



# Islamabad POST

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**Pakistan committed Enhance ties with Japan: Shehbaz**

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**Senior journalist Aamir Mahmmud Passes away**

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**UN Secy Gen says new AI system soon**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Briefs**  
*Trump again claims tariff threat stopped Indo-Pak war*

**NEWS DESK**  
WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump once again claimed credit on Tuesday for ending the conflict between India and Pakistan, saying that his threat of extremely high tariffs was instrumental in reaching a ceasefire agreement. Participating in a cabinet meeting at the White House yesterday, the US president reiterated the claim that his intervention was directly responsible for the end of the conflict. "India and Pakistan were gonna end up in a nuclear war if I didn't stop them," he said, adding, "I saw seven jets were shot down ... \$150 million planes were shot down; seven, maybe more than that, they didn't even report the real number." Trump added that he had spoken to both India and Pakistan at the time of the conflict, asking them what was going on between them. "The hatred was tremendous," he said, saying that the conflict had been going on, "sometimes with different names", for hundreds of years. Without specifying whether he had been speaking to India or Pakistan, the president said that he had refused to make a trade deal if the two countries ended up in a nuclear war, which had proven pivotal.

**Shooting in US church**

**DNA**  
NEW YORK: Police and paramedics were responding to an active shooter situation unfolding on Wednesday at a church on the south side of US's, local news reported, citing the Minneapolis Police Department. "There is no active threat to the community at this time. The shooter is contained," the City of Minneapolis said on X. The shooting occurred at the Annunciation Church, which is also home to a grammar school. "The families of children at the school can go to the reunification zone at the Annunciation School," the city said in a second post on X. Meanwhile, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz said in a post on X that he had been briefed on the shooting and would continue to provide updates. "I'm praying for our kids and teachers whose first week of school was marred by this horrific act of violence," Walz said, without providing details on potential victims. Later, United States President Donald Trump said in a post on Truth Social that he had been fully briefed on the incident and that the White House "will continue to monitor the terrible situation".

**7 swept away by floodwaters in Sambrial**

**DNA**  
SIALKOT: Seven people have been swept away by floodwater in Sambrial, including five people who belonged to the same family, a spokesperson for Rescue 1122 said in a statement. "Seven people were washed away in floodwater in Majra Kalan," said Rescue 1122 spokesperson Waseem. "The bodies of a woman and her child have been recovered, while two other children and her husband are still missing. He added that someone who went to pick up relatives in the area and a 65-year-old man were also washed away."

## PM orders emergency measures

Thousands evacuated in Punjab as India opens floodgates, rains swell rivers to 'exceptionally high' levels

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the National Disaster Management Authority to take immediate measures to address potential urban flooding in Lahore, Sialkot and Gujrat, besides continuing its early warning and relief efforts. The prime minister, chairing an emergency meeting to discuss the situation caused by heavy rains and potential flood in Punjab, particularly in Chenab, Sutlej, and Ravi rivers, directed to enhance the effectiveness of flood and rainfall warnings, emphasizing the importance of timely information sharing between NDMA and PDMA Punjab to minimize losses. NDMA Chairman Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik briefed the prime minister on the flood situation in rivers, preemptive evacuations, safe relocations, and the delivery of relief supplies in affected areas. Referring to the provision of tents by the NDMA for affected areas in Punjab, he said the supply of other essential items will continue. He instructed Minister for Communications, Minister for Energy, Secretary Energy, and NHA Chairman to reach Lahore to fully cooperate with the provincial government to ensure uninterrupted power supply, communication channels, and road restoration in the affected areas. He said that the issues arising from

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**NDMA chairman says 210,000 evacuated**

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik has said that nearly 210,000 people have been safely evacuated from flood-affected regions with no casualties reported, APP reports. Speaking to the media, Lt Gen Malik said large-scale rescue efforts are being carried out in close coordination with the Pakistan Army, Rangers, Rescue 1122, Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs), and other agencies, with evacuees relocated to relief camps where they are receiving medical care, food, and other essential services. He said the NDMA has issued early warnings for a new spell of rainfall expected between August 29 and September 9, particularly in

Continued on Page 06

**On Imran orders**

## PTI lawmakers start quitting committees

Lawmakers have submitted their committee resignations to National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD/PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers have begun resigning from parliamentary standing committees following directives from the party's founder, Imran Khan. The move comes as part of the party's political strategy, which also includes boycotting upcoming by-elections scheduled for the coming months. MNAs Ali Asghar, Sajid Khan, Shahid Khattak, Faisal Amin Khan, and Asif Khan have all submitted resignations from various National Assembly committees. Asghar stepped down from the Cabinet, Privatisation, and Planning committees, while Sajid Khan resigned from the Overseas, National Heritage, and Kashmir-related committees, declaring he would even vacate his assembly seat if instructed by Khan. Faisal, brother of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, left the Economic Affairs, Food Security, and Par-

liamentary Task Force committees. Khattak announced he was withdrawing from all standing committees, while Asif resigned from the Education, National Heritage, Culture, and Information and Broadcasting committees. Separately, Junaid Akbar relinquished his position as chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, submitting his resignation to the party's chief whip, Amir Dogar, in line with the PTI political committee's directive. Party sources confirmed that the National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq has received the resignations of Faisal and Ali. PTI spokesperson Sheikh Waqas Akram has also resigned from all National Assembly standing committees. He has sent his resignation to NA Speaker Sadiq. Meanwhile, Khan has also instructed PTI leaders to quit the Judicial Commission, terming the party's participation in it as ineffective, sources said. PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan and Senator Ali Zafar are part of

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Belarusian Interior Minister Ivan Kubrakov visited Ministry of Interior, Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi welcomed the Honorable guest on his arrival. – DNA

**Ethiopian airforce chief calls on PAF chief**

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: : Lieutenant General Yilma Merdassa, Commander Ethiopian Air Force, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, at Air Headquarters, Islamabad. During the meeting, both dignitaries held detailed discussions on areas of professional interest and reaffirmed their resolve to strengthen cooperation between the two Air Forces. Upon his arrival, a smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Air Force presented Guard of Honour to Lieutenant General Yilma Merdassa. During the meeting,

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**Earthquake jolts parts of Pakistan**

DNA

PESHAWAR: Tremors from a moderate earthquake were felt in several parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Wednesday, according to the National Seismic Monitoring Centre. The quake, measuring 5.3 magnitude, was recorded in Peshawar, Swat, Malakand, Swabi, and Mansehra, along with adjoining areas. It also hit Gahkuch city of Gilgit Baltistan's Ghizer district. The seismic centre said the epicenter was located in the Hindu Kush region of Afghanistan. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage. These earthquakes are part of a series of tremors to hit northern Pakistan in

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## Pak condemns Israeli airstrikes on Syria, hospital

Pakistan also condemned in the strongest possible terms the Israeli occupying forces' incursion into the Syrian Arab Republic in contravention of international law and principles of the UN Charter

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday strongly condemned the deadly Israeli airstrikes on Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, Gaza, which claimed the lives of at least 21 individuals, including four journalists and a rescue worker. This unconscionable and heinous attack on a medical facility, as well as the continued targeting of civilians and journalists, represents a grave violation of international human rights and humanitarian law, as well as freedom of the press, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a statement. "We reiterate our call on the international community to hold Israel accountable for such heinous crimes and to take concrete steps towards ending Israel's impunity," the spokesperson said. Pakistan also condemned in the strongest possible terms the Israeli occupying forces' incursion into

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**PM to meet Russian President in China**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is scheduled to hold a series of high-profile meetings with world leaders on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in China next week, sources said. According to diplomatic sources, a meeting between Prime Minister Sharif and Russian President Vladimir Putin has been finalized and will take place during the summit. The two leaders are expected to discuss strengthening bilateral ties, regional security issues, and key global developments. The prime minister will also meet Chinese

Continued on Page 06

## Modi declined multiple phone calls from Trump: report

Report notes Indian perception of Trump has considerably changed due to his plans to boost Pakistan ties



CENTRELINE REPORT

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump reportedly attempted to contact Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on four occasions in recent

weeks, but his calls went unanswered, The News reported citing Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung newspaper. The German paper, citing sources points out that earlier, Trump shocked India by imposing the country with 25% tariffs and calling it a "dead economy." "There

are signs indicating that Modi felt insulted," Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung writes, adding that Modi's unwillingness to hold a phone conversation with Trump demonstrates the extent to which the Indian premier was irritated by what the US president had done, TASS reported. The newspaper also notes that the way Trump is perceived in India has considerably changed, particularly due to his statements about plans to boost relations with Pakistan. India and the United States began negotiations on a large-scale trade agreement in February, following Prime Minister Modi's visit to Washington. Both countries aim to increase annual trade to \$500 billion by 2030. The agreement was expected to be signed this fall. India's delegation has made several trips to Washington for talks, but a US delegation's visit to India for the sixth round of negotiations, scheduled for August 25, was cancelled.

