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Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

French PM fights for survival as Opp not backing him

Detailed News On Page-08

US President sacks Fed Reserve head

Detailed News On Page-08



Rizwan not being removed as captain

Detailed News On Page-06



India releases water

Nearly 150,000 evacuated amid flood warnings

Authorities order emergency services to remain vigilant, urge citizens to avoid rivers and low-lying areas

ABID RAZA / DNA

LAHORE: Nearly 150,000 people have been shifted to safer areas after the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) issued alerts over the rising waters in the Sutlej and Ravi rivers, following heavy rains and India's release of water into both streams. Since then, authorities have warned of potential flooding in adjoining districts as the rivers continue to swell. Acting on early warnings, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Punjab launched evacuation operations in vulnerable areas, relocating tens of thousands of residents from Bahawalnagar, Kasur, Okara, Pakpattan, Bahawalpur, and Vehari. The NDMA said about 40,000 people had already moved on their own, soon after initial advisories. Emergency response teams were deployed while all departments concerned were placed on high alert to safeguard lives and property. Citizens have been urged to stay away from rivers, streams, and low-lying areas, avoid unnecessary travel, and strictly follow safety instructions being circulated through television, radio, mobile alerts, and the Pak NDMA Disaster Alert app. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Monday directed authorities to ensure timely

PM directs NDMA to accelerate rescue operation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the National Disaster Management Authority to expedite the rescue operation in the districts of Punjab province affected by the flooding in the Sutlej River. The prime minister instructed the NDMA chairman to take immediate steps for the evacuation of people stranded in flood-affected areas and to ensure their relocation to safe locations. He asked the Authority to take protective measures and intensify monitoring, considering the flood situation at Ganda Singh Wala in the River Sutlej. The prime minister also directed to ensure the provision of food, medicines, and tents to the affected population, besides instructing the NDMA chairman to maintain close coordination with Punjab's disaster management authority.

evacuation of the stranded population in view of the arrival of flood torrents. According to the NDMA, the flood situation in major rivers remains critical. The Sutlej has entered a very high flood stage at certain locations, while other points along the river are experiencing high to medium-level flooding. The Ravi continues to see rising water

levels, with medium flooding at some sites and low levels at others, and its tributaries including Basantar, Bein, and Deg are also in low to medium flood. The Indus River is facing medium flooding at Sukkur and low flooding at Kalabagh, Chashma, Guddu and Kotri barrages.

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Friends for ever

Pak, Türkiye pledge to further solidify ties

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, met with the Foreign Minister of Türkiye, Hakan Fidan, in Jeddah

DNA

JEDDAH: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, met with the Foreign Minister of Türkiye, H.E. Hakan Fidan, on the sidelines of the 21st Extraordinary Session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM), held to discuss the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Palestine. During the meeting, Senator Dar conveyed Pakistan's deep appreciation for Türkiye's active and principled leadership as the Chair of the 51st session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers. He acknowledged Türkiye's pivotal role in mobilizing the Islamic world in response to pressing global and regional issues, particularly the deteriorating situation in Gaza. The two foreign ministers expressed grave concern over the worsening humanitarian conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including famine and acute shortages of basic necessities.

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Pak commitment to deepen ties with brotherly nations

DNA

JEDDAH: Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to deepening ties with North African nations, including Algeria and Egypt, through enhanced connectivity and expanded cooperation across diverse fields. The deputy premier made the remarks during a "meaningful interaction" with his Egyptian counterpart Badr Abdelatty and Algerian FM Ahmed Attaf on the sidelines of 21st extraordinary session of the Council of Foreign Minister of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

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ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on 26 August, 2025. – DNA

Iran army chief talks to Field Marshal Asim Munir

DNA

TEHRAN: General Syed Abdul Rahim Mousavi had a telephone conversation with Pakistani Army chief Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir today. General Mousavi expressed his deep condolences and sympathy to the government, nation and armed forces of Pakistan following the devastating rains and floods. He emphasized: Iran is ready to eradicate terrorism and secure the borders of the two countries of Iran and Pakistan. General Syed Abdul Rahim Mousavi, appreciating Pakistan's positions and support for the Islamic Republic of Iran in the 12-day Sacred Defense against Israeli aggression, said: We expect that practical action will be taken against terrorists in the light of this bilateral cooperation. Of course,

Continued on Page 06

Imran wants his MPs to resign from all bodies

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has instructed party members to resign from all parliamentary committees, his sister Aleema Khan said on Tuesday. "He [PTI founder] has ordered party members to tender their resignations from all standing committees in the National Assembly," she said while speaking to journalists outside Adiala jail after meeting her brother. She said the PTI founder

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Ma'raka-e-Haq

Shehbaz Sharif praises PAF's role in national defense

Air Chief Marshal Sidhu briefed the Prime Minister on ongoing initiatives to enhance aerial capabilities, including advancements in cyber warfare, electronic defense systems, and joint operational training with allied nations

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a high-level meeting with Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Babar Sidhu to discuss the professional affairs and strategic priorities of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF). During the meeting, the Prime Minister paid glowing tribute to the PAF's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the nation's skies. He lauded the air force as a "steel wall" in the defense of Pakistan, emphasizing that its personnel—referred to as the "Falcon of the Nation"—have consistently demonstrated courage and excellence in the face of adversity. Referring to the recent conflict dubbed the Ma'raka-e-Haq (Battle of Truth), Prime Minister Sharif praised the PAF for delivering a decisive blow to the enemy by suc-

cessfully downing hostile aircraft. "Our air warriors struck with precision and valor, sending a clear message that Pakistan's sovereignty is non-negotiable," he stated. The meeting also included a detailed exchange on the operational readiness, modernization efforts, and strategic vision of the air force. Air Chief Marshal Sidhu briefed the Prime Minister on ongoing initiatives to enhance aerial capabilities, including advancements in cyber warfare, electronic defense systems, and joint operational training with allied nations. The Prime Minister reaffirmed the government's full support for the PAF's modernization and strategic goals, noting that a strong air force is essential for maintaining regional stability and national security. This meeting comes at a time when Pakistan's defense forces are

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Australia expels Iran's envoy over antisemitic attacks

Iran has vowed reciprocal action; rejects accusations as baseless

DNA

CANBERRA: Australia said on Tuesday it would expel Iran's ambassador to Canberra, as Prime Minister Anthony Albanese accused Tehran of executing two antisemitic attacks in the key cities of Sydney and Melbourne. "Iran has sought to disguise its involvement, but ASIO assesses it was behind the attacks on the Lewis Continental Kitchen in Sydney on October 20 last year, and the Adass Israel Synagogue in Melbourne on December 6." "These were ex-

traordinary and dangerous acts of aggression orchestrated by a foreign nation on Australian soil," Albanese said. "They were attempts to undermine social cohesion and sow discord in our community." Australia has suspended operations at its embassy in Tehran and all its diplomats were safe in a third country, Albanese said, adding that his government would designate Tehran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organisation. Meanwhile, Iran has vowed reciprocal action after Australia expelled its ambassador over accusations that Tehran was behind antisemitic arson attacks in Sydney and Melbourne. "The accusation that has been made is absolutely rejected,"

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'Powerful optics': China's Xi to welcome Putin, Modi

DNA

BEIJING: President Xi Jinping will gather more than 20 world leaders at a regional security forum in China next week in a powerful show of Global South solidarity in the age of Donald Trump while also helping sanctions-hit Russia pull off another diplomatic coup. Aside from Russian President Vladimir Putin, leaders from Central Asia, the Middle East, South Asia and Southeast Asia have been invited to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, to be held in the northern port city of Tianjin from August 31 to September 1. The summit will feature Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first visit to China in more than seven years as the two neighbours work on further defusing tensions roiled by deadly border clashes in 2020. Modi last shared the same stage with Xi and Putin at last year's BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia, even as Western leaders turned

their backs on the Russian leader amid the war in Ukraine. Russian embassy officials in New Delhi last week said Moscow hopes trilateral talks with China and India will take place soon. "Xi will want to use the summit as an opportunity to showcase what a post-American-led international order begins to look like and that all White House efforts since January to counter China, Iran, Russia, and now India have not had the intended effect," said Eric Olander, editor-in-chief of The China-Global South Project, a research agency. "Just look at how much BRICS has rattled (US President) Donald Trump, which is precisely what these groups are designed to do." This year's summit will be the largest since the SCO was founded in 2001, a Chinese foreign ministry official said last week, calling the bloc an "important force in building a new type of international relations". The security-focused bloc, which began as a group of six



Eurasian nations, has expanded to 10 permanent members and 16 dialogue and observer countries in recent years. Its remit has also enlarged from security and counter-terrorism to economic and military cooperation.

'Fuzzy' implementation: Analysts say expansion is high on the agenda for many countries attending, but agree the bloc

has not delivered substantial cooperation outcomes over the years and that China values the optics of Global South solidarity against the United States at a time of erratic policymaking and geopolitical flux.

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"What is the precise vision that the SCO represents, and its practical implementation are rather fuzzy. It is a plat-

form that has increasing convening power, which helps in narrative projection," said Manoj Kewalramani, chairperson of the Indo-Pacific Research Programme at the Takshashila Institution thinktank in Bangalore. "But the SCO's effectiveness in addressing substantial security issues remains very limited." Frictions remain between core members India and Pakistan. The June SCO defence ministers' meeting was unable to adopt a joint statement after India raised objections, saying it omitted reference to the deadly April 22 attack on Hindu tourists in Indian-occupied Kashmir, which led to the worst fighting in decades between India and Pakistan. New Delhi also refused to join the SCO's condemnation of Israeli attacks on Iran, a member state, earlier in June. But the recent détente between India and China after five years of heightened border frictions, as well as renewed tariff pressure on New Delhi from the Trump

administration, are driving expectations for a positive meeting between Xi and Modi on the sidelines of the summit. "It's likely (New Delhi) will swallow their pride and put this year's SCO problems behind them in a bid to maintain momentum in the détente with China, which is a key Modi priority right now," said Olander. Analysts expect both sides to announce further incremental border measures such as troop withdrawals, the easing of trade and visa restrictions, cooperation in new fields including climate, and broader government and people-to-people engagement. Despite the lack of substantive policy announcements expected at the summit, experts warn that the bloc's appeal to Global South countries should not be underestimated. "This summit is about optics, really powerful optics," added Olander. Modi is expected to depart from China after the summit, while Putin will stay on for a World War Two military parade in Beijing later in the week for an unusually long spell outside of Russia.

Briefs

Imran asks Raja to continue



MEHTAB PIRZADA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Salman Akram Raja on Tuesday asserted that party founder Imran Khan had refused to accept his resignation from party's secretary general post. This was the third instance the political leader has submitted his resignation and the PTI founder has rejected it. The senior lawyer was appointed as PTI secretary general last year in September, following the resignation of senior party leader Omar Ayub. Sources within PTI revealed that Raja tendered his resignation following disagreement with Imran Khan's sister Aleema Khan over the party's participation in the upcoming by-elections.

47 terrorists killed in Zhob

DNA

QUETTA: Security forces gunned down 47 terrorists attempting to cross the Afghan border and infiltrate Balochistan's Zhob district, security sources confirmed on Tuesday. According to sources, a large group of terrorists, belonging to Indian proxy Fitna al-Khwaraj – a term used for outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) – were trying to infiltrate through the Pak-Afghanistan border in Sambaza, area of the Zhob District, when the security forces detected their movement. The security forces carried out an operation against the terrorists from August 7 to 9, during which all 47 militants were neutralised, according to the sources.

CM extends Dhee Rani program to daughters of prisoners

MULTAN: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has taken a historic step by extending the scope of the "Dhee Rani Program" to include the daughters of prisoners. The initiative follows appeals made by inmates who requested support for their daughters' marriages under the scheme. On the CM's directives, Provincial Minister for Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal Punjab, Sohail Shoukat Butt, confirmed that the program will now also cover the daughters of prisoners across the province. He described the move as "a ray of hope for innocent daughters of incarcerated individuals." According to Secretary Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal, Javed Akhtar Mahmood, divisional directors have been instructed to compile necessary data of prisoners for inclusion in the program. Acting promptly, Divisional Director Social Welfare Multan, Ms. Umme Farwah Hamdani, coordinated with DIG Prisons Multan and superintendents of jails in the division to collect the required information. Jointly with prison officials, questionnaires were developed to verify whether prisoners' daughters had CNICs and marital status records. Teams from the Social Welfare Department have already begun on-site registrations inside jails of Multan division. Notably, Multan is the first division in Punjab to complete data collection under this initiative.—APP

Agri transformation game changer for Potohar farmers: Kirmani

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Minister for Agriculture Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani on Tuesday said the Agriculture Transformation Plan introduced in the Potohar region under the directions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was a game changer for farmers' prosperity and the development of the area. The minister was chairing a high-level meeting on the Agriculture Transformation Plan here at the Commissioner's Office. Members of the Provincial Assembly from Rawalpindi Division, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture Usama Khan Leghari, Secretary Agriculture Punjab Iftekhar Ali Sahoo, Commissioner Rawalpindi Aamir Khattak, directors general Agriculture and deputy commissioners attended the meeting. Addressing the meeting, Minister Kirmani said the Agriculture Transformation Plan worth Rs 7 billion was launched in Potohar as a special initiative of the Punjab chief minister for agricultural development and farmers' welfare. Similarly, he said, a Rs 4 billion programme was initiated for irrigation and efficient water use, under which solar systems, modern irrigation systems, and laser land levelers would be provided at 70% subsidy. For land conservation, he added, 400 mini dams would be built at a cost of Rs 1 billion. With a subsidy of Rs 77,000 per acre, 4,500 acres land would be reclaimed using bulldozers, and farmers would be provided 25,000 kilograms of quality peanut seed.—APP

Cut in electricity cost can boost exports: Atif Ikram

Ahsan Bakhtawari hosts dinner in honor of the Council of Economic & Energy Journalists (CEJ)

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh said that if electricity prices in Pakistan are brought at par with other countries in the region, exports can increase significantly and the economy can be strengthened. He was addressing the dinner hosted by Chairman Azerbaijan-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry Ahsan Bakhtawari in honor of CEJ. He stated that the government's 10-year industrial policy includes measures such as reducing energy tariffs and lowering interest rates. All economic indicators are positive, and the country is moving in the right direction. He also praised the role of the media, saying it has always supported the business community. Ahsan Bakhtawari commended the media's consistent cooperation in bringing key issues to light and expressed hope that this partnership would continue in the future. Bakhtawari noted that Pakistan's economic condition has improved significantly compared to two years ago, crediting collaborative efforts between the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), the business community, and media outlets. He emphasized that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and



Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir took decisive steps in response to the concerns raised jointly by these stakeholders. Looking ahead, Bakhtawari predicted a more business-friendly environment and urged media outlets to conduct research on the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He stressed the need to strengthen trade ties and adopt unconventional strategies to stabilize the economy. He highlighted the support Pakistan received from Azerbaijan, China, and Turkey during difficult times and called for deeper trade relations with these nations. Bakhtawari announced plans to visit Azerbaijan next month for high-level meetings aimed at expanding bilateral trade and investment opportunities. He also urged the Council of Economic and Energy Journalists and FPCCI to take proactive steps in enhancing trade and diplomatic relations with countries that stood by Pak during economic hardships. Tourism, he said, is a major industry that requires serious government attention to unlock its full potential and attract foreign investment. Bakhtawari praised the media's role in raising awareness about high interest rates and issues related to Independent

Power Producers (IPPs), calling its support "unforgettable." He advocated for further reductions in electricity tariffs to boost exports, especially in the textile sector, and called for incentives in solar and wind energy development. He described the media as the "eyes and ears" of FPCCI and the business community, and emphasized the need to formally recognize the role of the Council of Economic and Energy Journalists within FPCCI to advance national economic goals. Afzal Butt lauded Atif Ikram Sheikh as an exemplary FPCCI president and credited Ahsan and Zafar Bakhtawari for consistently raising their voices for

economic reform in collaboration with the media. He called for a national Charter of Economy to ensure long-term stability and build investor confidence. Other speakers, including Azhar Jatoi, Raja Kamran, Kashif Munir, and Masood Siddiqui, echoed these sentiments. They emphasized the importance of strengthening trade relations, increasing exports, supporting the textile sector, promoting renewable energy, and developing the tourism industry. The consensus was clear: with continued cooperation between media and the business community, Pakistan can achieve sustainable growth and prosperity.

