was also addressed by PPP Spain President Chaudhry Ishtiaq, Hafiz Abdul Razzaq Sadiq, and Ayaz Abbasi of Pak Federation Spain. Leaders of PML-N Spain, including Raja Haji Asad, Imtiaz Akiya, Sajid Gondal, Pervaiz Jani, Faizullah Shahi, and Rizwan Kazmi, also spoke on the occasion.—APP

NFC Award vital for promoting harmony b/w centre-provinces: Bugti

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Monday said that the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award is an important opportunity to promote harmony between the strong federation and the provinces. He said this while presiding over an important meeting at the Chief Minister's Secretariat, Quetta regarding the preparation of the NFC Award. The meeting was attended by Provincial Finance Minister Mir Shoaib Noshirwani gave a detailed briefing on the economic situation and financial needs of the province and highlighted various aspects of the upcoming National Finance Commission Award. It was decided in the meeting that the opinions of all political parties and experts will be included on the NFC Award. On this occasion, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti clarified that by expanding the scope of consultation, opinions would also be taken from parties not having representation in the parliament so that the province's position is comprehensive and unanimous. He said that the suggestions of economic and financial experts and experts from various fields would also be included so that the public of Balochistan interests could be highlighted in a comprehensive manner. The CM also expressed his determination that the expectations and hopes of the people of Balochistan should be included in the 11th National Finance Commission Award so that the backwardness of the province could be eliminated and development and prosperity to be ensured.—APP

AI to reshape governance in country: Ahsan

The minister said it was the fundamental challenge of our times that technology, a new revolution in technology and particularly digital technologies, biotechnology, automation, robotics, now in future quantum computing, all these technologies were going to bring about a change on a scale that had not been seen ever in our history

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal has said that as industrial revolution reshapes societies similarly artificial intelligence (AI) will reshape governance in the country. He said this while addressing the third National School of Public Policy Conference on 'Artificial Intelligence in Public Policy and Governance' organized by the National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP) in collaboration with the National School of Public Policy (NSPP) at the NSPP on Monday. He said: "We can use artificial intelligence to win various 'Markas' which includes 'Marka-i-Education', 'Marka-i-Health', 'Marka-i-Trade', 'Marka-i-Research and Technology'."

"If we combine wisdom of our civil service through power of AI, we can build Pakistan that is prosperous, inclusive and globally competitive by 2035 to realize dream of turning Pakistan into 1 trillion dollar economy," he added.

The minister said there was a need to immediately establish AI training centre for officers at the NSPP and other training centres to improve their capability. The minister emphasized on working with startups, universities and industry to co-create AI governance solutions because it requires a collaborative efforts. The officers must be AI literate, he said and added that the NSPP must launch an AI centre for civil servants training and to study how we could adopt AI fast in governance and civil service. He said, "We must not overlook the ethics part of AI." The federal minister said, "We must ensure that AI is transparent, fair and respects privacy of data. AI is based on algorithms and quality of algorithms would



define what is utility of AI. Because if your algorithms are not fair, if they contain biases, so AI will also give those biases." He said: "It is extremely important that, you know, we also look at the fairness dimension of AI and see that the algorithms are fair and do not have discrimination or biases." Ahsan Iqbal said, "In a country like Pakistan, which is very diverse, it has to be ensured that it is right. Similarly, the authenticity of data, the fuel of AI is data. And if your data is not accurate, it is not timely, it is not updated, AI will not do much." He said: "We are a generation which is passing through some of the most spectacular times in human history and I often say that in our lifetime, we have seen the journey from 'Takhti' to 5G and in coming years, probably this change will happen even in less than six years. So that is the speed of

change with which we have to grapple in future." "When the environment changes and so do the species, their existence also comes under threat, those species which are able to cope with the new environments survive and the ones which cannot cope with the new environment extinct," he added. The minister said it was the fundamental challenge of our times that technology, a new revolution in technology and particularly digital technologies, biotechnology, automation, robotics, now in future quantum computing, all these technologies were going to bring about a change on a scale that had not been seen ever in our history. He said: "In change management, there are three approaches first is either you proactively embrace change, the second response is reactive change and the third is you keep yourself in denial of change." AI was no longer science

fiction, it was not consideration for the future, it was already here and it was already transforming communities and societies worldwide, he said and added that for Pakistan, AI was not a luxury, it was a necessity for survival and success in a fiercely competitive world. He said that in 2016-17, we were able to visualise establishment of National Centre for Artificial Intelligence, National Centre for Cyber Security, National Centre for Big Data and Cloud Computing, National Centre for Automation and Robotics, National Centre for Genomics, National Centre for Satellite Technology and GIS and National Centre for Applied Mathematics because algorithms were the basis of the whole AI revolution. So all these national centres were set up in 2017 as a foundation for the new industrial revolution 4.0 and each of these centres was networked with 8 to 10 engineering universities, he maintained. He said that this was not just one place but it was a network of all capabilities we had nationwide and as a result today with the grace of the Allah, The Almighty, we do have an ecosystem that had enabled us to produce human resource and knowledge in these areas. The federal minister said: "Policies and plans whether 'Vision 2010' or 'Vision 2025' or even 'Uraan-Pakistan' today, you may have the best policies but if we fail to develop the ecosystem, nothing will happen. You study from Japan to Korea to Malaysia to Singapore to Vietnam to Bangladesh to China to Turkey to Gulf, all these success stories of last 40 years have an ecosystem based on four pillars which are critical in their success." He said that peace and political stability were essential for ensuring development along with commitment to reform and modernization.—DNA

Naqvi reviews security measures

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Monday visited the Pakistan Railways Headquarters in Lahore, where he attended a high-level meeting chaired by Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi.

The meeting reviewed the overall security situation of Pakistan Railways, with special focus on safeguarding railway lines and train operations, particularly in Balochistan. Officials briefed the ministers on the enhanced measures being undertaken to improve security across the railway network. A joint crackdown against encroachments on railway land was also approved during the session. It was decided that the National Constabulary, in coordination with the Railways Police, will actively participate in anti-encroachment operations. The interior minister assured full cooperation of the Frontier Constabulary (FC) in these efforts. The forum also decided to initiate a new train service between Islamabad and Rawalpindi to facilitate commuters. Speaking on the occasion, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said all necessary steps will be taken to ensure foolproof security of railway tracks and trains, adding that the protection of passengers is the government's foremost priority. He reaffirmed that the Railways Police will be fully supported to meet this objective.—APP

Zong, Zindigi partner to drive digital banking access

This collaboration between Zindigi & Zong enables government disbursements at scale, ensuring that millions especially those in underserved and remote communities gain seamless access to essential financial services

ISLAMABAD: Zong, Pakistan's leading technology innovation company, has entered a strategic partnership with Zindigi, the fastest growing digital banking initiative of JS Bank, to enable branchless banking services for bulk disbursement under Government-to-Person (G2P) projects. Through this collaboration, Zindigi will open M-Wallets for Zong customers, allowing beneficiaries in remote and underserved areas to receive monthly cash assistance directly into their accounts. These funds, primarily distributed under government poverty alleviation and disaster management programs, will be accessible through Zindigi's network of agents & ATMs nationwide. By combining its advanced connectivity infrastructure with Zindigi's digital banking capabilities, the partnership aims to strengthen Pakistan's financial inclusion landscape and deliver meaningful social impact. Speaking at the signing ceremony, Farooq Raza Khan, Head of Business Solutions, Zong said: "This partnership is a step forward in harnessing digital innovation to extend financial access to marginalized communities. By combining Zong's nationwide connectivity with Zindigi's modern banking

platform, we are simplifying and securing transactions for those who need them most. This collaboration demonstrates how public-private partnerships can create scalable solutions for social challenges while driving sustainable business growth for all stakeholders." Faisal Khalid Bashir, Chief Product Officer at Zindigi stated, "This collaboration between Zindigi & Zong enables government disbursements at scale, ensuring that millions especially those in underserved and remote communities gain seamless access to essential financial services. It is a transformative step toward building a more inclusive and digitally connected Pakistan." The initiative is expected to not only ensure timely delivery of funds to affected communities but also strengthen Pakistan's digital banking ecosystem. Both organizations are committed to leveraging their technological and operational strengths to maximize the program's reach and impact. With this agreement, Zong CMPak and Zindigi reaffirm their shared commitment to use innovation for inclusive growth, creating meaningful social value while supporting the country's progress toward a more digitally enabled economy.—DNA

Plantation drive to restore Margalla Hills ecosystem

The IWMB reiterated its commitment to ongoing conservation measures in Margalla Hills, urging the public to support such initiatives and contribute to building climate resilience across the country

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB), in collaboration with the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) and the Zoological Survey of Pakistan (ZSP), has launched a plantation drive in Margalla Hills National Park to restore the park's natural ecosystem and strengthen conservation efforts. The initiative, which saw active participation from volunteers, students, and local communities, aims to enhance biodiversity and combat climate change through increased tree cover in what are often referred to as the capital's "green lungs." Senior officials, including Aamir Abbas Khan, Director (A, L/E), Mohsina Zubair, Director (Lab/NEQS), and Rana Asif, Deputy Director (A/F), joined the plantation activity. Interns' representative Mahnoor Idrees and Zahid ul Rehman also took part in the drive, reflecting the broad community involvement in the initiative. An IWMB spokesperson told APP that the plantation campaign is part of a wider strategy to protect Margalla Hills from deforestation and environmental degradation. "Preserving our forests is not just about safeguarding wildlife, but also about ensuring a healthier, greener future for generations to come," the spokesperson noted. The IWMB reiterated its commitment to ongoing conservation measures in Margalla Hills, urging the public to support such initiatives and contribute to building climate resilience across the country.—APP

ITP vows strict action against parking violations

ISLAMABAD: Superintendent of Police (SP) Traffic Majid Iqbal has issued strict instructions to all zonal DSPs to ensure zero tolerance against illegal parking in the federal capital, directing that action against violators be intensified to maintain smooth traffic flow and road discipline.

An ITP official told APP on Monday that special teams have been deployed at shopping malls, commercial centers, markets, and major highways to take indiscriminate action against vehicles parked in no-parking zones and on footpaths. SP Majid Iqbal emphasized that parking must be confined to designated areas, particularly in busy commercial hubs. "Footpaths are the right of pedestrians, and no encroachment or parking will be tolerated," he added.