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# Indonesian Consul General promotes trade expo

The meeting discussed that over 1,460 exhibitors from various industries are expected to participate, offering a golden opportunity for Sukkur's business community to establish direct links with Indonesian companies and explore potential collaborations

## DNA

SUKKUR: Dr. Ahmad Sufyan, Economic Consul of the Indonesian Consulate General in Karachi has visited Sukkur and held a meeting with a delegation from the Sukkur Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here on Wednesday. The purpose of the visit was to promote the upcoming Trade Expo Indonesia, a major international trade exhibition scheduled for October in Indonesia. The meeting

discussed that over 1,460 exhibitors from various industries are expected to participate, offering a golden opportunity for Sukkur's business community to establish direct links with Indonesian companies and explore potential collaborations. The Indonesian Consulate General in Karachi will organize business-to-business meetings and matching sessions to facilitate positive trade outcomes for the Pakistani delegation. The Indonesian Consul General expressed his commitment to connecting Sukkur's business community with Indonesian suppliers, enabling the in-

roduction of Indonesian consumer products to the local market. Sukkur's strategic location and economic activities make it an attractive destination for trade and investment. The city's industrial growth, agricultural productivity, and transportation network provide a solid foundation for business collaborations. The visit highlights Indonesia's active role in promoting trade relations with Pakistan, particularly with the province of Sindh. This initiative is expected to open new avenues for business opportunities and strategic partnerships between Sukkur and Indonesia.

## Parliamentary Secy reviews healthcare facilities

LAHORE:Parliamentary Secretary for Human Rights and Minorities Affairs Sonia Ashir on Wednesday visited the Jinnah Hospital and inspected various wards, reviewed facilities She interacted with patients and their attendants to assess healthcare services. The Medical Superintendent briefed her on the hospital's operations and facilities, while the Deputy Medical Superintendent accompanied her during the inspection. Sonia Ashir inquired about the treatment being provided and listened to the concerns of patients. Speaking on the occasion, the Parliamentary Secretary emphasized that staff must ensure courteous behavior with patients and their attendants, maintain cleanliness in wards and washrooms, and guarantee transparency in the provision of medicines. She also inspected the medicine counter, reviewing the availability and distribution process. Highlighting the initiatives of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Sonia Ashir noted that special funds had been allocated to improve hospital conditions, while modern equipment and machinery were being provided to ensure quality treatment. She added that Free Medicine Program and upgradation of emergency wards were among the government's top priorities. All possible resources would be utilized to provide the best facilities to patients, ensuring significant improvements in hospitals across Punjab, she added. —APP

## Haider for AI transformational public governance

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, on Wednesday stressed the need for adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI) to promote innovation, transparency and efficiency in public service sectors across the country. Addressing the closing session of the third annual Public Policy Conference, on 'Artificial Intelligence in Public Policy and Governance,' organised by the National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP), here at the NSPP, the governor termed that AI a game-changing force in governance and policy implementation, especially in combating climate change and reforming administrative systems. "Artificial Intelligence has revolutionized every aspect of modern life. We must harness this technology to bring efficiency, transparency and innovation to our public institutions," he said Governor Saleem Haider called for enhanced investment in AI research and development. "If we are to compete globally, we must invest in developing our AI capabilities," he added. The governor urged civil servants to serve with compassion and professionalism, stating that bureaucracy must rebuild public trust through character and conduct. He shared recent initiatives to improve public accessibility to governance, including opening the Governor House to citizens and directing staff to maintain courteous interactions with visitors. Sardar Saleem Haider remarked that politicians were the most scrutinized segment of society and emphasised distinguishing between individuals and broader political narratives. The Governor concluded by emphasizing the need for close collaboration between the public sector.—APP

## Sindh minister unveils 'Free Pink EV Scooters

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senior Sindh Minister for Transport Sharjeel Inam Memon Wednesday, revealed the trailblazing Pink EV Scooters Scheme aimed at empowering women, including students, working women and minorities by offering free-of-cost electric scooters across the province on a first-come, first-served basis. While in an exclusive conversation, the Sindh Minister highlighted the launch of the 'Free Pink EV Scooters' scheme aimed at empowering women by improving their mobility across the province. The minister emphasized that this initiative would provide electric scooters free of cost to eligible women, helping to address their

transportation challenges and promote independence. distribution of these scooters will be carried out on a first-come, first-served basis to ensure fairness and transparency, he mentioned. The minister stressed the urgency of fulfilling the mobility needs of women, including students, working professionals, Industrial and minority groups, who face daily transportation hurdles. To benefit from the scheme, applicants must fulfill certain eligibility criteria set by the authorities, he said, adding, these criteria are designed to prioritize women from underprivileged and marginalized communities, ensuring that the assistance reaches those who need it most. The minister concluded by urging women across Sindh to take advantage of this unique opportunity

and assured that the government is committed to supporting women's empowerment through practical measures such as this innovative scooter distribution program. To qualify for the scheme, he explained that the applicants must be permanent residents of Sindh and either students or working women. They are required to possess a valid driving license for a motorbike or car and must commit not to sell or sublet the scooter for at least seven years. Additionally, those selected through a draw will need to pass a road safety skill test to ensure safe usage of the vehicle. This initiative makes daily travel safer and more affordable for women in Sindh, the minister added, with the Sindh Mass Transit Authority offering free training programs across the province, he concluded.



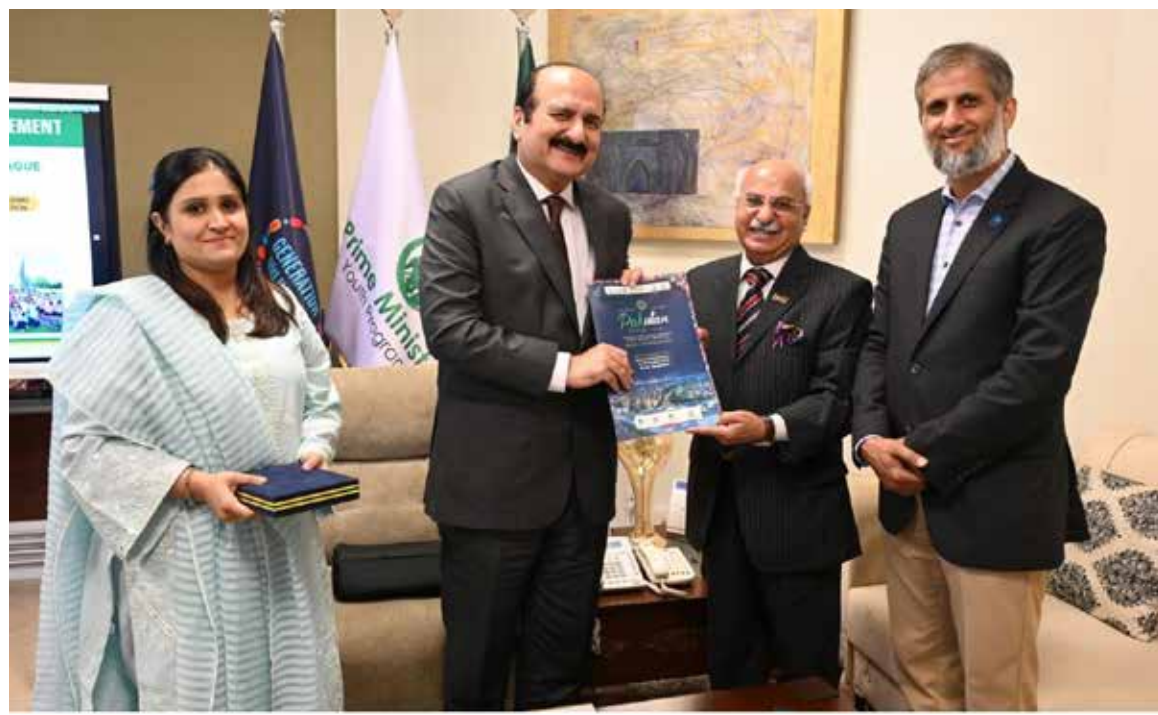
ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan Ms Jane Marriott called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters.