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Minorities Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora on Tuesday chaired a meeting to review the Minority Cards program and examined all phases of the initiative in detail. Addressing the participants, Ramesh Singh Arora announced that, in line with the special directives and vision of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz, the number of Minority Cards is being increased from 50,000 to 75,000. He said that under the leadership of the Chief Minister, revolutionary measures were being taken across Punjab for the welfare and empowerment of minority communities, and the Minority Cards initiative is a key part of this vision. He emphasized that 100 percent transparency will be ensured at every stage. Canceled cards will be thoroughly reviewed to protect families from unfair exclusion, while payments will only be made upon presentation of the Minority Card. He also directed that beneficiaries must not be enrolled simultaneously in any other welfare program. The minister instructed that all pending cases be resolved by September 15. He appreciated the improved performance of the department under the leadership of Secretary Human Rights Farid Ahmed Tarar and praised the dedicated efforts of the entire team in ensuring transparency and credibility.—APP

Journey towards hope Muqam walks step by step with flood victims

SHANGLA: In the devastated mountainous region of Shangla, where recent floods wiped out roads and swept away bridges, cutting villages off from the rest of the world, one man didn't wait for a path to be cleared; he created his own. Engr Amir Muqam. In this battered mountainous terrain, where roads have vanished and bridges have been washed away, isolating entire communities, one individual didn't stand by for helicopters or official convoys. Instead, he tightened his shoelaces and began the grueling climb himself. Federal Minister and Pakistan Muslim League (N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President, Engineer Amir Muqam, spent an emotionally and physically exhausting day walking through the wrecked villages

just to stand beside his people in their hour of sorrow. With conventional travel impossible due to the destroyed roads, he chose not to wait for airlifts or VIP arrangements. He crossed raging streams, trekked narrow and dangerous paths, soaked in sweat and dust — driven by a deep desire to be there for his people. The residents of these remote mountain villages had not expected anyone to come. Surrounded by grief and isolation, they felt forgotten. But when a familiar face emerged through the mountain dust, shock and relief swept across their faces. "We thought we were alone in this disaster," an elderly man said with a trembling voice. "But today, our minister crossed rivers and mountains just for us. This feels nothing short of

a miracle." Throughout the day, Engineer Amir Muqam met with grieving families, offered heartfelt condolences for their lost loved ones, and assured them they were not alone. He didn't stand on a stage or give long speeches rather he sat on the ground, held hands, looked into eyes, and listened. "You are not alone," he told a mother whose children now sleep under the open sky. "We will rebuild everything together. Not with promises, but with action. And that's my promise not as a minister, but as your brother." For the people of this devastated region, this was the first time a federal minister had come to see them in such circumstances not from above in a helicopter, but by walking the same broken paths they tread every day.—APP

HEC recognizes nine WUM research Journals in Y Category

MULTAN: The Women University Multan (WUM) has achieved a significant milestone with the recognition of nine of its research journals in the Y category under the Higher Education Commission's (HEC) HRJS system for 2024-25. The approved journals include AHidayah (Editor-in-Chief Prof Dr Kalsoom Pracha), International Journal of Linguistics and Culture (Dr Mamoon Yasmin Khan), Pakistan Journal of Biochemistry and Biotechnology (Dr Maryam Zain), Annals of Social Sciences and Perspective (Dr Hina Ali), Frontiers in Chemical Sciences (Dr Sara Musadig), The Journal of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics (Dr Atia Iqbal), Journal of Statistics, Computing and Interdisciplinary Research (Dr Fariha Sohail).—APP

Pak trains media on ethical reporting of human trafficking

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Country Office Pakistan, in collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), held a one-day media awareness session in Islamabad to strengthen journalists' capacity for ethical and responsible reporting on Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and Smuggling of Migrants (SOM). Over 30 journalists and editors from leading media houses participated in the workshop, which stressed survivor-centered reporting, accurate legal terminology, safeguarding victims' identities, and avoiding sensationalism. Through interactive presenta-

tions, case studies, and discussions, participants explored how ethical journalism can shape public awareness, influence policy, and support Pakistan's national response to these crimes. Facilitated by senior journalist Mr. Oun Sahi, the session reinforced key principles, correct terminology: differentiating Trafficking in Persons (TIP) from Smuggling of Migrants (SOM), stressing how misuse confuses the public and undermines legal/policy responses. Survivor-centered approach: avoiding stigmatizing language, passive voice, or sensational headlines; protecting privacy and dignity with pseudonyms, blurred visuals, and trauma-informed interviews.

Legal grounding: references to Pakistan's Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (2018) and Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act (2018). Ethical guidelines: avoiding clichés, framing stories within human rights and social contexts (poverty, gender inequality, migration gaps), and highlighting systemic complicity. Media's role: shaping public understanding, influencing government priorities, exposing organized crime, and sustaining momentum for reforms. This initiative highlights UNODC and FIA's commitment to working with the media in promoting accurate and constructive narratives that uphold the dignity of survivors while exposing organized crime.



Islamabad: Advisor to Chairman Senate, Misbah Khar accompanied by senior director general protocol Tariq Bin Waheed presenting formal invitation to rear Admiral (r) Fred Senevirathne, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan for the participation of parliamentary delegation of Sri Lanka in upcoming inter-parliamentary speakers' conference (ISC).

With bare hands, big hopes, Hussain begins rebuilding life after Buner's floods

BUNER: Amid the rubble and haunting silence left by the devastating floods in Buner, a faint but steady clinking of stones rises through the stillness. It's the sound of resilience and steadfast courage of a man, who refused to surrender to despair. Hussain Ali, a 48-year-old resident of Pir Baba in Buner district, is started rebuilding his life brick by brick and stone by stone. With no significant aid yet in sight, no heavy machinery, and no professional tools, he is salvaging stones, bricks, wood, and whatever he can find to reconstruct his house destroyed by the August 15 flash floods, forcing his family to live in a tent. "I have no money. But I have these strong hands," Hussain says, lifting a dust-covered, sun-burnt palm. "I can't wait forever. My children need a roof before harsh winter." Just weeks ago, torrential monsoon rains unleashed floods across the district, destroying homes, roads, bridges, agriculture, livestock and livelihoods. Dozens of families were displaced and hundreds lost everything after the natural calamity struck, affecting Buner badly. For Hussain, the disaster eased years of hard work in a matter of minutes. His modest

five-marla stones made house built through grit, labour, and small savings was reduced to rubble, luckily his family survived. "I saw the flood water coming like a wall," he recalls. "There was no time to save our house luggage. We just ran." He, his wife, and their four children survived, but their home, livestock, wheat stock, and belongings were all disappeared in a jiffy. Now, every morning, Hussain walks kilometers through nearby areas, gathering usable bricks and broken wood—some from the remains of his own house, others donated by neighbors who've lost even more. He stacks them under a large plastic tent sheet—his only shelter for now. There's no cement, no formal map, just a dream of four walls and a roof. "I will build slowly, even if it takes months," he says. "Something is better than nothing." While the government and NGOs have pledged support, much of the highland aid is slow due to washed-out roads, landslides, and the scale of destruction. Local community organizer Mohammad Farooq admitted the situation is dire in Buner, urging philanthropists for immediate help. "People like Hussain are falling through the cracks. Aid is

coming, but it's too little, too late. But it's inspiring how some aren't waiting. They are acting. They're surviving." Hussain's humble effort has become a quiet inspiration for others flood victims. Some neighbors help when they can sharing food, lifting stones, or offering encouragement. "I am not the only one," Hussain says, glancing at the muddy hills. "There are many like me who just want to live again." Far from Pir Baba, in the flood-ravaged region of Shangla, where landslides and washed-out bridges have isolated entire villages, another story of resilience and great courage was unfolded. Federal Minister Engineer Amir Muqam made an arduous journey through mountainous terrain to reach cut-off communities on foot in Shangla. With roads gone and helicopters unavailable, he tightened his shoelaces and began the steep climb, determined to stand with the flood victims, not above them. "We thought we were alone," said an elderly villager Hamza Khan, his voice trembling with emotion. "But today, our minister crossed rivers and mountains just for us. This feels like a miracle, raising our moral.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

AUGUST

Aug 01/China
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Switzerland
National Day

Aug 01/Lebanon
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01 /Syria
Armed Forces Day

Aug 4/Bukino Faso
National Day

Aug 09 /Singapore

Aug 15/DPR Korea
Independence Day

Aug 15/India
Independence Day

Aug 15/Poland
Armed Forces Day

Aug 17 /Indonesia
Independence Day

Aug 24/Ukraine
Independence Day

Aug 25/Uruguay
Independence Day

Aug 30 /Turkey
Armed Forces Day

Aug 31/Kyrgyz Republic
Independence Day

Aug 31/Malaysia
National Day

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Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.....1122
& Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police.....9266044
Motorway Police.9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry
Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals
CMH.....5611111
MH.....561116
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



Departments
CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank
Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Muqam appeals for flood relief in meeting with UN agencies

Participants were shown video footage highlighting the extent of flood damage across various regions. The attending organizations expressed strong commitment to supporting the recovery and rehabilitation of flood-affected communities

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: In the wake of devastating floods across Pakistan, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan, and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam, convened a high-level meeting on Tuesday with representatives from key international organizations and national NGOs to appeal for immediate humanitarian assistance. Addressing the participants, Minister Muqam shared his firsthand observations from visits to flood-affected regions, describing the destruction as severe and widespread. "Thousands have lost their homes, and critical community infrastructure has been severely damaged," he said. He emphasized the urgent need for coordinated relief and rehabilitation efforts, calling on humanitarian partners to mobilize resources for rebuilding homes, restoring livelihoods, and reconstructing essential community facilities. "We recognize and appreciate the efforts made by international organizations and NGOs during past crises," he stated. "Today, we once again appeal for your partnership, technical expertise, and resources to help rebuild lives and communities. The Minister stressed that collective action could bring hope to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and other affected areas. UN Resident Coordinator Muhammad Yahya reaffirmed the United Nations' commitment to supporting Pakistan during this challenging time. "We stand with the people of Pakistan," he said. Representatives from major organizations including UNHCR, IRC, UNIOM, GIZ, UNICEF, Malteser International, Save the



Children, Action Against Hunger, Muslim Hands, Hashoo Foundation, and Relief International attended the meeting. Senior government officials, including Secretary Zafar Hassan and Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees Ismatullah Shah, were also present. Participants were shown video footage highlighting the extent of flood damage across various regions. The attending organizations expressed strong commitment to supporting the recovery and rehabilitation of flood-affected communities.

Food commodities worth \$743m imported

ISLAMABAD: Food group imports into the country during the first month of the current financial year grew by 44.90 percent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of the last year. During the month of July 2025, food commodities worth \$743.879 million were imported as compared to the imports of \$513.389 million of the same period of the last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. The exports of the commodities, including milk, cream and food for infants, grew by 92.64 percent as about 6,555 metric tons of the above-mentioned commodity valued \$15.023 million were imported as compared to the imports of 3,728 metric tons costing \$7.799 million of the same month of the last year. During the first month of the current financial year, 7,079 metric tons of dry fruits, nut costing \$8.295 million and 19,030 metric tons of tea worth \$41.994 million were imported as compared to the imports of 5,313 metric tons, \$5.80 million and 17,481 metric tons valued at \$41.882 million of the same period of the last year. The exports of dry fruits and nuts in the first month of the current financial year grew by 42.95 percent, whereas tea imported into the country increased by 0.27 percent, respectively. Over 19,556 metric tons of spices valued at \$23.796 million and 110,098metric tons of pulses costing \$73.837 million were also imported into the country during the month under review, which was up by 19 percent and 10.95 percent, respectively. It is worth mentioning here that the 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. 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.—DNA

Call for national responsibility in combating climate change

Former AJK's Prime Minister and President Alhaj Sardar Muhammad Yaqub Khan praises "One Daughter One Tree" campaign and plantation drive in Poonch Division

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister and former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Alhaj Sardar Muhammad Yaqub

as the "One Daughter One Tree" campaign, which has become a symbol of community engagement and women's participation in environmental conservation. While discussion the DFO, Sardar Yaqub Khan noted that the visible effects of climate change



Khan, has stressed the urgent need for collective action against climate change, terming it a challenge that threatens the very survival of communities across the region. In a special meeting with the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of the Reforestation Division Poonch Rawalakot, Syed Tahir Ali Shah, the seasoned political leader highlighted the significance of plantation campaigns, particularly during the ongoing monsoon season, which provides a natural opportunity for large-scale afforestation. The meeting, held against the backdrop of the recent monsoon plantation campaign in Poonch Division, provided an opportunity to review the progress made so far, the role of local communities, and the broader implications of plantation activities for environmental sustainability. Sardar Yaqub Khan praised the commendable efforts of the Forest Department and expressed his wholehearted support for initiatives such

are becoming more frightening with each passing day. Villages are destroyed, roads and bridges collapse, lives are lost, and livelihoods are disrupted. These calamities are no longer seasonal challenges; they are the direct result of unchecked deforestation, environmental negligence, and climate change. Every person, without exception, has to play his or her part to avoid these disasters," the former Prime Minister emphasized. DFO briefed the former Prime Minister about the targets and achievements of the monsoon plantation campaign in Poonch Division, noting that thousands of saplings have already been planted under different schemes, with special focus on community lands, schools, and roadsides. One of the key highlights of the meeting was Sardar Yaqub's appreciation of the "One Daughter One Tree" campaign, a socially driven initiative aimed at linking the birth of a daughter with the planting of a tree.