Balochistan WEF to be launched this week

QUETTA: Advisor to the Chief Minister for Women Development, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi, has announced that the first-ever Women Endowment Fund (WEF) in Balochistan will be launched this week.

Under this initiative, interest-free loans will be provided to women from remote and underprivileged areas, enabling them to establish household and community-based entrepreneurial setups and contribute to the economic well-being of their families.

She made these remarks during a meeting with Secretary Women Development Department, Ms. Saira Atta, and representatives of the Institute for Institutional Development on Monday. During the meeting, the Secretary briefed the Provincial Advisor about the departmental affairs and ongoing initiatives.—APP

Sindh CM okays Rs 55b allocation for uplift projects

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, presiding over a meeting, reviewed the District Annual Development Programme (ADP) 2025-26, during which he took policy decisions to ensure transparent and effective implementation of development schemes across districts.

The meeting, held at CM House, was attended by Minister P&D Nasir Shah, Minister Local Government Saeed Ghani, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Chairman P&D Najam Shah, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary Local Govt Waseem Shamshad, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoti and others.

The Sindh government has allocated Rs 55 billion in the provincial budget 2025-26 for District ADP schemes.

The P&D Department, on the directives of Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, convened two meetings in July to receive inputs from the Finance Department on guidelines, funds release strategy, and funds distribution as per the PFC Award 2007. After detailed deliberations, it was decided to continue with the existing procedure for implementing District ADP 2025-26, while a committee would also be formed to further strengthen the process.

To rationalize allocations, the chief minister decided to earmark 80 per cent of funds for ongoing schemes and 20 per cent for new schemes. The minimum approval limit for

a scheme will be Rs. 5 million. In contrast, the maximum limit will be Rs. 40 million for District Development Committees (DDCs) and Rs. 60 million for District Development Boards (DDBs).

The CM said that Deputy Commissioners will act as Project Directors of the schemes in their respective districts. The schemes will be prepared by executing agencies mandated to carry out specific works and approved by District Development Committees/District Development Boards. "To prevent duplication, agencies and local bodies must certify that proposed projects are not part of completed or ongoing schemes in the past three years," the CM instructed. Murad Shah emphasised that sectoral ownership at the district level should be ensured and that at least 50% of the cost of each scheme be allocated in the current fiscal year. He also directed that District ADP schemes should ideally be completed within one year, with exceptions allowed only under strong justification.

The CM further decided that funds allocation should focus on completing ongoing schemes within the financial year. No revision or re-revision of schemes will be allowed, except under exceptional circumstances such as escalated costs or missing essential components. He added that 'throw-forward' of ongoing schemes should not exceed two years.—APP

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ISSI, BIISS conclude MoU on coop during DPM's visit to Dhaka

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Bangladesh Institute of International Strategic Studies (BIISS), a prominent think-tank.

The MoU was signed during the official two-day visit of Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar to Dhaka on 23-24 August 2025, said a press release issued here on Monday.

Major General Iftikhar Anis, DG BIISS, signed the MoU on behalf of BIISS, while Pakistan's High Commissioner to Bangladesh Imran Haider signed it on behalf of ISSI. The signing ceremony, in which several

agreements, MoUs and other instruments were signed, was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar; Advisor on Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh, Md. Touhid Hossain; Pakistan's Additional Foreign Secretary (Asia-Pacific) Ambassador Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, and other senior officials on both sides.

Consistent with shared desire of promoting mutual understanding and people-to-people links between Pakistan and Bangladesh, the ISSI-BIISS MoU is aimed at enhancing institutionalized cooperation between the two institutes. It will facilitate establishing academic contacts and engaging in research

endeavors on areas of emerging national, regional, and global issues.

The MoU envisages a detailed program of cooperation, including exchange of information, improvement of research and academic programs, and exchange of experts and researchers.

Welcoming the signing of the MoU, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood said that, "in essence, it [MoU] reflects a shared commitment to fostering deeper understanding, mutual dialogue, and academic and research collaboration — thus contributing to the further growth of fraternal ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh."—DNA

Briefs

Naqvi visits
railway
headquarters

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the Pakistan Railways Headquarters where he attended a special meeting chaired by Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi. During the meeting, the overall security of Pakistan Railways, particularly railway tracks and trains across the country — with a special focus on Balochistan — was reviewed. Officials briefed the ministers on measures being taken to ensure foolproof security. A joint crackdown against encroachments on railway land was also decided in the meeting. It was agreed that the National Constabulary and Railways Police would jointly participate in anti-encroachment operations, with full support from the Frontier Constabulary (FC). The meeting also approved the decision to operate a new train service between Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Minister Naqvi stressed that all possible measures would be taken to guarantee foolproof security for railway tracks and trains, pledging full support to the Railways Police. "The safety of passengers is our top priority," he said. The Interior Minister also praised Hanif Abbasi for taking unique initiatives to improve the performance of Pakistan Railways. —APP

Toll rate
hike for M-2
Motorway
announced

ISLAMABAD: The National Highway Authority (NHA) has announced new rates for the toll taxes of Lahore-Islamabad Motorway (M2) that will be implemented from August 26, 2025, until August 25, 2026. According to an official notification issued on Monday, the annual 10% escalation in toll rates is in line with the concession agreement signed with Motorway Operations and Rehabilitation Engineering (Private) Limited—a subsidiary of the Frontier Works Organization (FWO)—on April 23, 2014. The agreement, which is on a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) basis, mandates this annual adjustment starting from the second operational year. As per the revised schedule, Cars, Jeeps, and Taxis (Class 1) will be charged Rs. 1,330, calculated at a rate of Rs 3.72 per kilometer. Wagons (Class 2) will now pay Rs 2,240 (Rs 6.24/km), while the toll for Buses has been set at Rs 3,130 (Rs 8.73/km). For freight carriers, 2-Axle Trucks (Class 4) will be subject to a toll of Rs 4,460 (Rs 12.45/km), and 3-Axle Trucks (Class 5) will pay Rs 5,800 (Rs 16.20/km). Articulated Trucks (Class 6) will incur a toll of Rs 7,460, based on a rate of Rs 20.83 per kilometer. — APP

Al-Shifa transforming lives
with tech, care and kindness

The Lighthouse remains a symbol of compassion and innovation, offering practical solutions and emotional support to thousands of Pakistanis navigating vision impairment

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Since its inception in 2009, the Lighthouse, the Low Vision Rehabilitation Department at Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital, has become a beacon of support for people struggling with impaired vision that cannot be corrected through glasses, medication, or surgery.

Over the past 16 years, the facility has treated more than 70,000 patients. According to Al-Shifa Trust President Maj Gen (Retd) Rehmat Khan, this includes men, women, and children facing diverse challenges. The Lighthouse has distributed over 3,000 specialised low-vision devices, enabling patients to regain independence and confidence. Talking to media men, he said that the department caters to anyone with permanent low vision, including children struggling in schools, adults with conditions such as macular degeneration, glaucoma, or diabetic retinopathy, and individuals who have lost their sight entirely. Patients can access services through referrals, direct visits, or online records that ensure continuity of care. For partially sighted patients, the Lighthouse provides magnifiers, telescopes, reading lamps, and AI-based electronic applications. These tools help children continue their education, enable adults to stay in the workforce, and allow seniors to manage daily routines.



A learning aid for children with weak eyesight at Al-Shifa Lighthouse.

For those who are completely blind, the facility offers white cane training, mobility and independence skills, Braille liter-

acy, and AI applications. Blind children are guided toward special schools, while adults are referred to vocational training

support to thousands of Pakistanis navigating vision impairment.

Elevating Pak's
mango exports to
China and elsewhere

DNA

ISLAMABAD: There are sweet prospects, elevating Pakistan's mango exports to China and elsewhere in the World, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Monday. Pakistan, the world's sixth-largest mango exporter, boasts over 200 varieties yet struggles to translate its abundance into export growth. With around 1.2 million tonnes of mangoes produced annually over the past several years, the country still exports only about 10% of its produce. High production costs and persistent quality concerns continue to constrain growth. Khawar Nadeem, manager of the Pakistan Horticulture Development & Export Board, highlights that up to 30% of mangoes are lost from orchard to consumer due to outdated farming practices. Unlike conventional Pakistani farms with 40-60 plants per acre, countries like Australia and Egypt cultivate up to 600 plants per acre using high-density planting, superior rootstocks, and greenhouse setups. "If orchards with modern technology can be established, yields could multiply," Nadeem says. "For that, we need greater adoption of genetic engineering and the establishment of comprehensive production facilities, such as greenhouses, to offset the declining quality of nurseries caused by contamination from germs, diseases, and pests. At the same time, it is essential to introduce dwarf rootstock varieties that offer better adaptability to Pakistan's soil conditions," he added. Dr. Muhammad Zubair Iqbal, Vice Chancellor

of Bahauddin Zakariya University, points to another barrier: costs. "Electricity, gas, land, and registration fees are all too high. If we really want this industry to grow, input costs must come down and registration processes should be eased." Beyond production, Dr. Iqbal highlights chronic quality issues. He calls for government-backed standards to ensure only premium fruit enters the export chain. "Pakistan's mango sector remains largely raw-fruit focused, missing out on lucrative value-added opportunities. Juicing units, drying plants, packaging facilities, and industry training are essential. A full supply chain must connect producing regions with export ports." "Pakistan's mango sector remains largely raw-fruit focused, missing out on lucrative value-added opportunities. A proper supply chain is essential. Juicing units, drying plants, packaging facilities, and industry training can dramatically enhance both quality and profitability." Dr. Iqbal said, A whole supply chain should be put in place from mango producing-regions in the country to ports. Nadeem agrees, emphasizing the need for pulping, dehydration, and freeze-drying facilities. Neighboring countries, he notes, convert as much as 70% of production into pulp. "Exports could be conveniently tripled provided we move up the value chain," he envisions. In May, the All Pakistan Fruit & Vegetable Exporters, Importers & Merchants Association (PFVA) launched its 2025 mango export season, setting a target of 125,000 tonnes worth an estimated \$100 million.