## Young tribal journalists trained in ethical crime reporting

PESHAWAR: The three-day orientation and training workshops on "Crime Reporting for Young Parliamentarians and Budding Journalists of the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs)" concluded with impactful sessions delivered by senior journalists and media trainers Organized under the auspices of the Directorate of Youth Affairs, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in collaboration with the Pakistan Media Club, the event was held at the Press Gallery of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly and brought together young reporters from different tribal districts, including Khyber, North and South Waziristan, Bajaur, Mohmand, Orakzai and Kurram. The Session provided a rare opportunity for emerging journalists of these regions to not only learn from the experiences of seasoned trainers but also to share their own challenges of reporting from conflict-affected and socially sensitive areas. On the first day, Senior Journalist Mehmood Jan Babar conducted a detailed session on the fundamentals of responsible crime reporting. He shed light on the role of media in strengthening democracy, justice, and accountability, particularly in regions where rule of law and institutional structures are still evolving. His training focused on building

a foundation of ethical and fact-based journalism, while also guiding participants on how to avoid sensationalism in reporting sensitive issues. The second day was led by Senior Journalist and trainer Lehaz Ali, who drew from his extensive experience of covering violence, extremism and governance issues in conflict zones. He emphasized the importance of protecting victims' dignity, ensuring factual accuracy, and maintaining neutrality. He also highlighted the unique challenges faced by tribal journalists, including security threats, cultural sensitivities, and the lack of institutional access to information. According to him, responsible reporting not only informs the public but also shapes narratives that can contribute to peacebuilding and social cohesion. On the third day, Azmat Gul, President of the Crimes and Terrorism Journalists Forum, delivered a comprehensive presentation. He discussed the complexities of reporting on crime and terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the NMDs, where journalists often face life-threatening risks. Stressing the need for adopting safety measures, he advised young reporters to build reliable networks for fact-checking and verification. He encouraged them to remain resilient, impartial, and

professional even in high-pressure environments, and reminded them that their work carries great responsibility in shaping public perception. Across all three Sessions, the participation of young journalists from the tribal districts added significant value. Their questions, experiences, and real-life examples enriched the discussions and allowed for a two-way learning process. For many of these budding journalists, it was the first time they had engaged in such structured training within the legislative assembly's press gallery, which gave them a sense of recognition and inclusion in the wider media community. Speaking at the closing, Dr. Numan, Director of Sports and Youth Affairs, appreciated the enthusiasm of the participants and said such training will continue to provide tribal youth with professional opportunities. He added that empowering young journalists with ethical skills is vital for strengthening democracy and peace. Dr. Zia Khan, Chairman Pakistan Media Club, lauded the collaboration and remarked that journalism from the NMDs carries special importance. He assured that the Pakistan Media Club will extend its full support for similar capacity-building programs in the future.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Founder Chairman Khurshid Barlas extending an invitation to the 3rd Made in Pakistan Exhibition and Business Conference in Dhaka, Bangladesh, during a meeting with the Chairman Prime Minister Youth Programme Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan.

## Army begins flood relief operations in 8 Punjab districts

LAHORE: The Punjab government has deployed the Pakistan Army to assist with flood relief operations in eight districts, as rivers across the province continue to rise. According to the Punjab Home Department spokesperson, on the directives of Punjab Chief Minister, military assistance had been sought for Hafizabad, in addition to earlier deployments in Lahore, Kasur, Sialkot, Faisalabad, Narawal, Okara and Sargodha. The spokesperson said the army had been called in to support district administrations in relief activities and to ensure the safety of human lives amid the ongoing flood situation "District administrations, PDMA, Rescue 1122, Civil Defence and police personnel are already on the front lines carrying out their respective duties," spokesperson added. The decision to deploy the army was taken to provide immediate support to local authorities and to prevent any untoward incidents, spokesperson said and added that army aviation as well as other necessary resources were also being provided in flood-affected areas as per requirements. The number of troops in each district was being finalized in coordination with the respective district administrations, spokesperson added. "All relevant departments of the Punjab government are monitoring the flood situation 24/7," he added.—APP

## Punjab CM orders emergency measures for flood victims

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired a four-hour-long meeting to review the flood situation across Punjab and the ongoing rescue and relief efforts, here on Wednesday. Detailed reports from flood-affected districts were presented during the meeting. The CM ordered the immediate utilization of all available resources for the relief of flood victims and approved the deployment of army personnel in seven districts, including Lahore, Kasur, Sialkot, Narawal, Faisalabad, Okara and Sargodha. She was briefed that all relevant provincial departments were monitoring the situation round-the-clock. Rescue -1122,

PDMA, Civil Defence, Police and district administrations are carrying out front-line rescue and relief operations. Flooding in the Sutlej River has severely affected Kasur, Okara, Pakpattan, Vehari, Bahawalnagar and Bahawalpur. In Kasur alone, 72 villages and around 45,000 people have been badly affected. The briefing revealed that 12 villages in Pakpattan, 23 in Vehari, 75 in Bahawalnagar and 15 in Bahawalpur were hit by floods. Relief equipment, including 130 boats, 115 outboard motors, 6 ambulance bikes, 1,300 life jackets and 245 life rings, have been dispatched to the affected areas. Over 150,000 people and 35,000 livestock have been shifted

to safe locations. Medical and veterinary relief camps have been set up where more than 2,600 people are currently receiving treatment. CM Maryam Nawaz, directing emergency measures in hospitals across Punjab, said that every possible step would be taken to safeguard lives and provide relief to the people. Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Information Minister Azma Bukhari, Chief Secretary, Inspector General of Police, and other senior officials were present in the meeting. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired a four-hour-long meeting to review the flood situation across Punjab and the ongoing rescue and relief efforts, here on Wednesday.—APP

## Riverbank resorts to be razed for flood risks

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Malik said on Wednesday that the federal government has evolved a strategy to demolish all illegal and unsafe resorts built along riverbanks to avoid flood risks, warning that no one, no matter how powerful, will be spared. "These luxury resorts, whether legal or illegal, are not just buildings. In floods, they turn into missiles that smash through downstream villages, destroying lives and livelihoods," Malik said while addressing the CIP-FA/ICAP Public Financial Management Conference here. He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had issued clear orders for their removal, adding: "We will raze them all. No excep-

tions, no exemptions." The minister said that unregulated construction along riverbanks has worsened the impact of floods, compounding Pakistan's climate vulnerability. With over 7,000 glaciers feeding rivers from the Himalayas, Pakistan faces frequent flash floods and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs). "When glacial lakes burst, they unleash walls of water and boulders. Any obstacle in their way becomes a weapon of destruction," he warned. Malik tied the domestic crisis to global climate justice, pointing out that a handful of major economies contribute nearly three-quarters of the world's carbon emissions while vulnerable countries like Pakistan are left to suffer.