Eid Milad-un-Nabi celebrations begin

ISLAMABAD: As the month of Rabi ul Awwal commences, Eid Milad-un-Nabi celebrations have started with great fervor and enthusiasm across Pakistan. The birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is being celebrated with great zeal, as people decorate their homes, mosques, and streets with lights and banners in major cities like Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad, the celebrations have already begun, with people gathering in large numbers to participate in milad mehfilis and other events. These gatherings are filled with the recitation of naats and Quranic verses, creating a spiritual atmosphere that resonates with the message of love and compassion. Fatima a resident of Islamabad said "I love celebrating Eid Milad-un-Nabi because it reminds me of the Prophet's teachings and the importance of kindness and generosity". She told that they decorate their homes, participate in milad mehfilis, and distribute sweets among our neighbors and the poor as it's a time to come together and reflect on our values. "By engaging in acts of charity and kindness, we can embody the Prophet's teachings and create a more compassionate society", she stated. A participant in a milad mehfil Rabiya said "Eid Milad-un-Nabi is not just a celebration; it's an opportunity for us to come together and make a positive impact in our communities". She added that they gather to remember the Prophet's life and teachings, and to learn from his example as it's a time for them to reflect on their actions and strive to be better individuals.—APP

Girls secure top positions in HSSC result

Wajiha Qamar congratulated to all students who succeed in exams, emphasizing that the future of the country lies in their secured hands

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE), announced HSSC (Part I & II) 1st Annual Examination 2025, with female students securing most of top positions across different groups. The ceremony was graced by the minister of state for Federal Education and Professional Training (FE & PT), Wajiha Qamar along with other distinguished guests. She formally inaugurated the announcement by pressing the button to unveil the results. The Chairman FBISE, Prof. Dr. Ikram Ali Malik, while addressing the participants said that results would be conveyed through SMS to all candidates on registered cell numbers, adding that candidates could also get their result on FBISE website and by using unified code 5050 through SMS. While talking about the statistics of the results he said that overall passing percentage of HSSC-I & II was 62.40 and 83.19% respectively. The candidates, who secured the top positions were called on the stage and applauded their academic performance. Among Top position holder in different groups including Aleena Tahir secured the first position by getting 1071 marks, Warda Sarfraz locked second position with 1070 marks, While Urwa Malik and Minahil Murtaza fixed third position with 1069 marks each in HSSC-II pre-medical group. In Pre-Engineering group of HSSC-II Muzzamil Sajid held first position with 1063 marks, while Muhammad Sami (1059 marks) & Aisha Naeem (1056 marks) secured second and third position respectively. Similarly for Science General Group of HSSC-II, Zayam Ruhab obtained 1056 marks and stood first in this group, whereas Eesha Zaidi got second position with 1055 marks and third position was bagged by Halima Zuhair with 1053 marks. Jannat Nazir with 1025 marks got first in Commerce Group of part II, while Shaiza Mahnoor with 1020 marks and Zainab Waqar with 1013 marks secured second and third position respectively in this group. Dinah Khan with 986 marks got highest position in part II - Humanities group, Talha Shamas & Zoha with 981 marks each remained second in the row and Sidra with 974 marks secured third position. Wajiha Qamar congratulated to all students who succeed in exams, emphasizing that the future of the country lies in their secured hands.—DNA

OEC seeking Japanese language instructor

ISLAMABAD: Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC), an attached department of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD), was intended to hire Japanese Language Instructor(s) with the following qualifications and experience for imparting training in Japanese Language to Pakistani workforce who desire to get employment in Japan. An official source told APP here on Tuesday, he said that OEC needed a Japanese language instructor for its Karachi and Lahore regional offices. He said that the language trainer should meet the standards of the Japanese Language Capability Test (JLCT)/Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) to equip the trainee to level 3 & JFT required for employment in Japan. Trainer must be proficient in Japanese Language reading, writing, speaking and typing skills. To develop a customized / module training course encompassing the specific requirements for the Pakistani workforce to work in Japan.—APP

National AI fund proposed to boost artificial intelligence research

ISLAMABAD: A National Artificial Intelligence Fund (NAIF) has been proposed under the National AI Policy to support research, development, and commercialization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and related technologies. As per the policy, the fund will be managed through Ignite's Research and Development (R&D) resources, with at least 30 per cent of its R&D budget permanently allocated to NAIF, as stipulated under the Telecommunication Reorganization Act, 1996 (amended in 2006). The initiative aims to finance AI-focused projects in universities, industries, IT spin-offs, and startups, while promoting stronger collaboration between academia and industry for developing practical solutions to societal challenges. Under the plan, a thematic Innovation Fund will also be established through the proposed Centres of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence (CoE-AI) to support AI-based solutions in national priority areas. NAIF will provide financial assistance for pilot projects, testing, and scaling of innovations, along with capacity-building initiatives. A nationwide network of CoE-AI will be developed, with main centers in Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore, and supporting centers in Peshawar, Quetta, Faisalabad, and Hyderabad. Operating under a two-tier model, the primary centers will address national-level priorities, while auxiliary centers will focus on regional needs. The centers will be funded through NAIF and tasked with promoting demand-driven AI research, providing access to advanced computing infrastructure, AI labs, and test-beds, while ensuring environmental sustainability. They will also support academic research in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and provincial education departments, assist local startups through incubation and commercialization programs, and work with education boards to integrate AI curricula at school, college, and university levels.—APP

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Briefs

Another
100 electric
buses depart
Shanghai
for Punjab

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Another 100 electric buses have left Shanghai port for Pakistan and will be running in every district of the province by December, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday. The fare is only rupees 20. Modern, CCTV monitored, climate-controlled and comfortable buses for citizens of Punjab. More than 100 of the new buses would arrive in Rawalpindi soon. On August 12, it was announced that a fleet of 100 electric buses was being loaded at Yantai Port in China for districts including Mianwali, Okara, Nankana Sahib, Muzaffargarh, Vehari, Pakpattan and Dera Ghazi Khan, areas that have "long lacked a formal public transport system". Punjab first received 27 electric buses in January this year after Sharif announced in late December that the vehicles, manufactured in China, were ready to be shipped. —APP

Naqvi launches
nursery in
Islamabad to
fight smog

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has taken a significant step toward environmental protection and tackling smog in the capital by initiating Pakistan's largest nursery, spread across 50 acres of land, which is now nearing completion. The nursery will host more than one million plants, making it a landmark project for Islamabad's green future. During his visit to the CDA Model Nursery on Park Road, the Interior Minister inspected development progress across various sections and reviewed the master plan. He also visited the newly constructed rainwater harvesting pond within the nursery. "An international standard, state-of-the-art model nursery is being developed in Islamabad," said Mohsin Naqvi. "It will not only meet the horticultural needs of the city's residents but also play a vital role in enhancing Islamabad's environment." The minister announced that a flower shop and a training institute will also be set up within the nursery. He instructed CDA employees to undergo proper training for plant care and maintenance. Appreciating the efforts of the Azerbaijani horticulture experts assisting with the project, Naqvi commended the team for their excellent work.—APP

Pak needs to improve HR record for GSP+, says EU envoy

On human rights, she was blunt: "If you talk to many human rights defenders, civil society activists — and even just live here, like I have for three years — you often see ... a clear degradation. Our monitors read the newspapers. They have networks, they know what's going on. So, they're in a position to judge whether things are moving in the right direction or

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Noting a deteriorating human rights climate, outgoing European Union Ambassador Riina Kionka has called on Pakistan to show 'credible' and 'visible progress' on human rights and labour reforms ahead of a crucial trade assessment in November, signalling that the EU's next trade preference scheme will demand stronger compliance. Speaking to a leading English daily, days before leaving Islamabad, Kionka said the upcoming GSP+ monitoring mission, which had been delayed from June because of the Iran-Israel conflict, will scrutinise Pakistan's record on 27 international conventions tied to the trade scheme, which grants duty-free access to most Pakistani exports. "Pakistan needs to show more visible progress especially ahead of the upcoming GSP Plus monitoring mission in November," she said. "Governance is looking pretty good, (progress on) environment also positive. But labour rights need more work, and human rights remain the most challenging area." On human rights, she was blunt: "If you talk to many human rights defenders, civil society activists — and even just live here, like I have for three years — you often see ... a clear degradation. Our monitors read the newspapers. They have networks, they



know what's going on. So, they're in a position to judge whether things are moving in the right direction or not." European lawmakers and civil society, she added, are increasingly vocal about conditioning trade support on rights performance: "Why should we continue to offer this level of support if there's no reciprocal progress on the values side?" Despite what she described as "quiet diplomacy" between EU and Pakistan on sensitive issues like human rights, Kionka has sometimes been vocal on these issues. "If we can't support them (human rights activists) effectively because they're being silenced or intimidated, then

we lose a key channel of communication, a way to engage in dialogue and debate," she said while explaining the reason for taking strong positions adding "civil society is essential to the EU's human rights policy. It's how we project values. It's how we engage." The GSP+ programme is a lifeline for Pakistan's export sector, with the scheme delivering 83pc growth in exports to EU since its inception. But Kionka stressed that the arrangement is "a two-sided equation — one side is trade, which has been very successful. The other is sustainable development and we need to see credible progress on both fronts." The EU measures progress towards sustainability through active implementation of the 27 conventions Pakistan has pledged to uphold, covering human rights, labour rights, governance and environmental standards, the diplomat noted. She welcomed the Senate's recent vote to reduce the number of crimes punishable by death, calling it "encouraging", but urged further movement on freedom of religion and belief, freedom of expression, and the right to assembly. The EU is finalising a new GSP+ regulation for 2024–2034 that will require all current beneficiaries to reapply before the next cycle begins by 2027. The revised framework, Kionka said, will introduce "a more efficient way of addressing ongoing concerns". The proposed regulation will give Brussels more flexibility

to withdraw benefits in cases of serious, systematic violations including climate and environmental breaches. "Once the new regulation comes into force, Pakistan will have to reapply and submit an action plan — a roadmap explaining how it intends to meet the required milestones," she said. "It doesn't roll over automatically." The proposed regulation will also have an expanded list of conventions to include children's rights, disability rights, and stricter labour inspection regimes. The widened scope and expedited withdrawal mechanism could, meanwhile, make it more challenging for countries with weak compliance to stay in the scheme. As she departs after three years, a tenure that started after the 2022 floods for which the EU mobilised nearly 1 billion in aid and ends with yet another episode of devastating floods, the envoy pointed to structural weaknesses in the trade relationship. "About 75pc of Pakistan's exports to the EU are textiles. There are many other industries that could also benefit from GSP+," she said, urging diversification and value addition. She also emphasised the need for political stability and plurality "to get things done and maintain long-term partnerships", and highlighted the EU-Pakistan Business Network — a platform for European investors — as an unfinished project she hopes her successor will formally launch.

Pakistan
receives
\$6m from
China for
housing
projects

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has received a grant of \$6 million from China for the construction of houses in Balochistan. The monthly foreign economic assistance report released by the Economic Affairs Division for July 2025 reveals that the grant of \$6 million from China has been disbursed. Speaking to Wealth Pakistan, Adviser to Finance Minister Khurram Shehzad said that the Chinese support is focused on the reconstruction of houses in Balochistan province, which is often impacted by floods and other natural challenges. He said this contribution underscores China's commitment to Pakistan's development and its role in strengthening infrastructure and housing capacity in one of the country's most vulnerable areas. He said the aid will directly impact displaced families, providing them with durable housing solutions in the wake of devastating environmental events. The assistance aligns with Pakistan's broader reconstruction and recovery strategies, where international partnerships like the one with China play a pivotal role, he added.—APP

190 Pakistani
students reach HZAU
for Agri training

Chinese PV leader join hands with UNHCR to power Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As part of the Pakistani Agriculture "Thousand Talents Plan" training program, Huazhong Agricultural University (HZAU) welcomed a delegation of 190 Pakistani students, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Tuesday. They will be divided into three specialized groups—aquaculture and processing, fruit and vegetable production and processing, and smart agriculture—for a three-month study under the bilateral youth development program. This program, rooted in Pakistan-China cooperation, aims to train 1,000 Pakistani agriculture graduates in leading Chinese institutions to adopt advanced farming practices. HZAU is responsible for training 190 Pakistani agricultural managers and technical professionals, all of whom hold bachelor's degrees or higher, with 154 possessing master's degrees or higher. The implementation of this program not only exemplifies the continued collaboration in agriculture but also represents a practical step taken jointly to promote agricultural development. Meanwhile, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and its private sector partner LONGI Green Energy Technology Co Ltd. have solarized the Bolan Medical Complex in Quetta, which will save Rs. 70 million and reduce carbon emissions by 468 tonnes annually, Gwadar Pro carried on Tuesday. This clean energy project marks

a critical step toward sustainable healthcare benefiting both Afghan refugees and the Pakistani community in Balochistan. LONGI supplied its Hi-MO 9 modules for the project, which can deliver a power output of up to 670W with a conversion efficiency of up to 24.8%, demonstrating exceptionally low degradation even under high-temperature, high-humidity, and other challenging conditions. It will generate approximately 1.16 million kilowatt-hours of clean electricity annually and will meet the entire energy needs of one of Balochistan's largest hospitals. A ceremony was held at Bolan Medical Complex attended by Special Secretary Health Department Mr. Shehbaz Baloch representing Government of Balochistan, Ms. Philippa Candler, UNHCR's Representative in Pakistan, Tesfaye Bekele, Head of UNHCR Quetta and Mr. Arbab Talib, Commissioner for Afghan Refugees, Dr. Liaqat Baloch, Deputy Medical Superintendent, Bolan Medical Complex Hospital and other key notables. So far, by ensuring reliable electricity for three public hospitals, medical staff could do their works without a single power interruption, which means uninterrupted, critical care. Life saved and help sustained. Annually, these hospitals are saving more than USD 450,000. More than that, this initiative is transforming daily life and creating safe spaces—especially for women and girls. LONGI supports UNHCR in improving facilities at assisted schools, with a particular focus on removing barriers to displaced girls' education in Pakistan.