Flyadeal
connects
Riyadh with
Islamabad
and Peshawar

ISLAMABAD: Flyadeal, Saudi Arabia's leading low-cost carrier, has officially expanded its scheduled operations to Pakistan with the launch of direct flights to Islamabad and Peshawar. The milestone was marked at Bacha Khan International Airport (BKIA), Peshawar, on August 25, 2025, where the inaugural flight from Riyadh was welcomed with a cake-cutting ceremony organized by Menzies RAS. The event, held in the International Departure Lounge, was attended by representatives of the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA), Airport Security Force (ASF), and Menzies RAS. Flyadeal will now operate two weekly flights from Riyadh to Peshawar, every Monday and Wednesday. A day earlier, on August 24, 2025, Flyadeal operated its inaugural flight FAD 651/652 to Islamabad International Airport, where the aircraft was accorded the traditional water salute upon arrival. The flight landed ahead of schedule at 06:08 AM with 65 passengers on board. The return flight departed at 07:33 AM carrying 172 passengers. —APP

Civic freedoms,
governance closely
related, say journalists

HARIPUR: Civic freedoms and democratic governance are closely related to each other but both of them are unachievable objectives unless the freedom of press is ensured in a country. However, every content shared through social media forums especially should be based on the principles of being balanced and ethics of journalism, the speakers said. This was the gist of the speeches by senior journalists and development experts at a capacity building workshop held and participated by journalists and members of civil society organizations. The workshop titled "empowering media for civic engagement and democracy" was jointly organized by Human Development Organization (HDO), Haripur Union of Journalists (HUI), Haripur Press Club and Integrated Human Rights Network here on Sunday. Secretary General PFUJ Shakil Ahmed, president Rawalpindi Islamabad Union of Journalists Tariq Usmani, Muhammad Sadaqat president HUI, Zakir Tanoli President HPC, Muhammad Ahsan Khan Director Program HDO, senior journalists Masood Chowdry and joint secretary PFUJ Madni Ijaz Jadoon were prominent among those who spoke to the participants. Speakers said that freedom of expression, assembly and association were the rights not only guaranteed under the UN's human rights treaties but the constitution of Pakistan also provide assurance for the respect of those civic freedoms. "But these civic liberties, that are prerequisites for a true liberal democracy, are possible only once the media is free from undue restrictions", they stressed. Talking about the restrictions on media the speakers termed the recent amendments in PECA law, an attempt to muzzle the press but also aimed at harming the civic freedoms of every citizen and democracy demanded repeal of sections of PECA law that limit the constitutionally guaranteed rights of citizens. Speakers in their presentation also threw light on the challenges of the fast changing media landscape in the country especially in the face of growing consumption of digital space and social media. They said that journalists using social media platforms for sharing news and footage should not forget that they were supposed to take the role and responsibilities of a reporter, sub editor, editor. —DNA

Food exports
decrease
10.25% in July

ISLAMABAD: Food group exports from the country during the first month of the current financial year decreased by 10.25 percent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of the last year. During the month of July 2025, food commodities valued at 426.995 million were exported as compared to the exports of \$475.766 million of the same month of the last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. In the first month of the current financial year, the exports of the commodities, including rice, decreased by 18.29 percent, vegetables by 44.95 percent, oil seeds and nuts by 27.24 percent. However, the import of the commodities, including fish and fish preparations, grew by 18.60 percent, fruits by 43.63 percent and tobacco export increased by 786.63 percent respectively. Meanwhile, the exports of meat and meat preparations increased by 9.80 percent as over 9,031 metric tons of meat valued at \$40.461 million were exported during the month of July 2025, as compared to the exports of 8,408 metric tons valued at \$36.849 million of the same month of the last year.

Jam concludes
4 days
Bangladesh visit

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan has concluded his four-day visit to Bangladesh, where he had interaction with government officials and the business community with the objective of promoting economic relations between the two countries. According to a press release issued by the Commerce Ministry here Monday, during the visit, the minister met Adviser for Industries, Adviser for Food and Adviser for Commerce, visited Chambers of Commerce and Industries and interacted with business leaders from wide-ranging sectors. The Minister also visited a ship-breaking facility and a pharmaceutical plant and discussed sectoral possibilities of collaborations. His interactions with Bangladeshi economic and commercial officials included meetings with Executive Chairman, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority and Government officials from National Board of Revenue, Bangladesh Bank, Trading Corporation of Bangladesh, the Ministry of Civil Aviation, and Trade and Tariff Commission. The visit culminated in the signing of an MoU for the establishment of a Joint Working Group on Trade. The MoU will link the commerce officials of both countries, who in turn will synchronise their measures to enhance bilateral trade and investment, the statement added.



RAWALPINDI: A vendor displaying helmets on handcart on footpath under a 'No Parking' sign along Murree Road.

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A glimmer of hope for SAARC? Pakistan and Bangladesh mend ties, but the India factor looms

RECENT positive developments in the relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh offer a sliver of hope for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). While the road to a fully functional and effective SAARC remains long and fraught with challenges, the apparent thaw in bilateral ties between these two significant member states could inject some much-needed momentum into the stalled regional body. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the revival of SAARC's fortunes hinges largely on the resolution of the far more deep-seated and complex issues plaguing the relationship between its two largest members: Pakistan and India.

For years, SAARC has been struggling to live up to its potential, often overshadowed by the political tensions and mistrust prevalent within the region. Its history has been one of missed opportunities and unfulfilled promises. Bilateral disagreements and a lack of consistent engagement have hampered progress on crucial areas of cooperation, ranging from trade and connectivity to counter-terrorism and cultural exchange. The strained relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh, marked by historical complexities and divergent perspectives stemming from the 1971 war, has been one such impediment. This historical baggage has often prevented a more robust partnership, hindering regional collaboration. Therefore, the recent signals of a potential rapprochement are a welcome development. Increased diplomatic engagement, high-level visits, and a renewed focus on areas of mutual interest could pave the way for greater collaboration between Islamabad and Dhaka. This improved understanding could, in turn, foster a more conducive environment for regional dialogue within the SAARC framework.

However, it would be premature to declare a new dawn for SAARC based solely on the improvement of Pakistan-Bangladesh relations. The elephant in the room remains the deeply entrenched animosity between Pakistan and India. The history of conflict, border disputes, and differing strategic objectives continues to cast a long shadow over regional cooperation. The SAARC charter emphasizes the importance of bilateral harmony for effective regionalism, and the persistent state of hostili-



ty between its two most influential members directly undermines this principle. The two nations have been locked in a cold war, with political rhetoric and diplomatic spats often taking precedence over substantive cooperation. This rivalry has not only paralyzed SAARC meetings and initiatives but has also forced other member states to navigate a complex and delicate political landscape. Meaningful progress on any substantive SAARC agenda item inevitably gets stalled due to the prevailing mistrust and the tendency to view regional initiatives through the prism of bilateral rivalry. Whether it's a proposal for a regional trade agreement or a joint infrastructure project, the initiatives often fall prey to the lack of consensus between these two major players.

Unless Pakistan and India find a way to engage in sustained dialogue, address their core concerns, and build a modicum of trust, SAARC will likely remain in its current state of suspended animation. While improved relations among other member states, such as the Pakistan-Bangladesh rapprochement, are undoubtedly positive and can contribute to a more cooperative atmosphere, they cannot substitute for a functional working relationship between Islamabad and New Delhi. The sheer size, economic power, and strategic importance of these two nations within the South Asian context mean that their bilateral dynamics significantly impact the entire region and, consequently, the effectiveness of SAARC. Their disagreements often seep into the regional body's agenda, making any collective decision-making process difficult, if not impossible. The smaller nations of SAARC, such as Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and the Maldives, are often caught in the middle, unable to push their own agendas forward without the cooperation of the two largest economies.

In conclusion, the potential revival of Pakistan-Bangladesh relations is a positive sign for regional cooperation within South Asia. It demonstrates a willingness among member states to overcome past grievances and explore avenues for collaboration. It shows that progress is possible, even if it is incremental. However, the future of SAARC is inextricably linked to the relationship between Pakistan and India. While the improved Islamabad-Dhaka dynamic might create a slightly more favorable backdrop, a genuine revitalization of SAARC requires a fundamental shift in the dynamics between its two major players. Until Pakistan and India find a path towards peaceful coexistence and constructive engagement, SAARC will continue to fall short of its promise as a vehicle for regional integration and shared prosperity. The journey towards a truly effective SAARC is a long one, and its success hinges on overcoming the deep-seated mistrust that currently defines the relationship between its two most significant members. The dream of a united and prosperous South Asia, as envisioned by the founders of SAARC, will remain a distant one until these two nations can find a way to work together.

Trilateral diplomacy reshaping South Asia's strategic chessboard

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The course of history suggests, however, that optimism must be tempered with caution. Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan have often oscillated between fleeting cooperation and recurring confrontation. While the present moment carries the fragrance of success, it also demands vigilant handling. For Islamabad, this is a test of how adroitly it can translate diplomatic openings into long-term gains. The lessons of history remain clear: goodwill cannot be sustained on rhetoric alone; it requires mechanisms that address core disputes, ensure equitable...

FOR a long time, Afghanistan has knowingly or unknowingly entangled Pakistan in a web woven largely at the behest of India. Since the inception of Pakistan in 1947, Afghanistan has rarely missed an opportunity to exploit vulnerabilities, often aligning itself with New Delhi in order to exert pressure on Islamabad. Though both nations are equal neighbors bound by Islamic identity and cultural affinities, their bilateral relations have been marked by discord more than harmony. History testifies that Afghanistan was the only country to oppose Pakistan's admission into the United Nations in 1947. This opposition stemmed from Kabul's refusal to accept the Durand Line of 1893 as the legitimate international boundary. The line, drawn by the British between the Emir of Afghanistan and British India, divided tribes and territories, yet it was accepted as binding under international law. Pakistan inherited this boundary at independence, but successive Afghan governments contested it, leading to an undercurrent of hostility. Tensions deepened in 1949 when Afghanistan unilaterally declared that it would no longer recognize the Durand Line agreements, and in 1950 Kabul extended open support to the idea of "Pashtunistan," fueling secessionist sentiment within Pakistan.