"Pakistan's share is less than one percent, but we are among the worst hit. And yet those responsible for this destruction consume almost 80 percent of the Green Climate Fund," he said. He assured that the federal government will support provinces in strengthening urban drainage, disaster preparedness, and zoning enforcement. "Punjab, Sindh, KP, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, and AJK—all provinces and regions—will get equal support. The federation stands with every city," Malik said. Admitting gaps in Pakistan's ability to access international funds, Malik said stronger technical capacity and better-prepared projects are needed to secure global financing.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

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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

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National Day

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Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122

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Motorway Police.9270601-20

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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

ISLAMABAD: Floral Art Society of Pakistan hosted online demonstration by Francine Thomas, a renowned from New Zealand. Best performance awards were also given on the occasion. The event held at Islamabad Serena Hotel. Detailed coverage in the September issue of CENTRELINE magazine. —DNA

Rescue on wheels

CDA to launch 12 stations, motorbike service

The board approved the recruitment of new staff, specialized training for emergency personnel, and procurement of modern equipment – including water rescue vans, advanced tools, and rescue vehicles

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad’s emergency response system is set for a major transformation as the Capital Development Authority (CDA) approved the launch of a motorbike rescue service and 12 new rescue stations across the city. The move aims to drastically cut response times and provide faster assistance in emergencies, particularly in areas where traditional vehicles face delays due to traffic or narrow streets. The decision was taken during the 15th meeting of the CDA Board, chaired by CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Wednesday. The board approved the recruitment of new staff, specialized training for emergency personnel, and procurement of modern equipment – including water rescue vans, advanced tools, and rescue vehicles. A key highlight is the introduction of a 50-motorcycle rescue fleet, designed for rapid intervention in high-density urban areas. The CDA also finalized the Capital Emergency Service Regulations and announced plans to establish a state-of-the-art Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to monitor and coordinate all rescue activities in real time. “Every available resource will be utilized to equip Capital Emergency Services with modern facilities, leaving no stone unturned to ensure citizens receive the best possible services,” Chairman Randhawa said. He added that the CDA would seek support from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) for vetting the equipment to ensure international standards. Beyond emergency response, the CDA Board also approved hiring a consultant to help Islamabad acquire carbon credits for eco-friendly projects. Randhawa said this initiative would “not only ensure a cleaner and healthier environment but also gain international recognition for CDA’s conservation and sustainable development efforts.” Other key decisions included allocating land to Aga Khan University for a teaching hospital in Islamabad, moving forward with consultancy hiring for the Jinnah Medical Complex and Research Center, and revising the committee tasked with assessing land and property in the capital. Concluding the meeting, Randhawa stressed that Islamabad’s development, safety, and sustainability remain the CDA’s top priorities. “We are committed to making Islamabad an exemplary capital city,” he said.

210,000 evacuated in flood rescue, no casualties reported: Inam

ISLAMABAD: National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik Wednesday said that nearly 210,000 people have been safely evacuated from flood-affected regions with no casualties reported. Speaking to the media, Lt Gen Malik said the large-scale rescue efforts were carried out in close coordination with the Pakistan Army, Rangers, Rescue 1122, Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs), and other agencies. Evacuees have been relocated to relief camps where they are receiving medical care, food, and other essential services. These facilities will remain operational until families can safely return to their homes. Chairman NDMA acknowledged the logistical support provided by the Prime Minister’s Office, which has supplied 5,000 tents for relief operations. The Prime Minister is scheduled to visit vulnerable areas on Thursday, including Narowal, Sialkot, and flood-affected regions along the Sutlej River in Lahore. The NDMA has issued early warnings for a new spell of rainfall expected between August 29 and September 9, particularly in the catchment zones of the flooded areas. Local administrations, NGOs, and other stakeholders have been alerted to take precautionary measures to minimize potential losses. Lt Gen Malik further stated that water flow at Panjnad is expected to surge between 600,000 to 700,000 cusecs in the coming days. NDMA is actively sharing early warning information with the Sindh PDMA and other relevant authorities to ensure timely preparedness. Pressure levels at key downstream points such as Kotri and Guddu are also being monitored closely. Evacuation from flood-affected areas along the Sutlej River will continue as water levels rise. The people were being moved to safer locations through coordinated efforts involving Rescue 1122, the Pakistan Army, Rangers, and the Punjab PDMA. Army formations are implementing evacuation measures in their respective zones under directives from the Chief of Army Staff, (COAS) with priority given to relocating vulnerable populations.—DNA

SC grants bail to accused in case of molesting girl

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday granted bail to the accused in a case pertaining to molesting a 18-year-old girl. The Supreme Court has granted bail to accused Shakeel who belonged to Layyah against a bond of Rs 200,000. Justice Naeem Afghan remarked that it has been two and a half years since the incident, why could the trial not be held for two and a half years? The public prosecutor took the position that the accused molested the 18-year-old girl. Justice Naeem Afghan said that the accused is accused of molesting the girl twice. How did the incident happen in the presence of the father and mother at home? It has been one year and five months, the trial has not started. Justice Naeem Afghan remarked that the challan of the case was submitted after eight months. A two-member bench headed by Justice Hassan Rizvi heard the case. The court, subsequently, granted bail to the accused after hearing the arguments. The Supreme Court on Wednesday rejected the bail petition of accused Fayyaz Hussain in the drug smuggling case. A two-member bench headed by Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi heard the bail application of accused Fayyaz Hussain in the drug case.—APP

Ombudsman, NCHR member discuss minorities issues

ISLAMABAD: Member Minorities, National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), Manzoor Masih, Wednesday held a meeting with the Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, at the Office of the Federal Ombudsman Islamabad. During the meeting, wide-ranging discussions were held on the protection and promotion of human rights in the country, with a particular focus on the issues faced by minority communities. Manzoor Masih apprised the Federal Ombudsman of the initiatives and achievements of NCHR, including its complaint redressal and referral mechanisms, which have enabled victims of rights violations to access justice more effectively. Both sides acknowledged that despite the presence of robust constitutional guarantees and legislative frameworks for the protection of human rights, the lack of effective implementation of existing laws remains a major challenge.—APP

AIOU exam from Sep 1

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) announced the commencement of Spring 2025 final examinations from September 1 across the country, covering all Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programs ranging from Matric to MA/MSc. According to Controller of Examinations, Muhammad Zahid Akhtar Khaki all necessary preparations have been finalized. The date sheet also been made available on the university’s official website, while student’s roll number slips were uploaded to their CMS portals to ensure a smooth process and to avoid any inconvenience, he said. Examination centers have been established across the country providing students with facilities to appear for their exams at locations convenient to them, he added. Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood directed all regional heads to maintain a calm, organized and pleasant environment at the centers so that students can perform to the best of their abilities. The university administration expressed their commitment to conduct the examinations in a transparent, fair and efficient manner, ensuring that student’s hard work and knowledge would be evaluated in the best possible way.—APP

Dialogue at IRS explores governance solutions for disaster preparedness

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad hosted a high-level dialogue on ‘Climate Risk to Resilience: Strengthening Governance for Disaster Preparedness’. The event gathered policymakers, experts, and practitioners to deliberate on the governance challenges of disaster preparedness in Pakistan amid escalating climate risks. In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President of IRS, stressed that building resilience is not merely a financial or technical challenge but fundamentally a governance challenge that demands co-ordinated action, effective planning, and institutional strengthening. Recalling the devastating floods of 2022 that caused over US\$30 billion in damages and displaced more than 33 million people, he underscored the urgency of embedding disaster preparedness into national and local governance frameworks. He further noted that recurring flash floods and urban flooding in recent years illustrate the escalating cost of inaction. Former Chairman of the Federal Flood Commission, Mr. Ahmed Kamal, provided a historical overview of Pakistan’s flood management, noting that the country has faced 29 major floods since 1955, with the 2010 floods termed a “super flood” that affected 20 million people. He observed a troubling shift in the frequency and intensity of floods ranging from riverine floods to urban flooding. Stressing the importance of improved monitoring, he called for province-specific forecasting systems and a nationwide telemetry network to provide real-time data and early warnings tailored to diverse regional contexts. Mr. Kamal remarked on the necessity of both structural interventions and robust governance measures, including enacting Provincial River Acts, utilizing floodplain maps, and replicating successful urban early warning systems. He advocated for strengthening the Federal Flood Commission into a dedicated national authority, increasing funding for emergent flood programs, and launching large-scale forestation in river catchments to mitigate climate impacts and reduce flood intensity. Mr. Kamal emphasized a smooth coordination among federal and provincial institutions and a strong local government system for disaster preparedness. Dr. Syed Faisal Saeed, Chief Meteorologist at the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), explained the impact of intensifying monsoon trends and rising temperatures, particularly in Gilgit-Baltistan, which has witnessed a mean temperature rise of 6°C this year. He cautioned that these changes are accelerating glacial melt and increasing the risk of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs). Dr. Faisal indicated that the cloudbursts being attributed as cause of recent floods is inaccurate and that only one incident of cloud burst occurred in the country. While mentioning the well-established weather forecasting system of PMD, he indicated about the limitation of weather stations in glacial region due to inaccessibility and immense financial requirements. Highlighting the unpredictability of precipitation amid climate change, he pointed to critical technological and institutional gaps for disaster preparedness. Dr. Muhammad Irfan Khan, an Environmental Expert affiliated with UNDP, UNEP, and FAO, discussed the ‘missing link’ of environmental governance in urban disaster preparedness. He identified overlapping institutional mandates, weak enforcement of building and zoning laws, outdated master plans, and the lack of integration of disaster risk reduction into urban development as major governance failures. Dr. Irfan highlighted violations of environmental regulations for urban planning which is the root cause of consequent environmental consequences including urban flooding. He highlighted governance failure citing non-functioning of Pakistan Environmental Protection Council (PEPC) and weakening of environmental/climate institutions.—DNA