Meeting held to
address water charges
issue in AJK

ISLAMABAD: The second meeting of the steering committee, established to resolve long-standing issues related to "water use charges" in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), was held on Tuesday at the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC). The meeting was chaired by Advisor to the Prime Minister on Inter-Provincial Coordination and Political Affairs, Rana Sanaulah Khan. The meeting was attended by AJK Senior Minister Waqar Ahmed Noor, Minister for Energy Chaudhry Arshad, former AJK Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider, MLA Chaudhry Yasin, Minister for Local Government Faisal Rathore, Dr. Najib Naqi, MLA Shah Ghulam Qadir, Chairman of the Cabinet Division Standing Committee Malik Abrar Ahmed, Coordination Committee Member Mushtaq Minhas, AJK Chief Secretary Khushhal Khan, and representatives from various political parties and relevant departments. During the session, all stakeholders shared their views on the long-standing issues regarding water usage charges. The AJK Ministry of Energy presented a comprehensive background, current context, and proposed solutions related to the matter. Participants emphasized the urgent need for a sustainable and timely resolution to these issues. Based on input from all stakeholders, Rana Sanaulah Khan placed two key decisions before the committee. First, a five-member institutional technical committee was formed under the leadership of Federal Secretary IPC, Mohiuddin Wani, to conduct a detailed analysis of the water charges issue. Second, the Government of AJK was given a two-week deadline to frame the key issues and submit a report to the steering committee, enabling actionable recommendations to be finalized in the next meeting. All members of the steering committee unanimously endorsed these decisions, considering them significant steps toward resolving the long-pending matter. Rana Sanaulah Khan stressed the importance of collective efforts by the Government of AJK and all relevant federal institutions to ensure a durable and timely solution.—DNA

Early cancer
diagnosis can
save lives: Dr
Asghar

ISLAMABAD: Consultant oncologist Dr Asghar Hussain on Tuesday stressed the importance of early cancer diagnosis, noting that many cases become life-threatening due to patients' negligence. Talking to a private news channel, he explained that some cancers, such as colon cancer, take time to show symptoms, but early warning signs can still be detected. He added that over 75 percent of cancer patients remain unaware of the disease until stage 3. Dr Asghar urged people to pay close attention to any unusual changes in their bodies and to seek medical advice immediately rather than ignoring symptoms. He emphasized that early detection significantly increases the chances of successful treatment. During the discussion, he also highlighted the importance of regular check-ups, preventive measures.—APP

The causes & facts of the significant
conflict between M&E and executing deptts

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



Development projects are the tangible manifestations of a nation's aspirations. They are the arteries and veins through which the lifeblood of socio-economic progress flows. In a country like Pakistan, characterized by a rapidly growing population, significant infrastructural deficits, and limited fiscal resources, these projects are not mere constructions; they are lifelines. A new road is not just tarmac and gravel; it is access to markets, healthcare, and education. A school building is not just bricks and mortar; it is a vessel for future generations' dreams. A dam is not just a concrete monolith; it is energy security, water for agriculture, and a buffer against climatic uncertainty. Water supply, sanitation, paved streets, and drainage systems are crucial for fostering a healthy society. The quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of these projects directly translate into the quality of life for millions of citizens. Given the immense stakes, a critical question emerges: who guards the guardians of development? Who ensures that the vast sums of public money allocated to these

ventures are spent wisely, that the concrete poured is of the mandated strength, that the textbooks reach the schools, and that the hospital, once built, is equipped and functional? The institutional answer to this question, in Pakistan and across the world, is Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). Conceived as a systematic process for collecting, analyzing, and using information to track progress and assess outcomes, M&E is meant to be the conscience of the development process—the objective arbiter of quality and accountability. In Pakistan, this function is institutionalized through M&E departments established in every province, as well as in Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Their mandate is clear and crucial: to monitor development projects, identify weaknesses, and provide recommendations for improvement. Yet, a persistent and deeply entrenched conflict has emerged between these M&E officials and the executing departments—the government departments and their contractors responsible for actually building the projects. This conflict, often reduced to a war of words over "Unsatisfactory" ratings and dismissed reports, represents a critical dysfunction at the heart of Pakistan's development machinery. It is a struggle between the imperative of accountability and the realities of implementation, between the theoretical ideal of a project and its messy, on-ground execution. To understand the conflict, one must first understand the instrument at its center. Monitoring and Evaluation, though often spoken of as a single concept, comprises two distinct but interrelated functions.

Monitoring is the continuous, systematic process of tracking a project's implementation. It is the project's vital signs monitor, constantly checking its pulse. It involves the regular collection of data on inputs (e.g., funds disbursed, materials procured), activities (e.g., labor deployed, construction phases completed), and outputs (e.g., kilometers of road built, number of schoolrooms furnished). The focus of monitoring is on operational metrics: Is the project on schedule? Is it within budget? Are the specified materials being used? Is the workmanship adhering to the agreed-upon standards and specifications? Is the work being carried out in accordance with PC-1? Are the Bills of Materials (BOQ) being adhered to? Are any changes to the designs or specifications being made without the approval of authorized officers? Are the laboratory tests for materials being conducted as per the specified requirements? Are the contractors' and department's engineers present at the work sites? Are the staff at the sites provided with personal protective equipment (PPE)? It is a management tool, designed to provide real-time or near-real-time feedback that allows project managers to make corrective adjustments during implementation, preventing small issues from snowballing into catastrophic failures.

The conflict between M&E and executing agencies is not a simple disagreement but a fundamental clash of worldviews, expertise, and institutional incentives. Each side views the other with deep suspicion, and each has a narrative that casts itself as the victim and the other as the villain. From the

vantage point of the M&E official, their role is that of a lone sentinel standing against a tide of malpractice. Their narrative is often one of frustration and righteous indignation. They see themselves as technical auditors whose sole purpose is to protect the public interest, yet they feel their findings are systematically undermined. Their grievances are several: Systemic Corruption and Shortcuts: M&E officials often operate on the assumption that corruption is a default setting in many executing agencies. They believe contractors, often in collusion with compliant government engineers, intentionally use substandard materials (e.g., subpar cement, thinner steel, cheaper asphalt) to maximize profits. The "Unsatisfactory" rating is thus a factual recording of this malfeasance. Active Resistance to Accountability: In this view, executing agencies do not ignore recommendations because they are flawed, but because they are inconvenient. Implementing these recommendations would cut into illicit profits, expose previous poor work, or simply require more effort. Accountability is seen as a threat to be neutralized, not a process to be embraced. The executing agencies—typically the Works and Services Department, Irrigation Department, Public Health Engineering, Local Government, Project Directors, C&W, etc.—see the story in a completely different light. They view themselves as the pragmatic "doers" who grapple with the complex realities of the field, while M&E officials are seen as theoretical "checkers" who operate from a position of ignorance and arrogance. Their counter-narrative

is equally compelling: Executing agencies argue that M&E personnel are frequently generalist civil servants, often from the Pakistan Administrative Service or other central groups, who lack specific technical field experience. They may be recruited and sent to monitor a highly technical dam or a complex road construction project without any hands-on engineering background. Consequently, they misinterpret technical standards, apply textbook judgments without context, and fail to understand legitimate engineering workarounds for unforeseen field challenges. Executing engineers accuse M&E of employing a rigid, compliance-based approach focused on finding faults rather than solving problems. They claim that the M&E culture incentivizes being critical—the more "Unsatisfactory" ratings one gives, the more efficient and vigilant one appears to superiors. This leads to a propensity to flag minor, inconsequential deviations as major failures, demoralizing the project team. The polarized perspectives of the two camps point to a deeper, systemic malaise. The conflict is not merely a personality clash but a symptom of fundamental flaws in the institutional design, capacity, and culture of Pakistan's development sector. M&E units are often housed in planning and development departments, far removed from the operational realities of the executing agencies they are meant to oversee. There is little formal or informal communication, joint problem-solving, or shared learning between the two. An M&E report is only as powerful as the enforcement mechanism behind it. In many

cases, the M&E department can only "recommend" and "report." They often lack the direct authority to withhold funds, blacklist contractors, or initiate disciplinary proceedings. This power usually rests with higher-tier committees or political masters, making the process vulnerable to manipulation and rendering M&E findings effectively advisory rather than mandatory. The repeated spectacle of failed projects and public squabbles between government departments erodes citizens' already fragile trust in state institutions. It fosters cynicism and reinforces the narrative that the government is inherently corrupt and incompetent, undermining the very social contract. For a country reliant on foreign aid and loans from international financial institutions (IFIs) like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, a broken M&E system is a major red flag. Donors require robust accountability mechanisms to safeguard their funds. A weak M&E system can lead to the suspension of funding or a reluctance to invest in future projects. Technical Embedment and Joint Assessments: M&E officials should be required to undergo mandatory orientation and field attachment with executing agencies before taking up their roles. Complex monitoring missions should include a technical expert from a neutral agency or a peer executing department to lend credibility to the findings. This creates a shared basis of understanding. Evidence-Based Dialogue: M&E reports must transition from subjective judgments to irrefutable, data-driven evidence. The use of digital tools—drones for aerial progress monitoring,

mobile data collection apps with geotagged and time stamped photos, and standardized checklists—can make findings more objective and less susceptible to claims of bias. M&E personnel also need to have the skills to operate digital tools. For large, high-value projects, the government should mandate independent, internationally accredited third-party monitors. This takes the pressure off internal M&E, provides a gold standard for assessment, and its findings are harder for executing agencies to dismiss due to the third party's proven expertise. M&E must be transformed into a specialized, technical career track. This requires developing a dedicated cadre of officers with tailored recruitment (seeking technical backgrounds), continuous professional development in advanced M&E methodologies, and competitive incentives to attract and retain talent. Executing agencies also need training in modern project management, contract administration, and communication. They need to be equipped to see M&E not as a threat but as a valuable management resource that can help them identify and mitigate risks. The goal is to move from a system of mutual blame to one of collective accountability. When a project fails, both the executor and the monitor have failed. When a project succeeds, both deserve credit. The guardians and the builders must see themselves as two essential pillars supporting the same structure: the sustainable and equitable development of Pakistan. Only then will the nation's lifelines be truly secure, delivering on their promise of progress and prosperity for all.

Upcoming SCO summit in China

As the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) prepares to convene its annual summit in China starting August 31, global attention is turning toward the strategic ambitions and diplomatic choreography of its key member states. With leaders from China, Russia, India, Pakistan, and Central Asian nations expected to attend, the summit promises to be a pivotal moment for regional dialogue, economic collaboration, and security coordination. China, as this year's host, is expected to showcase its leadership within the SCO framework by emphasizing connectivity, trade, and multilateralism. The summit will be held in the historic city of Xi'an, a symbolic nod to the ancient Silk Road and a modern reminder of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Beijing is likely to push for deeper integration among member states, particularly in digital infrastructure, energy cooperation, and counterterrorism efforts. For Russia, the summit offers a platform to reinforce its eastern partnerships amid ongoing tensions with the West. Moscow is expected to advocate for a multipolar world order and promote regional security mechanisms that bypass Western institutions. President Vladimir Putin's presence will underscore Russia's commitment to the SCO as a counterbalance to NATO and the EU, while also seeking economic opportunities through Eurasian connectivity. India's participation will be closely watched, especially given its complex relationships with both China and Pakistan. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to focus on economic cooperation, counterterrorism, and regional stability. While India remains cautious about China's growing influence in the SCO, it views the organization as a valuable forum to engage with Central Asia and assert its strategic autonomy. Pakistan, a full member since 2017, sees the SCO as a vital platform to advance its regional interests. Islamabad is expected to highlight its contributions to peace and stability in South Asia, while advocating for enhanced trade and connectivity. The summit may also provide an opportunity for Pakistan to engage in backchannel diplomacy with India, although formal bilateral talks remain unlikely. Pakistan's alignment with China and its growing ties with Russia could further shape its role within the SCO. Despite underlying rivalries and divergent national interests, the SCO summit carries hopes for pragmatic cooperation. While the SCO is not without its limitations—particularly in resolving bilateral disputes—it remains one of the few multilateral platforms where adversaries like India and Pakistan, or China and India, can engage under a shared framework. As the summit unfolds, observers will be watching for signs of consensus, new initiatives, and potential breakthroughs in regional diplomacy. Whether the SCO can evolve from a dialogue forum into a more action-oriented bloc remains to be seen. But with the world increasingly shaped by regional alliances, the August 31 summit in China could mark a defining moment for Eurasian cooperation in the years to come.