In 1961, relations reached a nadir when Pakistan closed its borders after repeated Afghan-backed incursions. Trade and transit were halted, and diplomatic ties were suspended, resuming only in 1963 after mediation by Iran. Yet the shadow of mistrust never lifted. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 altered the dynamics altogether. Pakistan became the frontline state in supporting the Afghan resistance, hosting nearly three million Afghan refugees and providing logistic support to the Mujahideen. While Pakistan bore the social, economic, and security burdens of this prolonged conflict, gratitude from Kabul was sparse. Instead, Afghan soil became a theatre for external powers to play out their rivalries, often at the cost of Pakistan's internal stability. After the withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1989,

the ensuing civil war in Afghanistan once again spilled into Pakistan's territory. Later, with the emergence of the Taliban in the mid-1990s, Pakistan sought to cultivate ties for the sake of regional stability, yet the post-9/11 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan turned the country into a sanctuary for anti-Pakistan elements. Groups operating across the border conducted guerrilla-style attacks on Pakistani security forces, a bitter reminder that mistrust and conflict continued to dominate relations. Against this turbulent history, the present regional alignment offers a new dimension. China, through its Belt and Road Initiative and particularly the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), has invested heavily in this region. Beijing, with its pragmatic outlook, cannot afford to see its vast capital sink amidst instability. It has therefore encouraged dialogue under a single table and a single agenda, bringing together Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China with the twin goals of peace and economic cooperation.

In this context, the recent meetings between the foreign ministers of the three countries deserve particular mention. Pakistan's Foreign Minister has persistently emphasized that durable peace in Afghanistan is indispensable for regional stability and for the security of CPEC projects. His Afghan counterpart, while representing a nation long fractured by internal strife, has expressed willingness to rebuild trust and work towards a future that avoids perpetual hostility with its eastern neighbor. Meanwhile, China's Foreign Minister has acted as a bridge, urging both sides to focus on connectivity, trade, and counterterrorism as common grounds. These trilateral ministerial dialogues have signaled not only Beijing's commitment to safeguard its investments but also the possibility of transforming years of mistrust into constructive engagement. At present, Pakistan finds itself in a rare position of diplomatic advantage. For perhaps the first time in decades, the United States appears to have momentarily stepped out of India's spell, reassessing the balance of power in South Asia.

Afghanistan too, weary of endless internal strife and isolation, has tilted towards China and shown readiness to sit with Pakistan for constructive dialogue. For New Delhi, this signals a gradual erosion of influence in a region it has long sought to dominate by using Kabul as a counterweight to Islamabad. In this grand game of chess, India is facing a losing battle as the board rearranges itself in favor of Pakistan's regional diplomacy.

The course of history suggests, however, that optimism must be tempered with caution. Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan have often oscillated between fleeting cooperation and recurring confrontation. While the present moment carries the fragrance of success, it also demands vigilant handling. For Islamabad, this is a test of how adroitly it can translate diplomatic openings into long-term gains. The lessons of history remain clear: goodwill cannot be sustained on rhetoric alone; it requires mechanisms that address core disputes, ensure equitable distribution of economic dividends, and secure borders against infiltration. Yet the signs are encouraging. The willingness of Afghanistan to engage with Pakistan under China's facilitation, reinforced through the direct involvement of the three foreign ministers, signals an acknowledgment that old hostilities have led neither to prosperity nor peace. If this trilateral framework succeeds, it will not only stabilize the frontier regions but also unlock the potential of trade routes connecting South Asia, Central Asia, and beyond. For Pakistan, this would mean not just security on its western border but also the prospect of becoming the economic crossroads of the region. Time will ultimately determine how much Pakistan can benefit from this situation. The challenge is to convert tactical successes into strategic permanence, ensuring that the sacrifices of the past yield dividends for future generations. For now, however, Pakistan stands on firm ground, its flag raised high in regional diplomacy, and the door to a new chapter in its fraught relationship with Afghanistan appears, at long last, to be opening.

The Geopolitical Identity of the Muslim World

Alishba Usman

The catalyst for testing came in May 1998 when India conducted five nuclear tests, escalating regional tensions to a critical point. Facing immense domestic pressure and strategic imperative, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif authorized Pakistan's response. On May 28, 1998 (Chagai-I) and May 30, 1998 (Chagai-II), Pakistan detonated its nuclear devices in the Ras Koh Hills. These tests demonstrated. The success was immediate and profound. Pakistan had unequivocally joined the nuclear club, becoming the 7th nuclear...

PAKISTAN'S emergence as the world's first Islamic nuclear power on May 28, 1998, marked a defining moment in its history and the geopolitics of South Asia. The thunderous detonations in the Chagai hills of Balochistan, commemorated annually as Youm-e-Takbeer (Day of Greatness), were not merely scientific feats but profound assertions of national sovereignty, technological brilliance, strategic resolve and Islamic identity. This journey, driven by acute security imperatives and national aspiration, transformed Pakistan into the seventh nuclear-armed nation and cemented its place as a pivotal strategic actor. Pakistan's nuclear ambitions were fundamentally forged in the crucible of regional insecurity and conflict with India. The early Cold War alignment with the United States, formalized through the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement (1954), provided critical military modernization, training and access to Western alliances like SEATO and CENTO. While this bolstered conventional forces in the 1950s-60s, it also exposed Pakistan to the realities of global power politics and the symbolic weight of nuclear capability. However, two seismic events crystallized the absolute necessity of a nuclear deterrent: India's first nuclear explosion shattered the regional strategic balance. For Pakistan, already scarred by three wars (1948, 1965 and 1971) with its larger neighbor, it represented an existential threat. Conventional military parity was rendered insufficient. The loss of East Pakistan (Bangladesh) was a devastating military and psychological blow. It underscored Pakistan's vulnerability and convinced its leadership, particularly Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, that nuclear weapons were essential for survival and preventing future dismemberment. Bhutto's famous declaration, "We will eat grass, even go hungry, but we will get our own nuclear bomb, because the rallying cry. He established the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and laid the institutional groundwork.

Beyond immediate security, motivations included deterrence (making aggression prohibitively costly for adversaries), restoring the regional power balance tilted by India's test and achieving national pride and technological prestige particularly the aspiration to become the first Muslim nation to possess nuclear weapons. The path to nuclear

capability was arduous, conducted under a shroud of extreme secrecy and against formidable external pressure. The 1974 test triggered international non-proliferation efforts, leading to technology embargoes, heavy international scrutiny and intelligence surveillance. Pakistan faced diplomatic isolation and severe resource constraints. Despite these obstacles, a network of patriotic scientists, engineers and military strategists worked relentlessly. Early initiatives benefited from peaceful nuclear programs like the US Atoms for Peace and training collaborations. Key institutions like the Atomic Energy Research Organization (1954) and the PAEC were crucial. The scientific effort was spearheaded by figures like Dr. Munir Ahmad Khan (PAEC Chairman), Dr. Samar Mubarakmand (nuclear physicist overseeing the tests and missile tech) and Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad (prominent PAEC physicist). However, the program gained decisive momentum with the arrival of Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan in the mid-1970s. His expertise in uranium enrichment technology, often controversially acquired, earned him the title father of Pakistan's nuclear program and provided a viable route to a fission weapon. This development was not merely technical; it was deeply political, ideological and nationalistic. Successive governments, military and civilian, prioritized the program despite economic weaknesses and international condemnation, viewing it as the ultimate guarantor of security against India and a symbol of national resolve.

The catalyst for testing came in May 1998 when India conducted five nuclear tests, escalating regional tensions to a critical point. Facing immense domestic pressure and strategic imperative, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif authorized Pakistan's response. On May 28, 1998 (Chagai-I) and May 30, 1998 (Chagai-II), Pakistan detonated its nuclear devices in the Ras Koh Hills. These tests demonstrated. The success was immediate and profound. Pakistan had unequivocally joined the nuclear club, becoming the 7th nuclear power globally and the sole nuclear-armed Islamic state. Pakistan immediately framed its capability as purely defensive, rooted in the doctrine of minimum credible deterrence. The weapons were presented as essential to deter Indian aggression, ensure a strategic balance in South Asia and prevent large-scale war a lesson starkly learned

from 1971. The emphasis remains on maintaining sufficient capability for defense, not aggression or dominance. For the Islamic world, Pakistan's achievement was unprecedented. It shattered perceptions of technological inferiority and dependence, proving that a Muslim-majority nation, despite limited economic resources and political instability, could achieve technological parity with global powers. Domestically, it ignited nuclear nationalism – a potent unifying force celebrated annually on Youm-e-Takbeer, honoring the sacrifices of scientists, the military and leadership and serving as a powerful symbol of sovereignty, scientific achievement, strength and unity for Muslims worldwide. It reshaped the Islamic identity in global geopolitics – projecting capability, pride and security. The global response was swift and severe. Pakistan faced economic sanctions (US, Japan, EU), suspension of aid and trade agreements and short-term diplomatic isolation. However, the strategic landscape, particularly post-9/11, forced a recalibration. Global powers gradually began to accept Pakistan's nuclear reality. Pakistan managed to maintain crucial alliances, especially with China, navigate relations with the US and retain strong ties within the Muslim world. The scientific triumph, utilizing indigenous techniques and developing secure facilities and command systems, became a source of enduring national pride. Pakistan's nuclear status undeniably strengthened its defense posture, provided a powerful deterrent and fulfilled a deep-seated need for national and Islamic prestige. However, the journey also invites critical reflection. The program was intensely elite-driven, prioritizing military strength and strategic parity, often at the expense of broader social welfare and economic development. In the last, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer for his invaluable support and encouragement in guiding me to write an insightful write-up. His unwavering motivation, constructive feedback and deep understanding of the subject matter played a vital role in shaping my ideas and strengthening my research. It was through his mentorship that I found the confidence to explore this topic with depth and originality. I am truly thankful for his generous help and academic inspiration.

Briefs

Shukria Pakistan

FROM PAGE 01
this journey, those who supported me, and those who shared in the vision and the mission. Although I leave in an official capacity, my heart will remain tied to this land. I will always remain a sincere friend and an ambassador of goodwill for this nation in my heart. I truly hope that the bridges of friendship and cooperation will continue to strengthen, and that our joint efforts for a brighter, more peaceful future will endure. I may be leaving, but the love remains. The bonds we have built cannot be erased. I will always remain a loyal friend of Pakistan and look forward to the day I return—not as an ambassador, but as a grateful visitor with deep affection. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you all the Pakistani nation, government and leadership, I pray that my Pakistani brothers continues to enjoy peace and prosperity, and that the bridge of friendship between us remains strong—untouched by distance and unchanged by titles.

— The writer is the UAE Ambassador to Pakistan, who has just finished his tenure in Pakistan.

UAE envoy pays farewell...