CONDOLENCE

APNS expresses profound grief over the sad demise of

Mr. Aamer Mahmood

Chief Editor

Monthly Kiran and Imran, Digest.

May Allah the Almighty rest his soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the family to bear the loss.

All Pakistan Newspapers Society



## Briefs

NEOC on  
24/7 alert as  
Chenab, Ravi, Sutlej  
face severe  
flooding

ISLAMABAD: The National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC) has been placed on round-the-clock operation as Chenab, Ravi, and Sutlej face severe flooding, with National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) monitoring all rescue and relief efforts on the Prime Minister's directive. According to NDMA, an exceptionally high flood of 769,481 cusecs is passing through River Chenab at Marala with chances of further rise, while at Khaniki, the river is carrying 705,225 cusecs with a decreasing flow; in River Ravi, a high flood of 202,200 cusecs is passing at Jassar, which may rise to 229,700 cusecs. At Shahdara, River Ravi is flowing at 72,900 cusecs, posing flood risk to low-lying areas of Shahdara, Park View, and Motorway-II. In River Sutlej, an exceptionally high flood of 245,000 cusecs persists at Ganda Singh Wala, while 100,355 cusecs are recorded at Sulemanki. NDMA, in coordination with civil and military institutions, has urged residents along riverbanks and waterways to immediately move to safer places, strictly follow local administration's instructions, contact rescue teams in emergencies, and avoid all unnecessary travel in flood-hit areas.—APP

Coffee Craze  
Grips city  
youth as  
consumption  
doubles

ISLAMABAD: Across the buzzing streets of big cities, 'Coffee culture' thrives as youngsters flock to stylish cafés, not just for the taste, but for the vibe, the visuals and the story each cup tells online, with consumption so high that what once was sipped over three months is now easily emptied in just one. A local famous coffee brand expert, Shahzaib Khan, while in exclusive conversation with a local news channel, stated that 'Coffee consumption' among Pakistani urban youth has seen unprecedented growth in recent years. He highlighted that Brazil and African blend coffee brands are especially popular among young consumers for their unique flavors and rich aroma. "What used to be a casual drink has now evolved into a cultural phenomenon," Khan explained. "Youngsters are not just drinking coffee for its taste but are embracing it as part of their identity, lifestyle and social expression. This shift is reflected in the way cafés have become popular social hubs and how coffee moments are shared widely on social media," he added. Khan further highlighted that this trend has led to a significant increase in demand, with consumption doubling over the past year alone. "The market has responded with a variety of innovative flavors, stylish café environments and digital engagement," he noted.—APP

MOITT, CCH sign MoU to  
launch Model Digital institution

MoITT and Cadet College Hasanabdal partner to launch Model Digital Institution Aligned with Pakistan's National Digital Vision

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Information Technology & Telecommunication (MoITT), has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Cadet College Hasanabdal (CCH). This collaboration, aims to establish CCH as a Model Digital Institution in line with Pakistan's National Digital Vision and CCH Vision 2030. Under the agreement, MoITT will extend comprehensive support across multiple domains including digital infrastructure, teacher training, student development, cybersecurity, and strategic engagement. Key initiatives include provision of high-speed internet, campus-wide WiFi, and upgradation of IT resources alongside the establishment of smart classrooms. Faculty members will benefit from digital literacy and upskilling programs, with certifications in modern educational tools such as Google Workspace, MS365, AI in Education, and Coding. For students, the MoU ensures opportunities in coding, robotics, cybersecurity, AI, and blockchain bootcamps, as well as internships and mentorships with MoITT-affiliated startups and incubators. CCH will also serve as a pilot institution under MoITT's National ICT Framework, engaging in projects such as digital identity systems, smart assessments, and e-learning platforms. The agreement places strong emphasis on cybersecurity and data privacy, incorporating technical audits and implementation of protection standards. A joint roadmap with measurable KPIs will guide the ongoing transformation, while CCH's digital initiatives will be highlighted in MoITT reports, expos, and international



forums. On this occasion, Federal Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja stated technology has transformed life, and the government is prioritizing youth empowerment

through internet access, digital literacy, and training in AI, cybersecurity, and coding to equip them with global skills. The MoU was formally signed by Brig. Nasir

Saeed Khattak, Principal Cadet College Hasanabdal, and Mr. Faisal Ratyal, CEO National Information Technology Board (NITB), on behalf of MoITT.

AI to reshape global employment  
landscape, not eliminate jobs: Shaza

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja Wednesday, said that artificial intelligence (AI) will not eliminate jobs but will significantly reshape the global employment landscape, stressing the need for youth to acquire skills in modern technologies. Speaking at an event at Cadet College Hasanabdal, she said that future employment opportunities will belong to those who can effectively use AI tools and technologies. "The question is not whether AI will replace jobs, but whether our youth are prepared to adapt and lead with these emerging technologies," she added. Under the MoU, signed with the college, the young people with top talent will also be provided internship and training opportunities to help them smoothly transition into the professional field after completing their education, the minister added. She said that as per the MoU, multiple certification programs will be launched in fields such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, coding, and content technology. Top-performing students will also be provided with internship opportunities across various departments to enhance their practical experience and career readiness. The minister proposed the formation of a joint steering committee to monitor the implementation of MoUs and ensure regular follow-ups, either quarterly or annually. She said the Ministry of IT aims to connect all schools and district units in the Islamabad region with fiber optic high-speed internet within the next six months to activate e-classrooms. Shaza Fatima further emphasised the crucial role of teacher training in building generations of skilled students. "Teacher capacity-building and upskilling—whether in artificial intelligence, data literacy, or the use of modern learning tools—transform entire generations, not just individuals," she said. She also pointed out that skill development should now be measured by its relevance to future employment. "The question is not just how many students received training, but whether their skills will match the jobs and industries of the next 8-10 years," she added, recalling how trends in computer science shifted within a decade, requiring flexibility and foresight. Shaza Fatima said that youth and their skills form the foundation of Pakistan's digital transformation, and MoUs in this sector will ensure long-term support in building a technology-driven future. The minister said that technology and digitization are not limited to a specific sector but are transforming the lives of every citizen of Pakistan, particularly the country's youth, who will lead the nation into the future. —DNA

Gwadar Port to be powered through  
solar initiative: Junaid

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, on Wednesday, stated that efforts are underway to implement solar-based solutions aimed at operationalizing and improving the efficiency of Gwadar Port. The Federal Minister announced during a meeting on the port's operationalization, attended by Chairman Gwadar Port Authority Noorul Haque Baloch, Chairman of Chinese company COPHCL, My Yu Bo, along with Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Umer Zafar Shaikh, and Technical Advisor Jawad Akhtar. Following directives of the Prime Minister, the minister confirmed ongoing collaboration with the Minister of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, the Ministry of Energy, and other relevant bodies to tackle Gwadar's challenges related to power shortages and water scarcity. Junaid Anwar Chaudhry revealed that a sub-committee has been established, comprising representatives from the Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Federal Board of Revenue, Gwadar Port Authority, Gwadar Development Authority, Quetta Electric Supply Company, and officials from the PM's Office, with a responsibility to review the technical aspects of implementing solar power in Gwadar. The minister outlined the sub-committee's key duties, which include devising an efficient solar panel utilization plan, recommending the installation of solar photovoltaic systems and battery storage solutions for Gwadar's water facilities, and proposing measures to enhance the region's power supply.