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Another blow to democracy

In a development that has stirred deep concern across Pakistan's political landscape, an anti-terrorism court in Faisalabad has sentenced 61 more Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders and workers to prison in connection with the May 9, 2023 riots. Among those convicted are prominent figures such as Omar Ayub, Shibli Faraz, and Zartaj Gul, each handed a 10-year sentence for their alleged involvement in the attack on the residence of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Rana Sanaullah2. The verdict marks yet another chapter in the ongoing legal crackdown against PTI following the unrest that erupted after the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan. Thousands of party members have been arrested, tried, and sentenced in various cases tied to the May 9 protests, which saw widespread demonstrations and damage to public property. While the state maintains these actions were necessary to uphold law and order, critics argue that the judicial process has been weaponized against political dissent. The sentencing of Ayub, Faraz, and Gul—who were not present in court during the verdict—has raised serious questions about due process and the fairness of the trials. Many of the accused have already been convicted in other cases and disqualified from parliamentary positions, leading to accusations that these legal actions are politically motivated. Zartaj Gul, for instance, has publicly denied the charges, claiming she was not present at the alleged planning meeting and had submitted evidence to support her claim. This pattern of repeated convictions and disqualifications has sparked fears that the judiciary is being used to systematically dismantle PTI's political influence. Such actions not only undermine democratic norms but also risk alienating the electorate and eroding public trust in the legal system. The international community is watching closely. Pakistan's image as a functioning democracy is at stake, and the implications extend beyond politics. Investors and tourists alike seek stability, transparency, and rule of law. If political activism continues to be criminalized, it sends a chilling message to the world: dissent is dangerous, and justice is selective. This perception could deter foreign investment, stall tourism, and isolate Pakistan diplomatically. In an era where global partnerships hinge on democratic values and human rights, the country cannot afford to project an image of authoritarianism cloaked in legal formalities. While some political factions may celebrate the downfall of PTI leaders, such triumphalism is shortsighted. Today's victors could be tomorrow's defendants. The precedent being set—where political rivalry is settled in courtrooms rather than through dialogue and elections—poses a threat to all parties. If the legal system becomes a tool of political vengeance, no one is safe. August 26, 2025, will be remembered not just for the convictions, but for what they represent: a shrinking space for political expression, a judiciary under scrutiny, and a democracy in distress. Pakistan must reflect deeply on the path it is taking. True justice must be impartial, and democracy must be resilient enough to accommodate dissent—not punish it.

Trump's Confrontation to Coexistence with China

Qamar Bashir



Trump's early declarations that allies like Europe, Canada, and Mexico had been "plundering" the United States found quick results there. NATO states, under American pressure, agreed to hike defense spending from 2% to as high as 5% of GDP, and European negotiators conceded to humiliating trade deals that forced them to buy more American goods while swallowing a 15% tariff on their exports to the US. Canada, too, suffered greatly, as disputes over trade, security, and investment battered its economy and its political stability. In those regions, Trump's heavy-handed tactics worked because the dependency on the US remained asymmetric

WHEN Donald Trump reassumed the presidency in January 2025, he came with a determination to reset the United States, to restore what he called its lost glory, and to end the long years of exploitation by allies and adversaries alike. His first and fiercest target was China. Even before his administration had taken shape, when his cabinet was being scrutinized in the Senate and the Congress, it was clear that nearly every appointee, from the national security leadership to the economic team, carried one unifying agenda: to confront China, to cut down its growing influence, and to reclaim for America the leadership of the international order. The early months carried the full weight of this antagonism. Tariffs were slapped on Chinese goods, hawkish statements were made about containing Beijing in the Pacific, and even talk of stopping the flow of Chinese students to American universities was floated. The tone was confrontational, the stance uncompromising, and the ambition was nothing less than to push China back not only from American shores but from Asia, Europe, and beyond. Yet as the weeks unfolded, a sobering reality dawned on Washington. The United States no longer had the leverage it once commanded. The global order had shifted. China was not a fragile power dependent on American markets and technology; it was a formidable actor that had, over the past decade, consolidated its dominance in manufacturing, technology, and finance. By 2024, China accounted for nearly 31% of global manufacturing output, making it the indispensable workshop of the world. Its grip on rare earth elements was even more decisive, producing nearly 70% and processing about 85% of the world's supply, the backbone of modern technologies from smartphones and electric vehicles to satellites and fighter jets. To think that tariffs alone could bend such a power was wishful, and it quickly became apparent that the United States was staring at a competitor far too entrenched to be bullied. Trump's early declarations that allies like Europe, Canada, and Mexico had been "plundering" the United States found quick results there. NATO states, under American pressure, agreed to hike defense spending from 2% to as high as 5% of GDP, and European negotiators conceded to humiliating trade deals that forced them to buy more American goods while swallowing a 15% tariff on their exports to the U.S. Canada, too, suffered greatly, as disputes over trade, security, and investment battered its economy and its political stability. In those regions, Trump's heavy-handed tactics worked because the dependency on the United States remained asymmetric. But with China, the playbook misfired. Beijing did not bend. It retaliated with equal tariffs, diverted exports to Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, and doubled down on its Belt and Road Initiative, which by 2025 had already drawn in more than 150 countries and over a trillion dollars in investment. Far from retreating,

China used America's confrontation to strengthen its global alternatives. The attempt to ban Chinese students quickly collapsed as well. In 2024, more than 290,000 Chinese students were enrolled in American universities, contributing over \$15 billion annually to tuition and living expenses. When proposals were made to cut them off, university presidents, governors, and state legislators raised the alarm that such a move would devastate higher education budgets and gut critical research programs. By the summer of 2025, Trump reversed course, openly admitting that these students were vital not only for finances but also for America's scientific and technological advancement. What had been framed as a security threat was rebranded as a necessary lifeline for institutions already struggling with deficits. On the military front, too, harsh reality intruded. American officials initially talked of quadrupling the U.S. presence in the South China Sea to contain Beijing. But the Pentagon's own assessments made clear that China now had the largest navy in the world by ship count, and that sustaining such deployments would bleed the U.S. treasury without altering China's resolve. With a defense budget already at \$850 billion in 2024, America faced the prospect of draining itself in a contest it could not decisively win. It was not Beijing that appeared overstretched but Washington, and in the calculus of resources, the United States realized that escalation could only sap its strength. Even the most powerful weapon in America's arsenal, the dollar, proved less decisive than hoped. The dollar still made up about 58% of global foreign exchange reserves in 2024, but China and its BRICS partners had been steadily eroding this dominance. By early 2025, nearly a quarter of intra-BRICS trade was being conducted outside of the dollar, through local currency swaps and yuan settlements. At the same time, Beijing reduced its U.S. Treasury holdings to under \$775 billion, its lowest in more than a decade, subtly weakening America's ability to weaponize its debt dependence. The weaponization of finance, so effective against weaker adversaries, had limited effect on a China that had prepared its defenses. It was on rare earths and supply chains that the hardest lesson was learned. Any disruption from Beijing would paralyze entire sectors of the U.S. economy. Defense contractors building F-35s, tech companies producing semiconductors, automakers racing to transition to EVs—all were dependent on Chinese supply chains. Attempts to reshore production or find alternative suppliers in Africa and Australia were years away from maturity. In the meantime, tariffs and restrictions only drove up prices at home. Walmart, Target, and Home Depot reported that household goods were rising by 10–15%, squeezing American consumers and fueling inflationary pressures. What had been billed as a strategy to punish China threatened to punish the very voters Trump had pledged to protect. Trump is not a leader who easily admits defeat, but he is a pragmatist when forced by circumstances.

Gradually, the rhetoric softened. Where once he threatened to choke off Chinese students, now he welcomed them. Where once he promised to multiply naval deployments, now he quietly acknowledged that China was too big to intimidate. Where once he boasted that tariffs would bring Beijing to its knees, now he conceded in his own words that "both China and the United States hold powerful cards, but I do not want to use these cards anymore." It was a rare admission of limits, but also a demonstration of flexibility, of learning fast and adjusting course in the face of hard realities. The implications of this shift are global. For Europe and Canada, the price of submission to American tariffs has been humiliation and economic loss. For developing countries, especially those bound to China through investment and infrastructure like Pakistan, the easing of U.S.-China tensions offers relief, stability, and opportunities. Supply chains can stabilize, inflationary shocks can be tempered, and the specter of a bifurcated technological order can be postponed. The nervousness that gripped global markets in early 2025 may yet give way to a calmer, more predictable environment. This is not submission by the United States, nor is it triumph for China alone. It is a recognition of a multipolar world, one where interdependence outweighs the fantasies of domination. It is also a testament to Trump's instinct for survival, his ability to correct course, and his willingness to pivot when faced with the immovable weight of reality. The United States still holds cards—in its consumer market, its technology base, its dollar system, and its alliances. But China holds cards too—in its manufacturing dominance, its rare earths, its investments, and its financial innovation. The test now is not who can outplay the other, but who can recognize that destroying the table destroys the game for all. The course correction we are witnessing may prove to be one of the most consequential strategic adjustments of Trump's presidency. It suggests not weakness, but wisdom—the wisdom to see that America cannot remain a hegemon in a world where China has become the indispensable player. In showing flexibility, Trump has revealed that leadership is not only about force but about judgment. He has acknowledged that America's power, though vast, must coexist with China's, and that a stable balance is the only path to safeguard prosperity at home and stability abroad. To some, this may feel like compromise. To others, like survival. But history may remember it as something larger: the moment the United States accepted the reality of a multipolar world, and chose coexistence over collision.

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Democratization in Pakistan: The Role of Political Dynasties

Mustansar Siam and Babar Khan

Pakistan's experience fits into a wider global pattern. In India, the Nehru-Gandhi family has remained central to the Congress Party for decades. In Bangladesh, both the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party are led by descendants of political leaders from the country's formative years. Even established democracies are not immune: the United States has witnessed the rise of families like the Kennedys, Bushes, and Clintons, while in the Philippines, nearly 70 percent of legislators in 2019 came from dynastic backgrounds

DEMOCRACY thrives on inclusivity, competition, and leadership rooted in performance. Yet, in Pakistan, politics has largely been shaped by dynastic families who dominate electoral constituencies and party hierarchies. This phenomenon of political dynasticism, while not unique to Pakistan, has assumed a scale that limits the growth of democratic culture and institutions. Research by the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) indicates that in the 2018 National Assembly, around 55–60 percent of elected members belonged to families with prior political backgrounds. Similarly, in provincial assemblies, especially in Sindh and Punjab, over half of the seats are consistently won by candidates from entrenched political households. In rural districts, entire constituencies are often treated as family fiefdoms, with political influence passed down like property. The endurance of dynastic politics has multiple explanations. For many voters, family names provide a sense of continuity and familiarity. Dynastic figures also control local patronage networks, often linked to landholding and access to state resources, which reinforces their hold over rural constituencies. In some areas, voting for a particular family is perceived as the only viable route to secure development funds, employment opportunities, or protection against bureaucratic hurdles. Pakistan's experience fits into a wider glob-

al pattern. In India, the Nehru-Gandhi family has remained central to the Congress Party for decades. In Bangladesh, both the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party are led by descendants of political leaders from the country's formative years. Even established democracies are not immune: the United States has witnessed the rise of families like the Kennedys, Bushes, and Clintons, while in the Philippines, nearly 70 percent of legislators in 2019 came from dynastic backgrounds. What distinguishes Pakistan, however, is the relatively weaker presence of internal party democracy and the reliance on feudal structures, which makes it harder for non-dynastic leaders to break through. The democratic implications are significant. Dynasticism undermines meritocracy by narrowing political competition and discouraging new entrants, particularly women and youth from non-political families. Parties often fail to institutionalize internal elections, focusing instead on grooming heirs as future leaders. This weakens political debate, fosters personality-driven politics, and sidelines broader ideological engagement. Moreover, the dominance of families entrenches a culture of patronage rather than performance-based governance. Studies of electoral behavior in Pakistan show that voters in rural areas tend to cast ballots for dynastic candidates regardless of legislative performance, due to the expectation of direct benefits. This reduces in-

centives for policy innovation and accountability. To move forward, Pakistan requires reforms that encourage inclusivity and reduce over-dependence on hereditary politics. Enforcing transparent intra-party elections, introducing stronger campaign finance regulations, and considering proportional representation could broaden the political field. Equally important is investing in civic education, so that voters evaluate candidates on performance and policy platforms rather than lineage. Political dynasticism in Pakistan is thus both a symptom and a cause of institutional weakness. Unless these patterns are challenged through reforms and public awareness, the country risks remaining trapped in a cycle where democracy exists in procedure but not in spirit—where leadership is inherited rather than earned, and the promise of genuine representation continues to elude the people.

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Briefs

Nearly
150,000
evacuated
amid flood
warnings

FROM PAGE 01

The Chenab has entered a low flood at Head Marala, while its tributaries are also witnessing low levels. Water flow in the Jhelum, Kabul and Nari rivers remains normal, and hill torrents in the Suleman Range and Dera Ghazi Khan division are not currently active. Reservoirs are also filling up, with Tarbela almost full and Mangla nearing capacity, while Khanpur, Rawal and Simly dams are also recording rising water levels. Authorities in Punjab have instructed deputy commissioners and commissioners in Lahore, Sahiwal, Multan, Bahawalpur and Dera Ghazi Khan to remain alert. Announcements are being made through mosques urging residents to move to safe locations, while relief camps and arrangements for fodder have been set up for displaced families and their livestock.

The latest warnings follow two formal contacts made by New Delhi this week to inform Islamabad about planned water discharges. India's Madhopur Headworks has already increased inflows into the Ravi, while water released into the Sutlej has inundated parts of southern Punjab.

Australia
expels Iran's
envoy...

FROM PAGE 01

said foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei during a weekly press conference, adding that "any inappropriate and unjustified action on a diplomatic level will have a reciprocal reaction". Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said earlier that Iran was behind the torching of a kosher cafe in Sydney's Bondi suburb in October 2024, and directed a major arson attack on the Adass Israel Synagogue in Melbourne in December of the same year. No injuries were reported in the two attacks.

Australia declared Iranian ambassador Ahmad Sadeghi "persona non grata" and ordered him and three other officials to leave the country within seven days. It also withdrew its own ambassador to Iran and suspended operations at its embassy in Tehran, which opened in 1968. Baqaei said the measures appeared to be "influenced by internal developments" in Australia, including recent protests against Israel's war in Gaza. "It seems that this action is taken in order to compensate for the limited criticism the Australian side has directed at the Zionist regime [Israel]," he added. Iran's reaction comes in response of Australian PM's allegations saying that Tehran was behind two arson attacks.

Pak, Türkiye
pledge to
further...

FROM PAGE 01

They emphasized the urgent need for coordinated humanitarian assistance and renewed their countries' unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people in their just struggle for self-determination and statehood. Senator Dar and FM Fidan also reaffirmed the deep-rooted, brotherly relations between Pakistan and Türkiye, which are anchored in shared faith, history, and values. Both sides expressed satisfaction over the existing level of bilateral cooperation in political, economic, defence, and cultural spheres and committed to exploring new avenues for expanding multifaceted collaboration. They also agreed to maintain close coordination on regional and international forums, especially within the OIC framework, to ensure that the voices of the Muslim Ummah are heard and collective action is taken on critical issues. The meeting concluded with both leaders reiterating their resolve to further strengthen Pakistan-Türkiye ties and continue working together for peace, development, and justice in the Islamic world.