FROM PAGE 01
The Prime Minister lauded the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, in forging closer Pakistan-UAE ties that were reflective of the longstanding, deep-rooted, fraternal bonds between both countries. He also expressed his satisfaction that in recent months, the two sides had taken important steps to further strengthen these ties, including the visits of Foreign Minister His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi His Highness Sheikh Khalid bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the convening of the Pakistan-UAE Joint Ministerial Commission, and the recently operationalized agreement on visa abolition for diplomatic and official passport holders. The Prime Minister said that he looked forward to the official visit of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to Pakistan at an early date, that would lend further impetus to the relationship between the two sides. Amb. Al Zaabi thanked the Prime Minister for receiving him for a farewell call and said he was deeply appreciative of the support and friendship that he had received throughout his nine-year stay in Pakistan, from the Government as well as the people of the country. While acknowledging the special bonds of friendship between the leadership and the people of both countries, he said that he would continue to work for stronger Pakistan-UAE ties in the future.

Omar, Shibli...

FROM PAGE 01
which bars members convicted of crimes involving moral turpitude or corrupt practices. The deadline given to ATCs to decide various May 9 cases had already passed earlier this month. Therefore, day-to-day hearings were being held in the case, according to Shafiq. Last week, the Kasur Crime Control Department (CCD) presented former Faisalabad Civil Lines station house officer Zeeshan Khalid Randhawa as a witness during the trial. The former SHO was already under arrest in a separate kidnap and murder case of a Kasur resident. A joint investigation team probing the case had been summoned by an ATC in July 2024 to submit the charge sheet. Today's convictions are the latest in a slew of ATC sentences, wherein over 100 PTI leaders and workers have been handed lengthy jail terms. On July 22, a Lahore ATC had handed Yasmin Rashid, Omar Sarfraz Cheema, Mian Mehmoodur Rasheed and other PTI leaders 10 years of rigorous imprisonment in a case related to vandalism at Sherpao Bridge.

Pakistan squad named for ICC Women's CWC 2025

Pakistan Announces Squad for ICC Women's World Cup 2025 and South Africa ODIs

SPORT DESK

ISLAMABAD: The women's national selection committee has named a 15-member squad for the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 set to take place from September 30 to November 2. The same squad will also feature in a three-match ODI series against South Africa, scheduled at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore from September 16 to 22, said a press release. Uncapped right-handed batter Eyman Fatima, who recently made her T20I debut against Ireland, is part of the ODI squad. Fatima Sana, who represented Pakistan in the previous edition of ICC Women's Cricket World Cup, will lead the side for the first time in the mega event. The 23-year-old had previously captained the side in the ICC Women's CWC Qualifier held in Lahore this year, where the team maintained a 100 per cent win record to secure qualification for this year's ICC Women's Cricket World Cup set to take place in India and Sri Lanka. Pakistan will play all their group-stage matches at the R Premadasa International Cricket Stadium in Colombo. Should Pakistan qualify for the October 29 semifinal and the November 2 final, then both the matches will take place in Colombo.



Also, six players - Natalia Parvaiz (8 ODIs, 24 T20Is), Rameen Shamim (8 ODIs, 11 T20Is), Sadaf Shamas (15 ODIs, 12 T20Is), Sadia Iqbal (27 ODIs, 50 T20Is), Shawaal Zulfiqar (3 ODIs, 9 T20Is) and Syeda Aroob Shah (2 ODIs, 15 T20Is) are set to feature in their maiden ODI World Cup. Moreover, 21-year-old Aroob, 20-year-old Shawaal alongside 20-year-old Eyman featured for

Pakistan in the inaugural edition of ICC Women's U19 T20 World Cup held in South Africa in January 2023. Additionally, two changes have been made from the 15-member squad that featured in the ICC Women's CWC Qualifier. Eyman and Sadaf come into the squad in place of Gull Feroza and Najha Alvi, who have been named in the five-member non-travelling

reserves alongside Tuba Hassan, Umm-e-Hani and Waheeda Akhtar. The 15 players alongside five reserves players will take part in a 14-day pre-South Africa series camp from August 29. The players under the coaching staff led by Muhammad Wasim will undergo practice sessions as well as 50-over practice matches. More details regarding the camp will be

announced in due course.

South Africa women's cricket team will arrive in Lahore on September 12. 15-member squad: Fatima Sana (captain), Muneeba Ali Siddiqui (vice-captain), Aliya Riaz, Diana Baig, Eyman Fatima, Nashra Sundhu, Natalia Parvaiz, Omaira Sohail, Rameen Shamim, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Shawaal Zulfiqar, Sidra Amin, Sidra Nawaz (wicket-keeper) and Syeda Aroob Shah. Non-travelling reserves: Gull Feroza, Najha Alvi, Tuba Hassan, Umm-e-Hani and Waheeda Akhtar. Player support personnel: Hina Munawar (manager), Muhammad Wasim (head coach), Junaid Khan (assistant coach bowling), Tahir Khan (assistant coach bowling), Abdul Saad (fielding coach), Muhammad Rafi Ullah (media manager), Muhammad Asfand Yar (strength and conditioning coach), Waleed Ahmed (analyst), Tehreem Sumbal (physiotherapist), Kiran Shahzadi (masseur) and team doctor (tbc). Pakistan will play South Africa in the ODIs on September 16, 19 and 22. Pakistan team fixtures in ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 include October 2 vs Bangladesh; October 5 vs India; October 8 vs Australia; October 15 vs England; October 18 vs New Zealand; October 21 vs South Africa and October 24 vs Sri Lanka.

French govt to seek vote of confidence

FROM PAGE 01

"I have asked the president, who has agreed, to convene an extraordinary session of parliament on Monday, September 8," Bayrou told reporters.

Raja decides to resign as PTI secy general

FROM PAGE 01

senior party leader Omar Ayub. Ayub had resigned from the position in June. Taking to X, Raja stressed that despite stepping away from the party position, he will continue to offer his legal services to PTI free of cost. "During the period of PTI's ordeal, I stepped into the political arena along with legal assistance under the guidance of [Imran Khan]. My objective was to contribute to the struggle for the supremacy of the Constitution, law, and democracy," he added.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi...

FROM PAGE 01

mission to completely eradicate terrorism from the country. The nation is proud of its valiant sons," the minister said. He added that the successful operations against Fitna Al-Hindustan are a clear testimony to the professional competence of the forces. Naqvi reaffirmed that the entire nation stands firmly with its security forces in the fight against terrorism. He also prayed for the swift recovery of the police personnel who sustained injuries during the operation.

Three FC personnel martyred...

FROM PAGE 01

Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), an Islamabad-based think tank, the country witnessed 78 terrorist attacks during the month of June, which resulted in at least 100 deaths. Among the fatalities were 53 security personnel, 39 civilians, six militants, and two members of local peace committees. A total of 189 people were injured, including 126 members of the security forces and 63 civilians. Altogether, the violence and operations led to 175 deaths in June — among them, 55 security personnel, 77 militants, 41 civilians, and two peace committee members. The security forces along with the law enforcement agencies (LEAs) have been carrying out operations against the terrorist and even launched a targeted action against militants in KP's Bajaur. Earlier this month, the forces had also gunned down 47 Indian-backed terrorists, attempting to infiltrate from Afghanistan, during separate operations in Balochistan's Zhob district.

India cautions Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 01

major flood in the Tawi River at Jammu. The Indian High Commission in Islamabad conveyed the alert, with the communication made on the morning of Sunday, August 24, they added. It is the first major contact of its kind since the Pakistan-India war in May, the sources noted. Following the alert, Pakistani authorities issued warnings based on the information provided by India, the sources confirmed. In the wake of the killing of 26 people in the Pahalgalam area of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) in April, India held the IWT with Pakistan in abeyance. New Delhi accuses Islamabad of orchestrating the deadly militant attack, an allegation that Pakistan denies. Based on these groundless allegations, India waged a war against Pakistan in May, resulting in the heaviest military engagement in decades, before a ceasefire was brokered by the US. The nuclear-armed neighbours disagree over the use of the water from rivers that flow downstream from India into the Indus River basin in Pakistan.

Mbappe fires Madrid to victory at Real Oviedo

Mbappe Shines as Real Madrid Beat Oviedo; Villarreal Thrash Girona, Sociedad Fight Back



DNA

OVIEDO: Kylian Mbappe was again on target for Real Madrid as they overcame Real Oviedo 3-0 in La Liga on Sunday. For Oviedo, returning to Spain's top flight after an absence of almost a quar-

ter of a century, the arrival of the 15-time European champions was a gala occasion, and the Asturian fans made their presence heard. Star turns Mbappe and Vinicius Junior made the difference in the north of Spain. The Frenchman notched a brace before the Brazilian slid in a late third.

Coach Xabi Alonso made a couple of notable changes to his starting line-up from Madrid's opening 1-0 win against Osasuna, dropping Vinicius and Trent Alexander-Arnold for Rodrygo Goes and club captain Dani Carvajal, returning from injury. The dropped Vinicius responded by producing an assist and a goal in his half-hour cameo. "It was a very serious, very complete game," said Alonso. "With and without the ball. Playing as a team." "And Vini came on and had a role in those two goals that gave us peace of mind. There will be games for everyone. "Decisions are made with the team in mind, and that's how it was today." Argentinian teenage sensation Franco Mastantuono made his full debut in another change for Los Blancos.

Pakistan rejects 'Greater Israel'...

FROM PAGE 01

Pakistan also expressed solidarity with Arab states and condemned Israeli attacks on schools, hospitals, and refugee camps in violation of international law. "The brazen audacity of the so-called Israeli cabinet, in unveiling its ominous plan to extend Israel's full military control over Gaza, as well as the Israeli prime minister's recent allusion to the creation of a 'Greater Israel', provides an insight into Israel's annexationist and rogue mindset." Pakistan strongly condemned Netanyahu's remarks, stating that they call for action that would aggravate the already dire humanitarian situation and undermine efforts for peace in the Gaza Strip. "We joined the statement issued by the Arab-Islamic Ministerial Committee, along with other countries, in expressing strong condemnation and categorical rejection of the Israeli announcement, denouncing it as an unacceptable escalation and a brazen attempt to entrench illegal occupation by coercion," he said. Pakistan also fully endorsed and joined the statement issued by 31 Arab-Islamic countries and the secretaries general of the OIC, the League of Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council, condemning Netanyahu's comments about "Greater Israel". "His (Netanyahu's) statement constitutes a direct threat to Arab national security, to the sovereignty of states, and to regional and international peace and security," Dar stated. "The root cause of this ongoing tragedy is Israel's prolonged, illegal occupation of Palestinian territory. As long as this occupation endures, peace will remain elusive," Dar said, quoting Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.