Moreover, the committee will design solar power distribution systems integrated with storage options to ensure a dependable energy supply for critical infrastructure, including the Gwadar Port Authority, he noted. Junaid Chaudhry added that solar-based microgrids will be set up at strategic locations to supply power for water pumps and the 1.2 million gallons per day (MGD) desalination plant, with energy storage solutions also being considered. The initiative seeks to significantly reduce Gwadar's reliance on external energy by making it self-sufficient through local power sources. The plan includes establishing macro solar grids with sufficient capacity to meet power demands throughout the year, he added. The minister stated that the Prime Minister's Solar Initiative for Gwadar is expected to be fully functional soon, facilitating the establishment of new factories in the Gwadar free zone and providing power to the Gwadar International Airport. Water shortage in Gwadar is acute due to insufficient electricity to operate pumping and desalination plants. Gwadar has enough stored water for months if it can be pumped and distributed effectively, he added. Referring industry assessments, he said Gwadar's fisheries sector stands to save over a million dollars each year by shifting from costly diesel and erratic grid electricity to solar power. The minister stressed that dependable solar energy is not only a matter of reducing expenses but also vital to protecting the city's flagship industry, which supports local livelihoods and strengthens its position in export markets.APP

Muqam  
visits GB  
emergency  
center,  
assures full  
support for  
flood relief

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) & SA-FRON and Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) President, Engr Amir Muqam, visited the Provincial Emergency Center amid the recent flood situation and lauded the ongoing relief efforts. Secretary Interior Ali Asghar and Director General GB Disaster Management Authority gave the Federal Minister a detailed briefing on the affected areas and ongoing relief operations, said a press release on Wednesday. Chief Secretary GB, Abrar Ahmed Mirza and other senior government officials also attended the briefing session and presented detailed reports on the situation arising from the floods. Federal Secretary for Kashmir Affairs and GB, Zafar Hassan and former Chief Minister and Provincial President PML-N GB, Hafeez-ur-Rehman, were also present with the Federal Minister on this occasion. —APP

Pakistani  
graduates to  
boost modern  
farming after  
china training

DNA

ISLAMABAD: After having sowing seeds of technology training in China, Pakistani graduates to drive modern farming back home. The training focused on the actual needs of Pakistan and established a diversified curriculum system covering theoretical teaching, field investigations, technical practice, and cultural experiences. It has cultivated a group of inter-disciplinary talents who understand both agricultural technology and Chinese and Pakistani cultures, injecting new impetus into global agricultural sustainable development and the high-quality construction of the Belt and Road Initiative, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. During the training, the participants reached more than 10 preliminary cooperation intentions with Chinese agricultural companies in fields such as drone applications and the planting of characteristic fruits and vegetables.—APP

PAC seeks clarity  
on regulator's  
compensation

ISLAMABAD: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has raised fresh queries regarding executive compensation practices within a key financial regulator, following audit disclosures that highlighted significant allowances and salary enhancements. PAC members, in a bid to ensure transparency, expressed concern over a reported annual package of Rs41 million for the regulator's chief executive. They urged the Finance Division to review and validate all such approvals retroactively. The committee emphasized that in times of economic constraint, public institutions must demonstrate restraint and transparency in financial matters. Audit findings for FY 2023-24 revealed over Rs 267 million in payments categorized as perks and recreational allowances. These were reportedly sanctioned by the regulator's Policy Board but lacked formal clearance from the Finance Division, as required under existing financial rules. While acknowledging the regulator's statutory autonomy, PAC members stressed that financial independence must operate within the broader framework of public accountability. "Autonomous status does not exempt institutions from fiscal discipline," one member noted. PAC Chairman Junaid Akbar Khan directed that all regulatory bodies submit detailed records of executive compensation, emphasizing the need for uniform standards across autonomous institutions. "We must ensure that public service remains aligned with merit and fiscal responsibility," he said. The committee also recommended a proactive approach, suggesting a comparative review of compensation structures across similar entities. This, the PAC believes, could help strike a balance between operational autonomy and public expectations. Regulator maintains that all disbursements were made in accordance with internal approvals and statutory provisions. However, PAC, in its commitment to thorough review, has asked for a formal response to reconcile audit observations with existing financial protocols.—DNA

Naqvi orders fast-track construction of  
11-storey hostel at NPAInterior minister orders swift construction,  
reviews training, facilities at Police Academy

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday visited the National Police Academy, where he reviewed ongoing projects aimed at upgrading the institution and addressing its shortage of accommodation. During the visit, Naqvi assigned the task of completing the construction of an eleven-storey hostel comprising 126 rooms within five months. He inspected the construction site and emphasized that "speed must not come at the expense of quality." The minister also visited the Academy's swimming pool, observed a swimming competition among trainee police officers, and encouraged both probationers and instructors. Later, he toured classrooms to meet with trainee officers and joined ASPs at the Officers' Mess to personally assess the quality of food. He also sought feedback and suggestions from the trainees. Naqvi chaired an important meeting at the Academy, where progress on previous decisions was reviewed, including the reorganization of the institution and trainee officers' attachments with FIA, forensic agencies, Safe City projects, and cybercrime units. According to a briefing by the Deputy Commandant, approval has been granted to award MS degrees in Criminology and Police Studies to ASPs completing the National Command Course. The training program also includes regular field visits to police stations and specialized institutions. Trainee ASPs expressed gratitude to the Interior Minister for improving facilities at the Academy. Senior officials, including the Deputy Commandant of the Academy, Chief Commissioner of Islamabad, and CDA.—DNA



RAWALPINDI: At Rawalpindi Government Associate College for Girls, Gawal Mandi, MPA Malik Mansoor Afsar, Director Colleges Amjad Iqbal Khattak and Principal Saima Shabbir are inaugurating new blocks in the college. DNA

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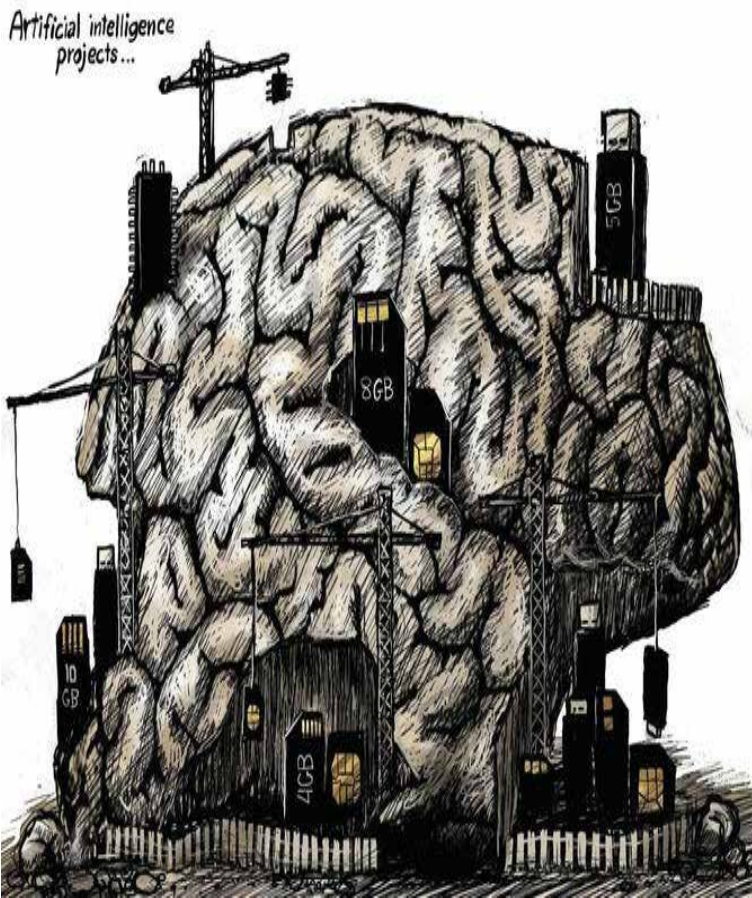
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Artificial intelligence projects...