PVARA convenes
inaugural board meeting

The Board deliberated on key priorities, including operationalizing PVARA to align with international Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) standards, recommending independent directors with expertise in virtual assets for approval, and establishing the Authority's core framework



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA) held its first board meeting today in Islamabad, marking a pivotal step in Pakistan's journey toward embracing blockchain, virtual assets, and the digital economy. The meeting was attended by Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, as a special invitee, alongside Minister of State for Crypto and Blockchain and PVARA

Chairman Bilal bin Saqib, the Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, Federal Secretaries of the Ministries of IT and Law and Justice, Chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), and key stakeholders, including representatives from the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA). In his address, the Finance Minister hailed the establishment of PVARA as a transformative milestone in Pakistan's economic evolution. He emphasized the Authority's critical

role in positioning Pakistan as a leader in the global virtual assets economy. The Minister expressed gratitude to the Pakistan Crypto Council (PCC) for its foundational contributions and extensive consultations with stakeholders, institutions, and experts, which were instrumental in establishing PVARA. The Board deliberated on key priorities, including operationalizing PVARA to align with international Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) standards, recommending independent directors with expertise in vir-

tual assets for approval, and establishing the Authority's core framework.

To accelerate progress, the Board agreed to form dedicated committees focused on sandbox experimentation, taxation policies, regulatory drafting, and international engagement. A draft of the proposed licensing framework was also shared with the members for consultation, which will be finalized in the coming days.

Additionally, PVARA will hold bi-monthly meetings for the first six months to ensure robust feedback and stakeholder consultation. The Board also approved the creation of a complaint portal, developed in collaboration with the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA), to address concerns related to virtual assets and provide timely redressal. The Board also deliberated on the withdrawal of BPRD Circular No. 03 of 2018, issued by the State Bank of Pakistan, which had directed financial institutions to refrain from dealing in virtual currencies and tokens.

Chairman Bilal bin Saqib remarked: "Today is a defining moment for Pakistan's virtual assets ecosystem. PVARA will safeguard financial integrity while fostering innovation, investment, and opportunity in the virtual assets space. Our goal is to build trust domestically and enhance Pakistan's credibility as a forward-thinking player in the global virtual assets economy." The Finance Minister reiterated the government's unwavering support for PVARA, underscoring its role in promoting the responsible adoption of virtual assets and strengthening Pakistan's financial system against illicit activities.

Battling Venus unsure of future
plans after US Open exit

NEW YORK: An emotional Venus Williams was non-committal about her future on Monday after the 45-year-old battled bravely before suffering a first-round defeat at the US Open. The American former world number one delighted a packed house on the Arthur Ashe Stadium court with a gutsy 6-3, 2-6, 6-1 defeat to Czech 11th seed Karolina Muchova. Williams only returned to competitive tennis in July following a 16-month absence from the sport and was granted a wild card into the main draw at Flushing Meadows, a decision that met with criticism in some quarters.

Yet she did enough against her 29-year-old opponent – who was not even born when Williams turned professional in 1994 – to more than justify the decision to give her a place in the main draw. Williams said she does not expect to play again this year, citing a reluctance to travel, but was coy about whether she would consider seeking

a place in the Australian Open next season. "That's kind of far too," Williams, the US Open champion in 2000 and 2001, said when asked about the Australian Open.

"My goal is to do what I want to do. I'm so grateful for all the folks who gave me a wild card. They could have said, 'Hey, listen, you've been gone too long, you haven't won a lot of matches in the last few years.' I wasn't lucky with my health and with injuries," she said. "But there were a lot of people who believed in me in these tournaments. I'm very grateful to have had that chance and that opportunity to make good on it and have a chance to really strike the ball. 'I play an exciting brand of tennis. It's a lot of fun to go literally hog wild out there and hit as hard as I can. I'm happiest when I can just hit hard.'" Seven-time major singles champion Williams contrasted Monday's performance with her defeat to Muchova at the US Open in 2020, when she lost in straight sets in the first round. – APP

PCB refutes reports
on Shan, Rizwan's
captaincy future

PCB clarifies Salman Ali Agha not being considered as new ODI captain

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Monday firmly dismissed reports suggesting the removal of Shan Masood as Test captain and the revocation of Mohammad Rizwan's ODI captaincy. In a post on X, a PCB spokesperson said that there is no proposal under consideration to remove Masood from Test captaincy, nor was there any plan to appoint Saud Shakeel as his replacement. The PCB also categorically rejected reports about Rizwan being stripped of his ODI captaincy. The PCB clarified that Salman Ali Agha is not being considered as the new ODI captain. The PCB further confirmed that the selection committee has not discussed any matter or proposal regarding a change in captaincy. Additionally, the PCB emphasised that the category of any player's contract has not been altered. The clarification was issued after speculation intensified that Shan could be replaced by Saud as Test captain, while Rizwan's position as ODI captain was also reported to be in jeopardy. For the unversed, the Tri-Nation series, featuring Pakistan, Afghanistan and the UAE, will be played at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium from August 29 to September 7. Pakistan will open their campaign against Afghanistan at 7:00 PM local time. Each team will play the others twice, with the top two qualifying for the final on September 7. Following the series, Pakistan will turn its focus to the 2025 Asia Cup, which kicks off on September 9 with the opening match between Afghanistan and Hong Kong. Eight teams, divided into two groups, will compete for the coveted trophy. Pakistan has been placed in Group A alongside India, UAE, and Oman. Group B comprises Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and Hong Kong. The men in green will launch their Asia Cup campaign against Oman on September

A cut above:
new-look
Alcaraz eases
into US Open
round two

NEW YORK: Carlos Alcaraz unveiled a striking new hairstyle before giving towering Reilly Opelka the chop at the US Open. The 22-year-old arrived on Arthur Ashe Stadium sporting a severe military-style crew cut for his night match with the American. While Alcaraz's new look failed to impress some – close friend and fellow player Frances Tiafoe called it "terrible" – it did not distract the streamlined Spaniard from task at hand as he motored to a 6-4, 7-5, 6-4 first-round victory over the 6ft 11in Opelka. – APP

India cricket ends
\$43.6mn sponsorship
after online
gambling ban: report

AHMEDABAD: Indian cricket is looking for a new main sponsor after a fantasy sports gaming platform pulled out of a deal worth \$43.6 million following a government ban on online gambling, reports said Monday. Dream11, the biggest online gaming platform in the country, became the lead sponsor of the men's and women's national teams after signing a three-year deal in July 2023. The Dream11 logo is printed on the jerseys of the Indian players. It is also the sponsor of several Indian Premier League franchises. Last week, the Indian parliament passed the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, criminalising the offering and financing of such games, with offenders facing up to five years in prison. The Indian Express newspaper said Monday that representatives of Dream11 visited the office of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and informed its chief executive, Hemang Amin, that they won't be able to continue. "As a result, they won't be the team's sponsors for the Asia Cup. – DNA



12, followed by the highly anticipated clash against India on September 14. Their final group-stage match will be against hosts UAE on September 17.

Tri-series schedule (all matches at Sharjah Cricket Stadium):

29 August – Afghanistan v Pakistan – 7pm local time

30 August – UAE v Pakistan – 7pm local time

1 September – UAE v Afghanistan – 7pm local time

2 September – Pakistan v Afghanistan – 7pm local time

4 September – Pakistan v UAE – 7pm local time

5 September – Afghanistan v UAE – 7pm local time

7 September – Final – 7pm local time

ACC Asia Cup T20 2025 (Pakistan fixtures, Super Fours and Final):

12 September – Oman v Pakistan, DICS, 6pm local time

14 September – India v Pakistan, DICS, 6pm local time

17 September – UAE v Pakistan, DICS, 6pm local time

20-26 September – Super Fours fixtures (Abu Dhabi and Dubai)

28 September – Final, DICS, 6pm local time. – DNA

Rio Ngumoha's 100th-minute goal gives
Liverpool thrilling 3-2 win at Newcastle

Ngumoha's Historic Winner Seals Dramatic 3-2 Victory for Liverpool at Newcastle

SPORT DESK

BAKU: Rio Ngumoha's 100th-minute winner gave Liverpool a dramatic 3-2 victory away at Newcastle United in the Premier League on Monday night, according to the Liverpool's official website. At the age of 16 years and 361 days, the attacker became the Reds' youngest scorer of all time by settling a topsy-turvy affair at St. James' Park.

Ryan Gravenberch put the champions 1-0 up in the 35th minute, ahead of the Magpies going down to 10 men on the stroke of half-time when Anthony Gordon was given a red card. Though Hugo Ekitike made it 2-0 moments after the restart, the hosts clawed themselves back level through Bruno Guimaraes and William Osula. But up stepped Premier League debutant Ngumoha off the bench to restore Liverpool's lead and clinch the three points. Gravenberch was one of two changes to the XI that started the opening-night victory over AFC Bournemouth, with Curtis Jones the other. Dominik Szoboszlai began his night operating as a right-back. As fiery as the atmosphere and intensity were, clear-cut opportunities were hard to come by during the opening 45 minutes. Florian Wirtz's curler in the 13th minute, after Ekitike intercepted a slack pass out from the back, forced the first save from either goalkeeper. At the other end, Anthony Elanga's cut-back near the right

touchline caused panic inside the Liverpool box, but he could not connect with his teammate Joelinton. Gordon headed onto the roof of the net off Harvey Barnes' cross and then stabbed straight at Alisson Becker from close range while under pressure from Szoboszlai. Liverpool began to stem the attacks from the hosts with patient spells of possession and would take the lead during



one of these encouraging periods. Gravenberch needed no invitation to take aim at goal from distance when Cody Gakpo laid the ball off to him. The midfielder's low strike flew through the legs of Guimaraes and took a kiss off the post en route to the back of the net, leaving Nick Pope rooted to his spot. Newcastle's hope of a recovery grew more difficult in added time with the dismissal of Gordon. His challenge on Virgil van Dijk was deemed to be serious foul play by the VAR, who recommended the overturning of the initial yellow-card decision. The Reds flew out of the blocks and doubled their advantage 20 seconds after referee Simon Hooper blew his whistle. Ekitike applied a lovely first-time finish, in off the post, from a Gakpo nudge just on the edge of the box. But, in minute 57, we were back to where we began the second period when Guimaraes reached Tino Livramento's delivery from out wide and planted a header into the bottom corner. Even with their one-man advantage, it was set up to be a tense finale for Liverpool.

Newcastle's pressure led to an equaliser two minutes before the end of the 90; a free-kick was punted upfield, flicked on by Dan Burn and then guided past Alisson by Osula, who had not been on the pitch long. There were 11 minutes of added-on time that both teams used to search for a winner. It was to go the visitors' way, however, when Szoboszlai skipped over Mohamed Salah's low cross, allowing Ngumoha to make history and seal a dramatic win.

Shehbaz
Sharif
praises
PAF's...

FROM PAGE 01

being recognized for their role in maintaining peace and responding to external threats with professionalism and resolve. The Prime Minister's remarks reflect a broader national sentiment of pride and gratitude toward the armed forces, particularly the PAF, for their role in defending the homeland.

Pakistan
commitment
to deepen...

FROM PAGE 01

In the meeting, they discussed the grave situation in Palestine, stressing the urgent need for humanitarian access, a ceasefire, and lasting peace. The FM's underscored the importance of unity within the Muslim Ummah in these challenging times. Dar landed in Jeddah on a two-day official visit yesterday, where he spoke on Israel's ongoing Gaza onslaught during the 21st extraordinary session of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers. DPM Dar on Monday reiterated Pakistan's strong condemnation of Israel's highly escalatory and dangerous statements over Palestinian land. He said 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", provided an insight into Israel's annexationist and rogue mindset. In his statement at the 21st Extraordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) in Jeddah, DPM Dar reiterated Pakistan's call for an immediate and effective ceasefire in Gaza.

Imran
wants his
MPs to...

FROM PAGE 01

also issued directives to PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar and general secretary Salman Akram Raja regarding the upcoming by-elections. "He [Imran] said contesting the by-elections would only give legal justification to those polls," Aleema added. Earlier, it was reported that Aleema had opposed participation in the by-elections, saying that the decision was totally against Khan's clear instructions. Raja, however, reportedly conveyed the political committee's position and voting breakdown to her. According to sources, 13 members of the committee favoured contesting the by-elections, while 9 were opposed. The disagreement reportedly left Raja disheartened, ultimately prompting his decision to tender resignation from the key party role. However, Raja – earlier in the day – said Imran had refused to accept his resignation from party's secretary general post. Separately, sources told Geo News that Imran has nominated Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) chief Allama Nasir Abbas and Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) Chairman Mahmood Khan Achakzai for the post of opposition leaders in Senate and National Assembly, respectively. Furthermore, sources added that Imran has also ordered his party to boycott the upcoming by-elections. Sharing details of the meeting today, Aleema said the PTI founder expressed distress over his wife Bushra Bibi's situation and was informed about the arrests of Shershah and Shahrez. "Imran said that such punishments and disqualifications have never taken place before in Pakistan," she noted. Shershah and Shahrez were arrested over their alleged involvement in May 9, 2023, riots, as the police claimed to have video evidence against the former for his presence at the Jinnah House on that day, a first information report (FIR) stated.

Iran army
chief talks
to Field
Marshal...

FROM PAGE 01

some steps have been taken in the past that should be increased and the backlogs should be compensated.

Briefs

PSX
continues
with bearish
trend

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index continued with bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 380.24 points, a negative change of 0.26 percent, closing at 148,435.06 points against 148,815.31 points last trading day. A total of 665,420,243 shares were traded during the day as compared to 693,301,556 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 31.543 billion against Rs 26.343 billion on the last trading day. As many as 479 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 196 of them recorded gains and 256 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 27 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were First Dawood Prop with 40,159,110 shares at Rs 7.43 per share, Kohinoor Spinning with 33,777,336 shares at Rs6.74 per share and Tree Corporation with 33,123,483 shares at Rs 24.84 per share. Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 121.65 per share price, closing at Rs 8,225.07, whereas the runner-up was Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited with Rs61.80 rise in its per share price to Rs9,629.99. PIA Holding Company LimitedB witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs561.33 per share closing at Rs 26,550.77 followed by Bata Pakistan Limited with Rs157.17 decline in its share price to close at Rs1,554.41.—APP

Gold price
ups by Rs 900
per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs.900 and was traded at Rs.360,700 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs359,800 the previous day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also increased by Rs.772 to Rs.309,242 from Rs.308,470 whereas that of 10 grams of 22 karat gold went up by Rs.708 to Rs283,482 from Rs 282,774. The rates of per tola and ten gram silver remained stagnant at Rs.4,121 and Rs 3,533 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$9 to \$3,380 from \$3,371. However, the rates of silver in international market remained unchanged at \$38.88, the Association reported.