KHANPUR: People enjoying boat riding at Khanpur Dam, as the water level increase in Dam after the heavy monsoon rains. — Online

Amad Butt expresses joy over Pro League participation



The team's participation in the Pro League is seen as a significant step forward, but the underlying issues of player welfare and financial autonomy remain key challenges

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan national hockey team player, Amad Butt, has expressed his happiness over getting the "green signal" to participate in the upcoming Pro Hockey League. In a statement, Butt thanked the government for its support, which he said was crucial for the team's participation in the prestigious event. However, Butt also highlighted a pressing issue still facing the players: the unresolved matter of daily allowances. He noted that despite the team's preparations, the financial

issue for the players has not yet been settled. Looking ahead to the Pro League, Butt stated that the team has ample time to prepare for the tournament. He believes that participation in the Pro League will be highly beneficial for the national game, as it will not only provide valuable experience but also help improve Pakistan's international ranking in hockey. Butt also touched upon the broader issue of the sport's development in the country. He stressed that the promotion of hockey should not rely solely on government funding. Instead, he urged the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) to take proactive steps to secure its own funds. This move, he suggested, is essential for the long-term sustainability and growth of the sport in Pakistan. His comments underscore a mix of optimism for the future of Pakistan's hockey team in international competitions and a call for more robust and independent financial management within the sport's governing body. The team's participation in the Pro League is seen as a significant step forward, but the underlying issues of player welfare and financial autonomy remain key challenges.

Briefs

Cambodia passes law to revoke citizenship of people convicted of treason

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia's parliament passed a law on Monday that will allow people convicted of treason to be stripped of their citizenship, a new measure that comes amid a sustained crackdown on opponents of the long-ruling Cambodian People's Party. The law, approved by 120 of the 125 members of the CPP-dominated National Assembly, will allow the state to revoke the citizenship of anyone convicted of conspiring with foreign countries or plotting against Cambodian interests. Many prominent political figures have fled Cambodia to avoid arrest amid intensified efforts to stifle the CPP's opposition in the wake of the Supreme Court's 2017 banning of the Cambodian National Rescue Party ahead of an election the following year. Cambodia has since held mass trials involving more than 100 opposition figures, with many jailed in absentia on treason and incitement charges. The CPP has been widely condemned by activists and Western countries, including the United States, for a crackdown on remnants of the opposition that has ensured the past two elections were virtually one-horse races.—APP

Indonesia, US and allies launch joint military drills

JAKARTA: Indonesia and the United States launched joint military drills on Monday that will last more than a week, joining allies from 11 countries in exercises aimed at ensuring stability in the Asia-Pacific region. The annual "Super Garuda Shield" drills will take place in the capital Jakarta and several locations on the western island of Sumatra and the Riau archipelago until September 4. More than 4,100 Indonesian and 1,300 American troops will take part, joined by participants from Australia, Japan, Singapore, France, New Zealand, Britain and other nations. The US and some allies such as Australia have expressed growing concern about China's increasing assertiveness in the Pacific, but Washington has previously said such drills are not aimed at Beijing. Samuel Paparo, commander of US Indo-Pacific Command, said this year's exercises were "the largest Super Garuda Shield ever," adding that they would help participating nations boost deterrence, without elaborating.—APP

New Zealand Post suspends deliveries to US over tariffs

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's postal service said it had suspended most deliveries to the United States, citing uncertainty over the impact of President Donald Trump's looming tariffs. NZ Post said it had temporarily suspended services as of August 21 before the US 15 percent tariff takes effect on August 29. Only limited letters and important documents — such as passports or legal letters — would be delivered to the United States, said a statement on the carrier's website. The move follows similar steps taken by postal services and mail carriers in India, Germany, France, Belgium, Austria and Denmark after the Trump administration said that as of August 29 it would abolish a tax exemption on small packages entering the United States. The United States started imposing tariffs on foreign nations in April, but most are only coming into force this month after months of negotiations and delays. NZ Post said it was "working quickly" to make changes to its service and that it hoped to resume deliveries as "soon as possible." Prime Minister Christopher Luxon told Radio New Zealand on Monday there was confusion over the impact of the tariffs.—APP

Free Wi-Fi for Islamabadians on cards: Randhawa

Chairman CDA directed that an operational and marketing model be developed to make this system self-sustainable and the revenue generated from it should be utilized for the maintenance and upgradation of this facility

DNA

ISLAMABAD : In line with the vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif and the directions of Federal Minister for Interior, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, free Wi-Fi facilities will be provided to the citizens of Islamabad. In this regard, Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, chaired an important meeting at the CDA Headquarters on Monday. The meeting was attended by the Managing Director of the National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC), Major General (R) Ali Farhan, CDA Member Finance Tahir Naeem, Member Planning Dr. Khalid Hafiz, Member Engineering Syed Nafasat Raza, Director IT and other senior officers. The meeting was briefed that initially, free Wi-Fi facilities will be provided at thirty different locations in Islamabad for the convenience of citizens. These thirty locations include main Markazs, Metro and Electric Feeder Bus stations, parks and other high-traffic areas to ensure maximum citizens benefit from the free Wi-Fi service. The meeting was further informed that CDA's technical team will provide complete support to NTC in this initiative.

Chairman CDA directed that an operational and marketing model be developed to make this system self-sustainable and the revenue generated from it should be utilized for the maintenance and upgradation of this fa-



cility. The meeting was informed that the operation and maintenance of this system will be the responsibility of NTC. It was also highlighted that, under this system,

Islamabad will soon be transformed into a free Wi-Fi city. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa emphasized that no effort should be spared to digitize Islamabad and

turn it into a free Wi-Fi city and all necessary resources must be utilized to ensure the uninterrupted provision of top-quality facilities to the citizens.

Suspects blame technical faults for Baltic Sea cable breaches

HELSINKI: The captain of an oil tanker and two officers accused of severing five undersea power and telecoms cables in the Baltic Sea last December, blamed technical faults for the damage as their trial began in Helsinki on Monday. NATO allies with forces stationed around the Baltic Sea went on high alert after the December 25 incident, one of a string of suspicious cable and gas pipeline outages in the region since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. Prosecutors say the Eagle S tanker deliberately dragged its 11,000 kg (24,250 lb) anchor along the seabed to sever the Estlink 2 power cable linking Finland and Estonia and four Internet cables as the vessel sailed from a Russian port via the Gulf of Finland. Finnish security forces intercepted the Cook Islands-registered ship and boarded it from helicopters after ordering it to move into Finnish territorial waters. The tanker's Georgian captain, Davit Vadatchkoria, and its Georgian first and Indian second officers pleaded not guilty, saying the vessel's anchor had dropped due to technical faults in the securing of the anchor winch. State prosecutor Heidi Nummela said that, while investigators did not find proof that the anchor's fastening had been manipulated, the failure of all three available backstops was at minimum a sign of gross negligence on the crew's part. Finnish prosecutors are seeking 2.5 years in prison for aggravated criminal mischief and aggravated interference with telecommunications for the defendants who deny all charges and reject the cable owners' claims for damages that amount to tens of millions of euros. They also questioned the court's jurisdiction in the matter, given the cable cuts occurred in international waters. "This was a normal marine accident, not any sabotage," second officer Santosh Kumar Chuarasia told reporters during a break. He said that the anchor dropped due to bad weather and mechanical malfunction and that he trusted the court to rule in the defendants' favor. Vadatchkoria declined comment, while his lawyer Tommi Heinonen told the court the incident was "a marine accident." On December 25, the Eagle S sailed on for three hours at a reduced speed after severing the first power cable at 12:26 p.m. (1026 GMT), prosecutors told the court. When contacted by Finnish marine authorities at 3:20 p.m. and asked whether its anchor was up and secured, its crew replied in the affirmative, which was not true, prosecutors said. Defense lawyers said the defendants had no reason to believe the anchor had sunk to the seabed as the tanker's mechanical engineer, who is not on trial, had told them the drop in speed was caused by "an engine problem." Prosecutors said the tanker sailed on and cut four more cables between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. that day, which they said showed clear criminal intent. Last week, a Ukrainian was arrested over the 2022 attacks on the Nord Stream gas pipelines in the Baltic Sea. Both Moscow and the West have described the explosions, which largely severed Russian gas supplies to Europe, as sabotage.—APP

Norway proposes maintaining Ukraine aid at \$8.4b

OSLO: The Norwegian government aims to maintain its aid to Ukraine at 85 billion kroner (\$8.4 billion) in 2026, the same level as this year, the office of Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store said Monday. The proposal, made as Store visited Kyiv, must be ratified by parliament and if passed would take to 275 billion kroner (\$27.1 billion) the total civilian and military aid which Norway will send the country for the 2023-2030 period. "The government intends to maintain Norway's extraordinary support to Ukraine next year and is proposing an allocation of a total of 85 billion kroner in military and civilian support," said Store in a statement. "This is a critical time in Ukraine's fight to defend itself. As talks on a ceasefire and peace take place, the war rages on in Ukraine. "It is important in the current situation to reaffirm our continued strong support for Ukraine: political, financial and military," said Store, who was to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday. The aid package proposed by the minority Labor government must be included in 2026 budget proposals due for presentation in October. Norway is to hold parliamentary elections — expected to see a close battle between left and right — on September 8. Oslo's support for Ukraine is almost universal among the Norwegian public, with the country sharing a border with Russia. According to German research institute Kiel Institute, Norway was the second largest European provider of military aid to Ukraine in May and June, behind Germany. On Sunday, Oslo announced it would allocate some seven billion kroner to strengthening Ukraine's air defenses, including the joint purchase with Germany of two Patriot air and missile defense systems.—APP

Economic partnership with Malaysia priority for ICCI: Nasir

ISLAMABAD: A high-profile delegation of more than eighty prominent businessmen and investors representing diverse economic sectors has arrived in Kuala Lumpur. The delegation will take part in the Business Opportunity Conference (BOC) and ICCI Global Gateway Awards 2025. The prestigious event, organized by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), is aimed at boosting trade, investment, collaboration, cultural exchange, and tourism promotion between Pakistan and Malaysia, said a press release issued here Monday. On the eve of the departure of the delegation, the ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi advised the participants to grasp and encash this golden opportunity to showcase Pakistan's true business potential before the world. The BOC and awards ceremony will hopefully be attended by top dignitaries, including the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, the Governor of Malacca, federal ministers from both countries.—DNA