## The Gaza carnage

THE ongoing devastation in Gaza represents one of the most severe humanitarian crises of the 21st century, yet the response from key international and regional actors has been overwhelmingly muted. Despite the overwhelming evidence of systematic destruction and mass casualties, the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and Western powers like the Trump administration have failed to take decisive action, effectively enabling the continued carnage. Satellite imagery and verified reports reveal the methodical razing of entire Palestinian communities, such as the complete destruction of the town of Khuza'a in May 2025. This was not a byproduct of combat but a deliberate campaign to render the area uninhabitable, targeting life-sustaining infrastructure, including fertile agricultural land 1. As of August 2025, over 2,076 Palestinians have been killed and more than 15,308 injured while seeking aid alone, often in queues at distribution points secured by Israeli forces and their contractors 5. The death toll from traumatic injuries is estimated to exceed 93,000, with thousands more buried under rubble and indirect deaths from starvation and disease likely far higher 11.

The Arab League and the OIC, representing 57 Muslim-majority nations, have issued statements but taken no concrete steps to halt the violence. While the OIC has formally supported Arab reconstruction plans for Gaza and emphasized the Palestinian cause as a "fundamental pillar" of its cooperation with the UN, these declarations have not translated into effective diplomatic pressure or meaningful intervention 26. Their calls for a two-state solution and ceasefire ring hollow against the relentless bombardment and blockade they fail to challenge. The United States, under President Donald Trump, has provided political cover for the assault. While Trump has acknowledged "real starvation" in Gaza, his administration has simultaneously backed the Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), an aid distribution system accused of being a tool for further control and violence 58. Special Envoy Steve Witkoff's assertion that the U.S. expects to "settle this before the end of this year" ignores the urgent need for an immediate ceasefire and instead prioritizes a vague, long-term political solution that legitimizes the current violence 4. Aid Militarization: The GHF, secured by private contractors and Israeli troops, has turned aid distribution into a deadly process, with Palestinians fired upon while seeking food 5. Diplomatic Inertia: The UN Security Council's presidential statement on OIC cooperation, while acknowledging the need for peace, lacks binding measures or accountability mechanisms 2. Normalization of Violence: The constant Israeli attacks on hospitals, schools, and aid seekers have been met with rhetorical condemnation but no actionable consequences, normalizing the brutalization of Palestinians. This inaction is a moral failure. As the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) stated, the world stands silent or even supports the ongoing genocide 15.

The Palestinian people are being subjected to conditions designed to destroy them physically and as a community—a definition of genocide recognized by leading human rights organizations and UN experts 1113. The silence of the Arab and Muslim world, coupled with the lip service of Western powers, makes them complicit in the Gaza carnage. Without urgent, coordinated, and forceful action—including arms embargoes, economic sanctions, and support for international justice mechanisms—the destruction will continue unabated, and history will judge this complicity harshly.

# Australia's Bold Move Against Israel and Iran

Qamar Bashir



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu lashed out, declaring that "history will remember Albanese for what he is: a weak politician who betrayed Israel and abandoned Australia's Jews." Yet Australia stood firm.

Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke delivered a sharp rebuttal: "Strength is not measured by how many people you can blow up or how many children you can leave hungry." In that moment, Canberra signaled that moral convictions, rather than alliances of convenience, would define its foreign policy direction. This stance became clearer when Albanese took the unprecedented step of formally recognizing Palestine at the United Nations on August 11

IN a cascade of landmark decisions that have recalibrated Australia's global identity, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has severed diplomatic ties with Iran and launched a bold critique of Israel's Gaza campaign, embedding a rare blend of moral clarity and strategic audacity into Canberra's foreign policy. What began as a domestic security response quickly evolved into a profound global statement. The chain of events was triggered by a chilling revelation: Australia's intelligence agency, ASIO, linked Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to two antisemitic arson attacks on Australian soil—one at a kosher restaurant in Sydney in October 2024 and another at a Melbourne synagogue in December. Addressing a tense press conference, Albanese declared these acts "aggression orchestrated by a foreign nation on Australian soil." His government responded decisively, expelling Iran's ambassador and three senior diplomats, suspending embassy operations in Tehran, and designating the IRGC as a terrorist organization—the first such expulsion since World War II. Critics were quick to suggest that Canberra's drastic move was an act of appeasement designed to placate Washington and its closest Middle Eastern ally, Israel. But just two weeks earlier, Albanese had shaken long-standing alliances by delivering a blistering condemnation of Israel, calling it "the aggressor" and accusing it of killing innocent children, violating international law, and trampling fundamental human rights. The statement reverberated across world capitals, triggering a furious response from both Washington and Jerusalem.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu lashed out, declaring that "history will remember Albanese for what he is: a weak politician who betrayed Israel and abandoned Australia's Jews." Yet Australia stood firm. Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke delivered a sharp rebuttal: "Strength is not measured by how many people you can blow up or how many children you can leave hungry." In that moment, Canberra signaled that moral convictions, rather than alliances of convenience, would define its foreign policy direction. This stance became clearer when Albanese took the unprecedented step of formally recognizing Palestine at the United Nations on August 11. While his announcement demanded demilitarization and recognition of Israel's right to exist, he framed the decision as "humanity's best hope to break the cycle of violence in the Middle East and bring an end to the suffering and starvation in Gaza." He called for unrestricted humanitarian access to Gaza, aligning Australia with the mounting chorus of global voices demanding action to save lives. Unlike many leaders who indulge in populist soundbites, Albanese matched his rhetoric with concrete measures, charting a path that blended pragmatism with principle. Iran, initially welcoming Australia's condemnation of Israel, was stunned when Canberra turned its punitive measures toward Tehran. Iranian officials denounced the expulsions as politically motivated, promised reciprocal action, and accused Albanese of aligning with Western powers. Yet Australia found unexpected do-

mestic unity, as both Jewish and Iranian-Australian communities expressed support for the government's actions, arguing that attacks targeting religious communities could not go unanswered. By placing sovereignty, accountability, and human rights at the center of its response, Australia carved a unique and independent path between competing global narratives. The geopolitical drama intensified with a development that dwarfed all others in humanitarian gravity: on August 22, 2025, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)—the United Nations' leading food crises authority—formally declared a famine in Gaza City, the first such declaration in the Middle East's modern history. Over 500,000 people, roughly one-quarter of Gaza's population, face catastrophic hunger, with projections warning that the famine will spread to Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis within weeks if aid does not reach civilians immediately. António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, called the famine "a human-made disaster" and "a failure of humanity." Aid agencies described Gaza as "on the brink of mass starvation," with children dying daily from malnutrition and hospitals collapsing under the weight of preventable disease.

For Israel, this declaration has intensified global scrutiny and deepened accusations of war crimes, particularly claims that starvation is being weaponized in Gaza. Israel has categorically rejected the UN's findings, calling them "lies" and accusing the IPC of political bias. For the United States, the famine raises uncomfortable questions about its role in sustaining Israel's military campaign while simultaneously portraying itself as a defender of human rights. Across Europe, over 200 diplomats have signed letters urging immediate ceasefires and humanitarian corridors, amplifying pressure on Washington to reconsider its unconditional support. For Gazans, however, the political debates offer no relief. With food, medicine, and clean water scarce, despair has become the only constant, and the suffering is worsening by the hour.

Amid this spiraling humanitarian crisis, a controversial narrative has resurfaced in political discourse: allegations that Donald Trump, two years ago, converted to Judaism—claims widely circulated by critics who argue that his unwavering support for Israel's Gaza campaign stems from personal alignment rather than policy calculation. While no credible evidence or mainstream reporting substantiates this claim, its viral spread underscores the growing perception that Washington's complicity in Gaza's suffering is ideological as much as strategic. The narrative, factually unverified though it remains, highlights an emerging reality of modern geopolitics: in an era of mass disinformation, perception can shape global reaction as powerfully as verified truth.