India to
probe giant
zoo run by
Ambani's son

NEW DELHI: India's Supreme Court has ordered an investigation into allegations of illegal animal imports and financial misconduct at a vast private zoo set up by the son of Asia's richest person. Vantara, which bills itself as the "world's biggest wild animal rescue centre", is run by Anant Ambani, son of Mukesh Ambani, the billionaire head of the multinational conglomerate Reliance Industries. The site in the western state of Gujarat is home to more than 200 elephants, as well as 50 bears, 160 tigers, 200 lions, 250 leopards and 900 crocodiles, among other animals, according to India's Central Zoo Authority. Wildlife activists have criticised the facility, saying it is housing endangered species on baking flatlands next to a giant oil refinery complex without any plan to return them to the wild. And on Monday, India's Supreme Court said it had ordered a panel led by retired judges to investigate alleged unlawful acquisition of animals — particularly elephants — other violations of wildlife regulations, and money laundering. "We consider it appropriate... to call for an independent factual appraisal," the court said. It added that the team will also assess whether Gujarat's harsh climate is unsuitable for the animals, and "complaints regarding creation of a vanity or private collection".—APP

ECC okays economic steps, relief for GB flood affectees

The ECC considered a summary from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting regarding a Technical Supplementary Grant of Rs 11 billion in favour of Pakistan Television Corporation (PTVC) against Tariff Adjustment and Net Metering

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet met today under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, at the Finance Division. The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari, Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain, Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan, and other Members of the body, including federal secretaries, representatives from relevant regulatory bodies, and senior officials of concerned Ministries and Divisions.

The ECC considered a summary from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting regarding a Technical Supplementary Grant of Rs 11 billion in favour of Pakistan Television Corporation (PTVC) against Tariff Adjustment and Net Metering, and approved Rs 3.813 billion with the remaining to be released on a quarterly basis for payment of salaries, pensions, and operational expenses of the state broadcaster. While approving the request, the ECC underscored that it was imperative for PTV to reduce its reliance on budgetary support and chart a path towards self-sustainability. The Committee also deliberated on a summary from the Petroleum Division regarding recovery of petroleum levy defaulted on by M/s Cnerygco PK Limited (CPL) since 2019. After detailed discus-



sion, the ECC approved the settlement framework prepared in line with the decisions of SIFC Apex/EC/IC for recovery of the principal amount of petroleum levy duty audited to date, and authorized the Petroleum Division to sign the proposed deed of settlement with CPL. The Committee further directed

that the entire outstanding amount of petroleum levy be recovered strictly in accordance with the terms of the settlement.

On a summary from the Power Division regarding relief to power consumers on account of captives transmission levy, the ECC approved the mechanism pro-

posed by the Division to pass on the benefit of levy collected from captive power consumers to electricity grid consumers.

The Committee also considered a summary seeking review of tariff determination of the Machike-Thallian Tarrujabba White Oil Pipeline project being devel-

oped on a government-to-government basis with Azerbaijan, and approved the terms and conditions proposed by the Petroleum Division to enable the launch of this strategic project which will further strengthen bilateral friendship, trade, and investment ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

Firefighters stabilize
Oregon wildfire

CALIFORNIA: A wildfire that destroyed four homes in central Oregon was starting to stabilize on Monday, authorities said, while a blaze in Northern California wine country has so far spared some of the state's most famous vineyards. Moisture helped the 1,200 firefighters battling Oregon's Flat Fire, but more work needed to be done. Dry, hot weather had fueled a rapid expansion of the blaze across 88 square kilometers of rugged terrain in Deschutes and Jefferson counties since the fire began late Thursday "Gotta love Mother Nature. It brought in a little bit of rain. Cooled the temps, relative humidity came up," Travis Medema, the state's chief deputy state fire marshal, told a community meeting in the town of Sisters. "The incident, for the first time in the last three days, is really beginning to stabilize." Officials said firefighters had protective lines of some sort around the entire fire, including roads, but the fire remained at five percent containment. Authorities at one point ordered evacuations for more than 4,000 homes but lifted orders for some areas in the evening. A heat advisory was in place through Wednesday, and forecasters warned that potential thunderstorms could create erratic winds that would challenge firefighters. Flames in California's wine country Meanwhile, the Pickett Fire in Northern California has charred about 26 square kilometers of remote Napa County, known for its hundreds of wineries. It was 15 percent contained on Monday. Flames spared the home and adjacent vineyards of Jayson Woodbridge of Hundred Acre wines, but he said it was a close call on Thursday when the fire broke out and raced along nearby slopes. He and his son grabbed hoses and futilely began spraying down the steep hillsides. "The water was evaporating as fast as we were spraying it out there," Woodbridge recalled Monday. "It was just a hot funnel of air. Fire was just engulfing everything." Before long, crews with bulldozers and air support arrived to protect the property. Water-dropping helicopters continued their flights on Monday, keeping the flames contained to canyons about 130 kilometers north of San Francisco. With about a month to go before harvest, Woodbridge said his grapes won't be damaged because of the "pure luck" of wind direction. "The smoke won't affect the fruit because the wind's coming in from the west, thankfully," Woodbridge said. That wasn't the case in 2020 when toxic smoke from the Glass Fire caused Woodbridge and other wineries to scrap much of that year's crop.—DNA

Kuwait records
\$3.46b budget deficit,
well below forecast

RIYADH: Kuwait recorded an actual budget deficit of 1.06 billion dinars (\$3.46 billion) for the 2024-2025 fiscal year ending March 31, significantly lower than the projected shortfall of 5.6 billion dinars. According to Reuters, citing data published in the official gazette Kuwait Al-Yaum, total actual revenues reached 22.06 billion dinars, surpassing the estimated 18.9 billion dinars. Of the total, 19.36 billion dinars were derived from oil income. This comes as government spending came in at 23.11 billion dinars, lower than the 24.5 billion dinars initially forecast in the state budget plan. Economic researcher Mohammed Ramadan said the lower-than-expected deficit was "normal," attributing it to Kuwait's conservative approach to budgeting, Reuters reported. "The government usually underestimates revenues and overstates expenditures, which makes the projected deficit appear somewhat exaggerated," he said. "Unfortunately, this policy leads the government to spend less than it should, which in turn reduces investment in development projects that grow more expensive over time due to inflation and other factors," he added. Total expenditures declined by nearly seven percent compared to the previous fiscal year, when spending stood at 23.64 billion dinars. Ramadan said the decrease was primarily due to reduced allocations for grants. These typically include support for foreign countries, international organizations, and some domestic institutions. He also noted a reduction in the goods and services category, which encompasses a wide range of operational spending.—DNA

CDNS set
annual savings
target of Rs13t

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has set a annual savings target of Rs1.3 trillion for the current Fiscal Year, 2025-26, to promote the savings culture in the country. Similarly, the CDNS has set a target of Rs50 billion in investments in Islamic Investment for the Current Fiscal Year 2025-26, which will lead to the growth of the Islamic economy in the country, the senior official of CDNS told APP on Tuesday. Replying to a question, he said that the CDNS has attained a target of Rs150 billion in savings inflows of the annual target for the first month of the current fiscal year, from July 1 to August 20, 2025. The senior official of CDNS said that the National Savings has set an annual target of Rs1650 billion for the current Fiscal Year, 2024-25, which will promote the country's saving culture.—APP

Indonesia creates new
ministry to oversee
Hajj, Umrah pilgrimages

JAKARTA: Indonesia's parliament on Tuesday approved the establishment of a new ministry dedicated solely to Hajj and Umrah which will oversee pilgrimage services for millions of Indonesians traveling to Saudi Arabia each year. The world's biggest Muslim-majority nation, Indonesia sends the largest contingent of Hajj pilgrims every year, while more than a million travel annually for Umrah. Indonesian lawmakers unanimously passed revisions to the country's 2019 Hajj and Umrah Law during a plenary session on Tuesday, effectively creating the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah. This ministry will provide a one-stop service (and) coordinate all matters related to organizing Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages, whether in terms of infrastructure, human resources or services for the pilgrims," said lawmaker Marwan Dasopang. The changes were initially proposed to improve overall services for pilgrims and adjust to policy and technological developments in Saudi Arabia, he added. Pilgrimage services in Indonesia were previously organized by the Directorate General for Hajj and Umrah Management, which operated under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Earlier this year, 221,000 Indonesian Hajj pilgrims were among more than 1.6 million Muslims who traveled to Makkah to perform the pilgrimage, one of the five pillars of Islam. "This is a new breakthrough, because (especially) when it comes to Hajj we're not talking about managing just a few people, but a huge ecosystem," Deputy Speaker Cucun Ahmad Syamsurrijal told reporters in Jakarta. "We hope that with this new ministry, services for pilgrimages will be further improved, more measured and continuously evaluated. The House of Representatives will be supervising closely." President Prabowo Subianto is expected to appoint a minister to head the new ministry soon. The Indonesian government has stepped up services for pilgrims this year, including the opening of a dedicated terminal for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims in May at Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta International Airport.—APP

Denmark not
excluding
recognizing
Palestinian
state: PM

COPENHAGEN: Denmark is not ruling out the possibility of recognizing Palestinian statehood as long as it is democratic, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said on Tuesday. "We're not saying no to recognizing Palestine as a state," she told reporters. "We're in favor of it. We have been for a long time. It's what we want. But of course we have to be sure that it will be a democratic state," she added. On Sunday, more than 10,000 people marched in a protest in central Copenhagen calling for an end to the war in Gaza and urging Denmark to recognize Palestinian statehood. In an interview with the Danish daily Jyllands-Posten on August 16, Frederiksen said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was "now a problem in himself," and that his Israeli government was going "too far." "Netanyahu's continued and very violent actions in Gaza are unacceptable," she wrote on Facebook the same day, adding that she has, since Hamas' October 7, 2023 attack, supported Israel's right to eliminate the "threat posed by Hamas.—APP

Kazakh
President to
visit China

ASTANA : The Head of State, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, will pay a visit to China on August 30 – September 3 at the invitation of President Xi Jinping, Kazinform News Agency learnt from the Akorda reports. The high-level talks will be held as part of the visit of the President to debate prospects for strengthening the Kazakhstan-China comprehensive and external strategic partnership. On August 31 – September 1, the President will attend the Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO and the "SCO Plus" Meeting in Tianjin, China. On September 2, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev will address the Kazakhstan-China Business Council sitting and hold talks with the heads of large Chinese companies. On September 3, the Head of State will attend solemn events commemorating the 80th anniversary of Victory in WWII as a guest. Earlier, it was reported that the 25th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and "SCO Plus" Meeting will be held on the margins of the SCO Summit. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit 2025 will take place in Tianjin, China, from August 31 to September 1.—APP

Hundreds of Afghan patients get eye
surgery in KSrelief-funded campaign

"I wouldn't have been able to go to a private hospital to treat my eyes. That's why I and so many others are here today, receiving free eye care," he said. "I sincerely hope other international organizations also step forward to support the Afghan people and recognize the difficult conditions we are living in

KABUL: Hundreds of the most vulnerable Afghan patients are set to receive free eye treatment, including surgery, in Kabul this week under a medical intervention program funded by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center. The program is organized by the Afghan Red Crescent Society at the ARCS Central Hospital in Kabul from Aug. 24 to 28. It is funded by KSrelief and Al-Basar International Foundation, a Saudi-based nongovernmental organization providing eye healthcare and visual rehabilitation to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities around the world. "The five-day campaign will provide treatment and surgery services for 400 patients and screening services for around 4,000 others. Patients receive screening services, medicine, glasses and surgery free of charge," Dr. Abdul Wali Utmanza, director of the ARCS Central Hospital, told Arab News. "Soon, an additional 400 patients in

Nangarhar and 400 more in Kandahar will also undergo eye surgery." Al-Basar Foundation has been treating eye patients in Afghanistan with KSrelief support since 2023. "Since then, thousands of patients have received care, and we remain committed to expanding these vital services even further," said Rizwan Baloch, the foundation's representative. "These services are crucial for restoring vision, improving lives, and reaching those without access to proper eye care."

Of Afghanistan's 43 million population, more than 400,000 are blind, according to the World Health Organization. Dr. Shamsulhaq Salim, ophthalmologist from Herat, estimates that another 2 million are visually impaired and many of them can lose sight due to cataracts. "Cataracts remain the leading cause of blindness in Afghanistan, yet a simple surgery can completely restore vision.

However, a severe shortage of eye specialists and relevant modern facilities are major barriers," he told Arab News. "Afghanistan has an estimated 150 to 200 eye specialists nationwide, most of whom are based in major cities and provincial centers." There are only nine public eye hospitals in the country and a handful of private clinics. For Mir Hamidullah, who arrived for treatment in Kabul from Surobi district, some 100 km away, the Saudi initiative offered a rare chance to restore his vision. "I wouldn't have been able to go to a private hospital to treat my eyes. That's why I and so many others are here today, receiving free eye care," he said. "I sincerely hope other international organizations also step forward to support the Afghan people and recognize the difficult conditions we are living in."—Agencies

Briefs

Imran Khan
seeks FIR
against
Punjab CM

Petition alleges PTI founder "constantly kept in darkness," all measures taken on orders of CM Maryam

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has requested the Rawalpindi city police officer (CPO) to lodge a case against Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz along with eight police officials, alleging denial of facilities in Adiala jail. The request, submitted by the jailed ex-prime minister's lawyer, Tabish Farooq, to CPO Khalid Hamdani, seeks the registration of a case against Maryam Nawaz, the Adiala Jail superintendent, ASP Zainab, SHO Aizaz, the Adiala outpost in-charge, and others — eight individuals in total, The News reported. Sent to the CPO's office via courier service, the petition states that Imran Khan is being denied standard facilities in prison. It alleges that on the instructions of the Punjab chief minister, even his basic rights as a prisoner are being violated. The petition claims there is no light in his cell and that his family is being denied visitation rights. It further asserts that he is "constantly kept in darkness" and that all these measures are being taken on the orders of the Punjab chief minister.