Japan PM Ishiba bounces back in polls after election debacle

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's poll ratings have rebounded a month after disastrous election results left his premiership hanging by a thread, a clutch of surveys showed Monday. Ishiba took the helm of the long-dominant Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) last year and has since lost his majority in both houses of parliament, most recently in upper chamber elections in July. But the self-confessed defense policy "geek" and maker of model ships has defied calls to resign from within the party, which has governed Japan almost non-stop since the 1950s. According to one poll by the Yomiuri Shimbun daily published Monday, the approval rating for Ishiba's cabinet was 39 percent, a record 17 points higher than after the July 20 vote. More respondents (50 percent) now think Ishiba should remain than resign (42 percent), the questionnaire showed, a reversal from July, when 54 percent said he should go and 35 percent stay. Another poll conducted by Kyodo News put support at 35.4 percent, up 12.5 points from last month after the upper house election, while the disapproval rating stood at 49.8 percent. A third survey by the Mainichi Shimbun put backing for the prime minister at 33 percent, a rise of four points, the first time it has been over 30 percent since February. The Yomiuri put the recovery down to the recent trade deal with the United States and efforts by Ishiba's government to curb the recent meteoric rise in rice prices. US President Donald Trump announced a "massive" trade deal with Japan only two days after the upper house election, cutting threatened US tariffs to 15 percent from 25 percent, while lowering those on cars to the same level. Voter backing of Ishiba's handling of US trade negotiations rose to 42 percent from 29 percent in June. An overwhelming 86 percent said they approved of the government's decision to shift policy toward increasing rice production. Rice prices have skyrocketed due to supply problems linked to a very hot summer in 2023 and panic-buying after a "megaquake" warning last year, among other factors.—DNA

Pak determined to stand with Kashmiris politically, diplomatically: Qureshi

BRUSSELS: Pakistan's ambassador to European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg Rahim Hayat Qureshi said Pakistan was determined to stand with Kashmiris, politically, morally, and diplomatically, until their inalienable rights were realized. He was speaking at a conference organized by the Kashmir Council European Union here on the theme of "Jammu & Kashmir in the Current International Political Scenario". Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi attended the conference hosted by Ali Raza Syed, Chairman, Kashmir Council EU. The ambassador said, "The question of Jammu and Kashmir is intrinsic to Pakistan's diplomatic agenda and moral compass. At its core, it represents a people's right to self-determination, promised under multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions and recognized by the international community." "Despite persistent efforts, the situation remains deeply challenging and the unilateral actions of 5 August 2019 continue to curtail the rights of Kashmiri people. Fundamental freedoms remain suppressed and political expression, mobility, and access to justice are constrained," he remarked. Ambassador Qureshi said, "Yet, the resilience of the Kashmiri people shines through. Their steadfast commitment to justice serves as a powerful beacon for all who believe in the rule of law and human dignity." "Efforts to silence the genuine leadership of the Kashmiri people are part of the wider hegemonic and extremist agenda behind India's illegal occupation of Jammu & Kashmir," he observed, stating, "The imprisonment of Kashmiri leaders and activists, including Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Muhammad Yasin Malik and Masarat Alam Bhatt will never dim the resolve of our Kashmiri sisters and brothers. The continued defiance of Kashmiris in an environment of unending intimidation across the illegal Indian occupation is further proof of the indomitable courage of the Kashmiri people. India's illegal occupation of Jammu & Kashmir remains the defining conflict in South Asia and the reason for India's continued rogue behaviour." He stressed that India's unprovoked aggression against Pakistan in May 2025, and its swift and comprehensive military defeat were only the latest evidence of the urgent need for the international community to ensure that resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute becomes a global priority. "Honouring the will and aspirations of the Kashmiri people, in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions provides the only path forward towards lasting peace in South Asia," he asserted. The ambassador said, "Our success in Marka-e-Haq and Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos is a landmark moment in our history. It was a demonstration of unshakable national will, professional excellence, and united purpose. Faced with unjustified Indian aggression, Pakistan responded with clarity, courage and restraint. The world witnessed a nation that is peace-loving, but fully capable of defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity." "The military capability, valour and faith of our brave soldiers and air warriors forced the enemy to kneel down. We pay tribute to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the sake of our freedom and offer prayers for the elevation of their ranks in eternal life," he continued. He drew attention to a European Parliament-commissioned study on transnational repression of human rights defenders. "This report, requested by the Parliament's sub-committee on Human Rights and finalized in June 2025, outlines how governments including India have extended coercion beyond borders. This includes tactics such as surveillance, digital intimidation, misuse of Interpol notices, and physical threats aimed at silencing exiled critics and activists in host countries," he mentioned. He said, "These developments are deeply instructive for us. Just as Kashmiri voices face suppression at home, many continue to encounter intimidation abroad.—APP

Pakistanis hold vibrant 79th anniversary IDay Parade in New Jersey

NEW YORK: A strong turnout of Pakistani-Americans as well as members of other communities on Sunday commemorated Pakistan's 79th Independence Day with a lively parade in Edison, a township in the US state of New Jersey. Men, women and children — mostly clad in national dresses — chanted full-throated "Pakistan Zinda Bad" and "Quaid-e-Azam Zinda Bad" slogans as the parade wound its way from Iselin, a commuter suburb, to nearby Edison. Pakistani and American flags dominated the parade floats and cars. The parade, organized by New Jersey's Pakistani-American community, featured stalls showcasing Pakistan's diverse cultural heritage, handicrafts, and traditional cuisines. The atmosphere was further

enriched with spirited performances, including national songs presented by Pakistani artists, highlighting the deep patriotic sentiments of the community. The event brought together community members, local leaders, and public officials to celebrate Pakistan's rich culture and heritage. Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, and the Consul General of Pakistan in New York, Amir Ahmed Atoazi, attended the parade. Addressing the gathering, Ambassador Sheikh underscored the significance of Pakistan's Independence Day, describing it as a proud milestone in the nation's history. He stated that the celebrations this year carry added joy due to Pakistan's recent victory in Bunyanul Marsoos, which has united the nation under its leadership. The Ambassador praised the contribu-

tions of the Pakistani-American community, noting that their role in the progress and development of the United States is a source of pride for Pakistan. He encouraged community members to remain engaged in the social fabric and democratic processes of their adopted homeland, emphasizing the importance of constructive civic participation. Ambassador Sheikh also commended the achievements of the Pakistani Ice Hockey Team, which recently excelled at the Amerigol Latam Ice Hockey Tournament in the United States, bringing further recognition to Pakistan's sporting talent. The event concluded with a reaffirmation of the enduring bond between Pakistan and its diaspora in the United States, as well as a shared commitment to promoting cultural understanding and national pride.—Agencies

GCC markets dominate Dubai Chamber exports in first 6 months

DUBAI: Gulf Cooperation Council markets were the top destination for Dubai Chamber of Commerce members' exports and re-exports in the first half of the year, accounting for nearly half of all shipments, according to the trade body. The region accounted for 48.6 percent of exports and re-exports, worth a combined \$22.7 billion, highlighting its strategic significance for Dubai-based businesses, Emirates news agency WAM reported. Non-GCC countries in the Middle East accounted for 29 percent (\$13.5 billion), African markets 9.7 percent (\$4.55 billion) and the Asia-Pacific region for 8.5 percent (\$3.9 billion). European markets accounted for 3 percent of exports and re-exports (\$1.4 billion) followed by North America with 0.7 percent (\$327 million) and Latin America with 0.4 percent (\$185 million). The total value of Dubai Chamber members' exports and re-exports in the first half of 2025 rose 18 percent year on year to \$46.8 billion, the report said.—APP

Jordan condemns settler attacks on Gaza aid convoy

DUBAI: Jordan on Monday denounced the attacks on Jordanian relief trucks en route to the Gaza Strip by Israeli settlers, describing their actions as dangerous for aid drivers aside from obstructing humanitarian operations for the besieged enclave. A group of settlers tried Sunday evening to block a convoy of 59 relief trucks, which later managed to cross into Gaza, Mohammad Momani, government spokesperson and Minister of Government Communication, said in a report from state news agency Petra. Momani said four of the trucks were attacked, with settlers pelting them with stones, smashing windshields, slashing tires as well as damaging front and side panels. The Jordanian official emphasized that Israeli authorities were responsible for failing to restrain such incidents, calling the response "lax" and warning that the attacks posed risks to driver safety, hindered relief work and violated international conventions and agreements. Meanwhile, Jordan has dispatched on Monday its 193rd humanitarian convoy into the enclave to deliver essential food supplies aboard 59 trucks.—APP

Syria president to speak at UN General Assembly

DAMASCUS: Syria's interim president, Ahmed Al-Sharaa, will speak at the United Nations General Assembly next month, a foreign ministry official told AFP on Monday, the first Syrian leader to do so in decades. Sharaa "will take part in the United Nations General Assembly in New York where he will deliver a speech," the official said, requesting anonymity as they were not authorized to brief the media. Sharaa took power in December after his Islamist group led a coalition of forces that toppled longtime ruler Bashar Assad after nearly 14 years of gruelling civil war. "He will be the first Syrian president to speak at the United Nations since former president Nureddin Al-Atassi (in 1967), and the first Syrian president ever to take part in the General Assembly's high-level week," scheduled for September 22-30, the official added. Since taking power, Syria's new authorities have gained regional and international support. In April, Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Al-Shaibani addressed the United Nations for the first time and raised his country's new flag at the body's New York headquarters. Sharaa met US President Donald Trump in May in Saudi Arabia, a week after meeting French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris on his first trip to the West. Sharaa remains under United Nations sanctions and a travel ban due to his past as a wanted jihadist, and must request an exemption for all foreign trips.—APP

Briefs

Iran offers full support to flood victims

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi received a phone call from his Iranian Counterpart Sikandar Momeni. The Iranian Interior Minister expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of precious human lives caused by torrential rains and floods in Pakistan, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan. He extended condolences to the bereaved families and prayed for their patience and strength. He also offered co-operation and support to Pakistan in assisting the flood victims. The Iranian Interior Minister said that Pakistan is our brotherly neighboring country, and in these trying times, Iran is ready to extend every possible support. He added that it was deeply saddening to witness the devastation caused by floods in Pakistan, where hundreds of people have lost their loved ones. "We stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Pakistan," he emphasized. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi thanked his Iranian counterpart for the offer of assistance and expression of solidarity for the flood victims. He said that Iran and Pakistan share both happiness and grief. Highlighting the grave situation, Mohsin Naqvi stated that climate change is becoming a harbinger of catastrophic destruction in Pakistan, and for the first time in history, the country is facing such a dangerous climatic scenario. He further said that all institutions are in the field to support the flood victims, and their rehabilitation and relief remain the Government's top priority.

Iran nuclear talks with European powers to be held in Geneva

European trio have threatened to trigger a "snapback mechanism" under the 2015 nuclear deal

DNA

TEHRAN: Nuclear talks scheduled for Tuesday between Iran and Britain, France and Germany will be held in Geneva, Iranian state media reported. "On Tuesday, Iran and the three European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal, along with the European Union, will hold a new round of talks at the level of deputy foreign ministers in Geneva," state television said on Monday. The meeting will be the second since Iran's 12-day war with Israel in mid-June, during which the United States carried out strikes against Tehran's nuclear facilities. The previous round of talks was held in Istanbul on July 25. It comes after Iran suspended co-operation with the United Nations nuclear watchdog following war with Israel, with Tehran pointing to the International Atomic Energy Agency's failure to condemn Israeli and US strikes on its nuclear facilities.

WB unfurls new education project to benefit over 4 million children

The "Getting Results: Access and Delivery of Quality Education Services and System Transformation in Punjab Project," it said, would expand early childhood education, re-enroll out-of-school children, strengthen teacher support and improve the education sector's responsiveness to climate change and emergencies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank (WB) has approved a US\$47.9 million grant for Pakistan, funded by the Global Partnership for Education Fund, to help improve girls' and boys' participation at pre-primary and primary levels in Punjab province. "The new support is expected to improve learning outcomes at the primary level and strengthen remedial learning support at the elementary level of schooling," WB said in a news release here on Monday. The "Getting Results: Access and Delivery of Quality Education Services and System Transformation in Punjab Project," it said, would expand early childhood ed-

ucation, re-enroll out-of-school children, strengthen teacher support and improve the education sector's responsiveness to climate change and emergencies. By contributing to stronger human capital and improving resilience to shocks, the project targets the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable populations, in line with the World Bank Group's twin goals of eliminating extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity and its Country Partnership Framework (CPF) with Pakistan. "This project represents a crucial step towards addressing learning poverty and ensuring equitable access to quality education across Punjab," WB Country Director for Pakistan Bolormaa Amgaabazar said. By strengthening foundational learn-

ing, enhancing system capacity, and promoting behavioral change, she said, the project would support long-term human capital development and economic growth in the province. The project aims to benefit over 4 million children, including 80,000 out-of-school children, more than 3 million children in School Education Department (SED) schools, about 850,000 children in the non-formal sector, and 140,000 differently abled children in Special Education Department (SpED) schools. Additionally, over 100,000 teachers and school leaders, as well as parents and community members, would benefit through professional development and awareness campaigns. Indirect bene-

ficiaries include all students in SED, SpED, and non-formal schools who will gain from broader system reforms. "The project is aligned with the Government of Punjab's broader education reform agenda, which seeks to create a more effective, accountable, and inclusive education system," WB Task Team Leader for the project Izza Farrakh said. "It will do so by supporting the government's efforts to improve governance, management, and capacity in the education sector. This includes strengthening coordination between the school, special education, and non-formal education departments, empowering schools, and building partnerships with communities to ensure sustainable results," she added.

Iran hopes to start gas supplies from Russia in near future

MOSCOW: Iran hopes to begin receiving Russian gas via Azerbaijan in the near future, as almost all issues with Gazprom have been resolved, Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali said. "We hope this will happen soon. We are currently negotiating with Gazprom, and almost all issues have been resolved. But we need to find common ground on the price. If this issue is resolved as well, then everything will be set in motion," he said. Earlier, Russian Energy Minister Sergey Tsiviliev said that the first deliveries of Russian gas to Iran via Azerbaijan's existing infrastructure will begin as early as 2025, at a volume of up to 1.8 billion cubic meters per year. - APP



JEDDAH: Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar attends the 21st Extraordinary session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Jeddah. - DNA

Pak cites India's 'serious violation' of water treaty

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Foreign Office Spokesperson, Shafqat, stated on August 25, 2025, that India's recent communication of flood warnings through diplomatic channels instead of the Indus Waters Commission is a "serious violation of international law." The spokesperson emphasized that India is obligated to fully comply with all provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty. According to Shafqat, the move by India to unilaterally hold the treaty in abeyance is unacceptable. He warned that



this action could have "significant negative consequences for peace and stability in South Asia." The statement comes in the wake of India's decision to bypass the formal commission, a mechanism established by the 1960 treaty to manage water distribution and information sharing between the two nuclear-armed neighbors. The Indus Waters Treaty has long been considered a key pillar of stability in the volatile relationship between the two countries. Pakistan's Foreign Office has called on India to reverse its decision and adhere to the established legal framework.

Pakistan dispatches 21st consignment of relief goods to Gaza

DNA

LAHORE: On the special instructions of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan continues its relief campaign for the people of Gaza. A fresh consignment of 100 tons of relief goods was dispatched on Monday from Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore via a special flight, marking the 21st consignment dispatched for the people of Gaza. The consignment includes ration bags, ready-to-eat meals, and canned fruits to meet the urgent food needs of the Palestinian people. Earlier, on August 23, the 19th consignment carrying 100 tons of relief goods was sent from Lahore, while another consignment carrying 12 tons of relief supplies

departed from Islamabad. With the latest dispatch, the total volume of aid sent by Pakistan to Gaza has reached 2,027 tons through 21 consignments via multiple flights. A ceremony was held at the airport to mark the departure of the relief goods. Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain attended as the chief guest, alongside government representatives and senior officials of NDMA. Addressing the occasion, the Federal Minister appreciated the efforts of NDMA and partner welfare organizations for ensuring the swift dispatch of aid to Gaza. He reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to stand by the Palestinian people in their hour of need and pledged that Pakistan would continue to make every possible effort to meet their humanitarian requirements.

China's new mega dam triggers fears of water war in India

Beijing has always maintained responsible attitude toward development of transboundary rivers, says spox

PARONG, INDIA: India fears a planned Chinese mega-dam in Tibet will reduce water flows on a major river by up to 85% during the dry season, according to four sources familiar with the matter and a government analysis seen by Reuters, prompting Delhi to fast-track plans for its own dam to mitigate the effects. The Indian government has been considering projects since the early 2000s to control the flow of water from Tibet's Angsi Glacier, which sustains more than 100 million people downstream in China, India and Bangladesh. But the plans have been hindered by fierce and occasionally violent resistance from residents of the border state of Arunachal Pradesh, who fear their villages will be submerged and way of life destroyed by any dam. Then in December, China announced that it would build the world's largest hydropower dam in a border county just before the Yarlung Zangbo river crosses into India. That triggered fears in New Delhi that its longtime strategic rival - which has some territorial claims in Arunachal Pradesh - could weaponise its control of the river, which originates in the Angsi Glacier and is known as the Siang and Brahmaputra in India. India's largest hydropower company in May moved survey materials under armed police protection near a prospective site of the Upper Siang Multipurpose Storage

Dam, which would be the country's biggest dam, if completed. Senior Indian officials have also been holding meetings about accelerating construction this year, including one organised in July by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's office, according to two of the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive government matters. Delhi's concerns were described in the undated Indian government analysis of the Chinese dam's impact, the specifics of which Reuters corroborated with four sources and is reporting for the first time. Beijing hasn't released detailed plans about the dam's construction, but the analysis drew on past work conducted by Indian government-affiliated institutions like the Central Water Commission and accounted for the expected size of the Chinese project, which broke ground in July and will cost nearly \$170 billion. Delhi estimates the Chinese dam will allow Beijing to divert as much as 40 billion cubic meters of water, or just over a third of what is received annually at a key border point, according to the sources and the document. The impact would be especially acute in the non-monsoon months, when temperatures rise and lands become barren across swathes of India. - Agencies

NAB exposes trillions lost in KP placer gold mining deals

NAB maintains leaseholders openly engaging in subletting, charging Rs500,000 to Rs700,000 per excavator

NEWS DESK

PESHAWAR: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), expressing strong reservations over the minimum price fixed for auction of gold blocks along the Indus and Kabul rivers, has stated the province is suffering losses worth trillions. It has also exposed irregularities during gold exploration operations. According to official documents of provincial government, NAB maintains leaseholders are openly engaging in subletting and charging

Rs500,000 to Rs700,000 per excavator per week. Their weekly income is estimated between Rs750 million to Rs1 billion, amounting to trillions, while the government is receiving only a meager amount. Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur told this correspondent his government auctioned the placer gold blocks at high prices. Previously, the auction price of a single block had reached Rs650 million, but his government fixed the minimum price at Rs1.10 billion and sold four blocks for around Rs4.6 billion for ten years.

France summons US envoy

PARIS: France summoned the United States' ambassador Charles Kushner on Sunday, over what Paris called "unacceptable" allegations he made about antisemitism in the country. In an open letter in the Wall Street Journal addressed to French President Emmanuel Macron, Kushner accused French authorities of failing to stem antisemitic violence in the country. He also called on President Macron to more urgently enforce hate-crime laws and "abandon steps that give legitimacy to Hamas and its allies." Kushner, who is Jewish, is the father of Jared Kushner, US President Donald Trump's son-in-law. Kushner said Macron's statements about recognizing a Palestinian state and condemning Israel's role in the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza have helped fuel antisemitism in France. "Public statements haranguing Israel and gestures toward recognition of a Palestinian state embolden extremists, fuel violence, and endanger Jewish life in France. In today's world, anti-Zionism is antisemitism - plain and simple," Kushner wrote. In response, a French foreign ministry spokesperson said "France has learned of the allegations made by the United States Ambassador, Mr. Charles Kushner, who, in a letter to the President of the Republic, expressed his concern about the rise in antisemitic acts in France and noted the alleged lack of sufficient action by the French authorities to combat them." "The ambassador's allegations are unacceptable," the ministry said, adding Kushner would be due to appear on Monday. - DNA

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