FIA arrests
two human
traffickers

DNA

QUETTA: Human smuggling from Pakistan to Iran has been a persistent issue, with many migrants attempting to cross through perilous land and sea routes in search of better economic opportunities or to reach onward destinations in the Middle East and Europe, according to a report by the National Initiative against Organised Crime. Gwadar and other parts of Balochistan are frequently used as key transit points, where traffickers exploit vulnerable citizens by charging hefty sums for the dangerous journeys. Per the FIA's statement, "major operations" were carried out by the agency's Composite Circle Gwadar, through which the suspects were arrested from different areas of the district. "The arrested suspects are involved in sending citizens from Pakistan to Iran through illegal sea routes," it said. "The suspect extorted Rs10,000 each from the victims." The suspects were arrested after being identified by the victims, the statement further said, adding that an investigation into the matter had been initiated.

Hospital
strike:
UN calls
for inquiry

DNA

NEW YORK: There's been international condemnation of Israeli airstrikes on the Nasser hospital in southern Gaza that killed many people including five journalists. The head of the UN, Antonio Guterres, described Monday's incident as horrific. Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, expressed deep regret and referred to the attacks as a "tragic mishap". Also: US judge temporarily blocks Abrego Garcia's deportation, and catcombs in Paris to close for major makeover. The Global News Podcast brings you the breaking news you need to hear, as it happens. Listen for the latest headlines and current affairs from around the world. Politics, economics, climate, business, technology, health — we cover it all with expert analysis and insight. Get the news that matters, delivered twice a day on weekdays and daily at weekends, plus special bonus episodes reacting to urgent breaking stories.

PM seeks transparent,
faceless customs system

PM Orders Faceless Customs Reforms to Boost Trade, Transparency, and Revenue Growth



SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the relevant authorities to ensure transparency by integrating the customs inspection and assessment system with modern technology and making it faceless. He said that the purpose of improving and modernizing the customs system was to facilitate business-

men associated with exports and imports while simultaneously increasing national revenue. Chairing the progress review meeting on faceless appraisal of customs, the prime minister also issued special directives to minimize the time duration of the administrative procedures required for customs inspection and assessment. For the effective implementation of customs system reforms, all relevant institutions should work in harmony and under an

integrated strategy, the prime minister said adding that enhancing business and investment through economic and trade reforms was among the government's top priorities. The prime minister stressed that in reforms of the customs system, every possible benefit should be derived from international best practices and feasible strategies. The government and all relevant institutions, he said were determined to achieve the goal of national economic development,

prosperity, and improvement in trade and investment. He also directed to entrust the authority of hearing appeals filed by businessmen against customs assessments should to impartial officers.

The prime minister instructed to make organized planning to handle the increasing volume of cargo at ports and ensure its swift dispatch in such a way that goods move from the port to their destination at the earliest. He also said that immediate necessary steps should be taken to make the appeal system against customs assessments transparent.

The meeting was briefed on the steps taken so far in customs inspection and assessment. It was informed that an Artificial Intelligence-based risk management system will soon be operational.

The use of AI in inspection through customs scanners is reducing the time required for customs clearance.

Due to effective government actions against smuggling, the illegal transportation of goods has decreased, and the number of goods cleared through the formal legal customs system has increased, the meeting was informed.

The meeting was further told that work was ongoing to take all necessary steps to make the customs inspection and assessment system faceless. Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Climate Change Dr. Musadik Malik, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar, Minister for Economic Affairs Division Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani and senior government officials attended the meeting.

ECP writes to political parties
seeking financial statements

Under Section 210 of the Elections Act, political parties are legally bound to submit, within forty days after the end of each financial year, their financial statements on Form-D, duly audited and certified by a Chartered Accountant

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued a formal reminder to all political parties, directing their leadership to submit consolidated and audited financial statements for the fiscal year 2024-25, which concluded in June 2025. As per the requirements of Sections 204 and 210 of the Elections Act, 2017, and Rules 159 and 160 of the Election Rules, 2017, all parties are obligated to file their financial disclosures with the Commission on or before August 29, 2025. Under Section 210 of the Elections Act, political parties are legally bound to submit, within forty days after the end of each financial year, their financial statements on Form-D, duly audited and certified by a Chartered Accountant. The statements must include a comprehensive breakdown of the party's annual income and expenditures, sources of funding, as well as its assets and liabilities. These documents must be signed by an authorized party official, confirming that no funds were received from any prohibited sources as defined under the Elections

Act, 2017, and that the statements provide a true and fair view of the party's financial position. The submission must also include a valid and current renewal certificate issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP) as proof of the auditor's accreditation. Form-D is available free of charge at the ECP Secretariat in Islamabad, as well as at the offices of the Provincial Election Commissioners in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan. The form is also accessible on the ECP's official website. The Commission has strictly instructed that no overwriting will be tolerated on the submitted forms, and all submissions must be clean, complete, and compliant with the specified format. Furthermore, each submission must include bank statements for all party accounts covering the full financial year from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. These documents must be delivered in person by an authorized party representative to the office of the Secretary, Election Commission of Pakistan, Constitution Avenue, Sector G-5/2, Islamabad. Submissions sent via post, fax, courier, or any alternative means will not be accepted, in accordance with Rule 156 of the Election Rules, 2017.

Act, 2017, and that the statements provide a true and fair view of the party's financial position. The submission must also include a valid and current renewal certificate issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP) as proof of the auditor's accreditation. Form-D is available free of charge at the ECP Secretariat in Islamabad, as well as at the offices of the Provincial Election Commissioners in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan. The form is also accessible on the ECP's official website. The Commission has strictly instructed that no overwriting will be tolerated on the submitted forms, and all submissions must be clean, complete, and compliant with the specified format. Furthermore, each submission must include bank statements for all party accounts covering the full financial year from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. These documents must be delivered in person by an authorized party representative to the office of the Secretary, Election Commission of Pakistan, Constitution Avenue, Sector G-5/2, Islamabad. Submissions sent via post, fax, courier, or any alternative means will not be accepted, in accordance with Rule 156 of the Election Rules, 2017.

Pakistan received
increased funding
from multilateral
lenders

Islamabad witnessed almost 59% increase in foreign loans in July 2025 compared to previous fiscal year

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: In the midst of the selection process for filling the lucrative post of executive director at two major multilateral creditors based in Washington and Manila, Pakistan has received increased foreign loans in the first month (July 2025) of the current fiscal year. Islamabad secured foreign loans of \$695 million in July

compared to \$436.4 million in the same month of the previous fiscal year, representing an increase of almost 59%. Against the projected foreign loans and grants of \$19.7 billion for FY26, Pakistan has obtained \$694.53 million in July 2025. The World Bank has disbursed the largest project loans of \$157.69 million under IDA funding and \$52.56 million as an IBRD loan in July 2025. Pakistan also received \$100 million from Saudi Arabia in shape of Saudi Oil Facility (SOF) against the total projected amount of \$1 billion. It is expected that the SOF will continue in the first 10 months (July-April) of FY26 under the existing arrangement. The government has constituted a high-powered committee, headed by Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, for nomination of ED to the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB). The ministerial committee, led by Ishaq Dar, has finalised the name for the slot of ED in the WB, but name of ED for the ADB is yet to be finalised. However, the WB has disbursed its project financing from the first month of the current fiscal year. According to the official data released by the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) on Monday, Islamabad has obtained \$118.4 million as bilateral loans from friendly countries in July 2025 out of the total budgetary estimates of \$1.277 billion for the CFY26.

Cleric Ali Mirza
detained by police

DNA

JHELUM: Jhelum police said early on Tuesday that they have detained cleric Engineer Muhammad Ali Mirza for 30 days under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) ordinance for alleged controversial remarks. Mirza, a resident of Machine Mohallah of Jhelum city, frequently uploads his lectures and speeches on his social media accounts and has amassed 3.1 million followers on his YouTube channel. Jhelum Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Meesam Abbas and District Police Officer (DPO) Ahmed Mohiyuddin confirmed Mirza's arrest under MPO to Dawn.com. Section 3 of the MPO ordinance gives authorities the power to arrest and detain suspected persons to prevent "any person from acting in any manner prejudicial to public safety" or to maintain public order. A religious group had yesterday filed an application, seen by Dawn.com, requesting legal action against Mirza for alleged controversial remarks made during an interview that "went viral on social media". Mirza was also among 17 clerics whose speeches were banned by then-Jhelum DC during Muharram last year to prevent any potential sectarian violence.

Trump says he is firing Fed's Cook
over mortgage loan allegations

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Monday said he was firing Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook over alleged improprieties in obtaining mortgage loans, an unprecedented step that could test the boundaries of presidential power over the independent monetary policy body should it be challenged in court. Trump said in a letter to Cook, the first African-American woman to serve on the Federal Reserve's governing body, that he had "sufficient cause to remove you from your position" because in 2021 Cook indicated on documents for separate mortgage loans on properties in Michigan and Georgia that both were a primary residence where she intended to live. Cook responded several hours later in a statement emailed to reporters through the law office of lawyer Abbe Lowell, saying of Trump that "no causes exists under the law, and he has no authority" to remove her from the job she was appointed to by former US President Joe Biden in 2022. "I will continue to carry out my duties to help the American economy." — DNA

India getting ready for punishing US tariffs

India's Election Commission under fire from opposition

AGENCIES

MUMBAI: Indian exports to the United States will face some of the highest tariffs in the world this week, barring a last-minute reversal from President Donald Trump. Trump has tied issues of war and peace to trade, threatening to slap 50% duties on New Delhi in retaliation for its continued purchases of Russian oil — which Washington argues help finance Moscow's war in Ukraine. The tariff offensive has rattled US-India ties, given New Delhi a new incentive to repair relations with Beijing, and carries major consequences for the world's fifth-largest economy. Trump issued a three-week deadline on August 6, which is expected to take effect on Wednesday morning in India. How bad will it be? The United States was India's top export destination in 2024, with shipments worth \$87.3 billion. Analysts at Nomura warn that 50% duties would be "akin to a trade embargo", devastating smaller firms with "lower value add and thinner margins". Elara Securities's Garima Kapoor said no Indian product can "stand any competitive edge" under such heavy import taxes. Economists estimate tariffs could shave 70 to 100 basis points off India's GDP growth this fiscal year, dragging growth below 6%, the weakest pace since the pandemic. Exporters in textiles, seafood and jewellery are already reporting cancelled US orders and losses to rivals such as Bangladesh and

Vietnam, raising fears of heavy job cuts. A small reprieve: pharmaceuticals and electronics, including iPhones assembled in India, are exempt for now. S&P estimates exports equivalent to 1.2% of India's GDP will be hit, but says it will be a "one-off" shock that "will not derail" the country's long-term growth prospects. Meanwhile, the Election Commission of India, long regarded as the impartial guardian of the world's largest democracy, is facing unprecedented

scrutiny over its credibility and independence. Opposition leaders and critics have alleged that large-scale rigging of elections is impacting the overall results of the vote. The ECI has denied all charges, the first against it in India's history. Heading the charge is the leader of the opposition in New Delhi's parliament, Rahul Gandhi of the Congress party, who previously alleged that India's electronic voting machines are flawed. Now Gandhi has accused the ECI of refusing to

share digital voter records, detailing what he said was a list of errors after his supporters spent weeks combing through vast piles of registration lists by hand. Gandhi, 55, said his party lost dozens of seats in the 2024 parliamentary elections because of vote rigging.

The largest democratic exercise in human history across the country of 1.4 billion people was staggered over six weeks.

Gandhi claimed that the ECI manipulated voter rolls to favour Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Modi, 74, won a historic third term last year but fell short of a majority. The alleged rigging involved a string of tactics, according to Gandhi. He said some people voted multiple times, citing bulk registrations from one dwelling and seemingly bogus addresses.

In a presentation to reporters on August 7, Gandhi pointed to a parliamentary constituency his party narrowly lost as an "open and shut" example of the alleged irregularities.

Over 100,000 "fake" votes were cast in the constituency, he said, courtesy of duplicate voters. His Congress party lost the seat by just over 30,000 votes. "Our demand from the ECI is clear — be transparent and release digital voter rolls so that people and parties can audit them," Gandhi said. The ECI has called Gandhi's accusation "false and misleading". India's chief election commissioner said they would "never" back down from their constitutional duties. "Politics is being done using the Election Commission... as a tool to target India's voters," Gyanesh Kumar told a news conference this month.

French PM
fights for
survival

NEWS DESK

PARIS: French opposition parties have said they will not back Prime Minister François Bayrou after he called a vote of confidence on 8 September on plans for deep budget cuts.

Bayrou, who has led a minority government since last December, called the vote on Monday, warning France was facing a "worrying and therefore decisive moment". "Yes, it's risky, but it's even riskier not to do anything", he said, in the face of France's mounting budget deficit. From the National Rally on the right to the Socialists, Greens and France Unbowed on the left, opposition parties lined up to say they would vote against him.

Bayrou called the vote two days before protests have been called across France to "block everything".

The Bloquons tout movement, which began on social media but has since been backed by the unions and far left, emerged after Bayrou announced plans in July for almost €44bn (£38bn) in budget cuts.

Reacting to news of the vote, France's CAC40 share index fell 1.59% on Monday and then a further 2% on Tuesday morning.

Two more
polio cases
reported in KP

DNA

PESHAWAR: Two more poliovirus cases were confirmed in the southern parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, bringing Pakistan's total count this year to 23, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) said on Tuesday. Pakistan is one of the last two countries in the world, alongside Afghanistan, where polio remains endemic. Despite global efforts to eradicate the virus, challenges such as security issues, vaccine hesitancy, and misinformation have slowed progress.

A statement from the Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at Islamabad's NIH said the latest cases include a 16-month-old girl from Union Council Mullazai in Tank district and a 24-month-old girl from Union Council Miran Shah-3 in North Waziristan district. "With these detections, the total number of polio cases in Pakistan in 2025 has reached 23, including 15 cases from KP, six from Sindh, and one each from Punjab and Gilgit-Baltistan," the statement noted.