Australia's choices, by contrast, illustrate how a medium power can leverage moral authority without abandoning strategic balance. By openly condemning Israel's actions, recognizing Palestinian statehood, and expelling Iran's diplomats for acts of aggression, Albanese charted a course distinct from traditional Western bloc politics.

He showed that alliances need not demand silence in the face of injustice. This duality—standing firm against Iranian-sponsored violence while also challenging Israel's siege of Gaza—signals that Canberra seeks to define its identity through principles, not dependence.

The broader implications, however, extend beyond Australia's example. Albanese's leadership exposes a void where other powers have hesitated. Muslim-majority countries, sitting on vast economic leverage through oil, trade, and investments, have yet to mount coordinated efforts to pressure Israel to end its military campaign and allow unfettered aid into Gaza. European nations, fragmented by domestic politics and strategic dependencies, remain largely confined to symbolic statements rather than actionable policies. BRICS nations, meanwhile, have voiced rhetorical support for Palestinian rights but lack collective political will to impose tangible consequences. Here lies the deepest challenge for the global order: unless other great powers—the likes of China, Russia, the European Union, and emerging economic blocs—act decisively, collectively, and concretely to stop the ongoing massacre in Gaza and the West Bank, they must abandon any illusion of commanding respect on the world stage. The International Court of Justice has issued rulings; UN resolutions have condemned the bloodshed; yet hesitation continues to prevail. Without coordinated diplomatic, economic, and—if required—non-kinetic or kinetic pressure, the U.S. will remain what it is today: the sole superpower dictating the terms of morality and geopolitics.

Anthony Albanese's actions are far from symbolic gestures; they represent a rare assertion of conscience in an era of complicity. He demonstrated that ethical governance can coexist with strategic imperatives and that democracies need not trade their values for alliances. At a time when famine stalks Gaza's civilians, starvation grips hundreds of thousands, and the international system dithers, Australia has shown that leadership can mean more than words. It can mean acting when others remain paralyzed. This moment belongs not just to Australia but to the world. If other nations find the courage to match conviction with decisive action—whether through sanctions, trade pressures, or coordinated humanitarian interventions—the tide of Gaza's suffering can still be reversed. But if they remain silent and fractured, allowing famine to devour children and displacement to erase communities, history will record their hesitation as complicity. In the vacuum left by inaction, the United States will continue to dominate not because of moral superiority but because it alone dares to act. Albanese has reminded the world that peace without justice is hollow, security without compassion is unsustainable, and leadership without conscience is meaningless.

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

# Gaza and the Silence of the World

Khayam Abbasi



The international community stands at a crossroads. On one path lies continued silence, selective outrage, and the pursuit of narrow interests at the cost of justice. That path will lead, inevitably, to greater wars, to chaos, and perhaps to the extinction of the very values we claim to cherish. On the other path lies courage — the courage to speak truth to power, to hold aggressors...

THE brutality with which the Zionist occupying forces continue their genocidal war in Gaza is a grim testament to the moral bankruptcy of our age. Scenes emerging from Khan Younis, where Al-Nasser Hospital was attacked in broad daylight, broadcast live to the entire world, encapsulate this tragedy. Among the many lives lost were four journalists, individuals whose sole crime was their commitment to documenting truth in the midst of devastation. Their blood, spilled before the eyes of the global community, raises a haunting question: would such naked terrorism ever be tolerated if committed by any nation other than Israel?

This is not simply an indictment of the occupying and rough regime alone, but a damning reflection on the state of our so-called international order. For decades, the ideals of human rights, justice, and international law have been preached as the pillars of civilization. Yet today, as Gaza burns and its people are starved, displaced, and slaughtered, these lofty values stand exposed as hollow words, invoked selectively when aligned with the interests of the powerful. What we are witnessing is not an isolated tragedy confined to a strip of land under siege; it is a manifestation of a dangerous trend — the replacement of law with brute force, of justice with convenience, of humanity with cold calculations of power and self-interest. The cries of Gaza's children, the shattered hospitals, and the silenced journalists are not merely regional issues; they are warning signs of a global descent into a darker age where moral compasses are abandoned and only might defines what is right.

It would be a grave mistake to believe that the flames engulfing Gaza will remain restricted within its borders. History bears witness that injustice, once allowed to fester unchecked, seldom remains contained. The sparks of today's atrocities are already igniting unrest across regions, polarizing societies, and sowing seeds of a wider confrontation. If we study history with even a modest degree of seriousness, we will find that neither of the two World Wars erupted suddenly. They were not

the result of singular incidents, but the culmination of a long series of provocations, alliances, betrayals, and unresolved grievances. What appeared at the time to be regional disputes, diplomatic failures, or isolated aggressions eventually converged into global catastrophes that consumed millions of lives.

Today, as the world watches Gaza, we are faced with a similar set of triggers: unchecked aggression, paralyzed institutions, and a global order increasingly tilted towards the interests of a few powerful states. Each massacre ignored, each international law violated without consequence, each silence of the United Nations becomes another step toward a tipping point. Can any sensible leader, or indeed any conscious human being, even imagine what it would mean if our world stumbles into a third great catastrophe? Unlike the early 20th century, where the weapons of war, though deadly, still left room for survival, today's arsenal of destruction is unimaginably more powerful. Nuclear weapons — capable of erasing entire cities within seconds — hang like a sword over the head of humanity.

The doctrine of deterrence, often celebrated as a guarantor of peace, is in reality nothing more than a fragile illusion. One miscalculation, one provocation too far, and the world could find itself plunged into a conflict where destruction would be so absolute that human civilization itself could collapse. Unlike past wars, there may be no victors in a nuclear confrontation — only survivors, if any, wandering amidst the ashes of what was once our shared planet. The hypocrisy of our times is that those who speak of "rules-based order" are the very same actors who trample these rules when it suits their agenda. They arm aggressors while sanctioning the oppressed. They celebrate press freedom while remaining silent when journalists are bombed in Gaza. They lecture the world on democracy while turning a blind eye to the collective punishment of millions under siege. Such duplicity erodes not only the credibility of global institutions but also the very idea that justice or law exists beyond the will of the powerful. The lesson of Gaza is

not only about Palestine. It is a mirror held up before all of humanity, reflecting what happens when silence becomes complicity. The death of a child in Khan Younis, the bombing of hospitals, and the destruction of homes are not just tragedies for Palestinians; they are wounds on the conscience of the entire world.

The international community stands at a crossroads. On one path lies continued silence, selective outrage, and the pursuit of narrow interests at the cost of justice. That path will lead, inevitably, to greater wars, to chaos, and perhaps to the extinction of the very values we claim to cherish. On the other path lies courage — the courage to speak truth to power, to hold aggressors accountable, and to restore dignity to principles of law and justice.

If we choose silence today, history will not absolve us. Just as the world still remembers the horrors of the Holocaust, the massacres of Rwanda, and the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, so too will future generations remember Gaza. But they will remember not only the victims; they will also remember those who watched and did nothing. The situation in Gaza is a warning — that the structures built after World War II to prevent global conflicts are crumbling. It is also a test — of whether humanity has the will to prevent a third great catastrophe. We stand in a moment of choice, and the decisions made today will shape the destiny of generations to come.

To ignore Gaza is to play with fire, a fire that could one day consume us all. Yet to heed its lesson is to embrace the possibility of a different future — one where justice is not selective, where law is not a tool of the powerful, and where human rights are more than empty slogans. The people of Gaza, enduring unimaginable suffering, have already paid the highest price. The question now is whether the rest of the world will awaken before it is too late — or whether, blinded by interests and arrogance, it will sleepwalk into a catastrophe from which humanity itself may never recover.

— **The writer is a freelance journalist.**  
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## Briefs

## PM orders emergency measures

FROM PAGE 01  
flood situations in any province will be resolved through coordination and referred the federal government's full support to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during recent floods, assuring the same to Punjab.

Prime Minister Shehbaz directed to ensure early flood warnings for Sindh, asking the public representatives and government institutions to ensure timely evacuation, safe relocation, and effective monitoring of relief operations. He also asked the authorities concerned to take measures to safeguard human lives, property, crops, and livestock from potential flood damage and that the issues at the district and tehsil levels in those areas should be resolved urgently in collaboration with local and provincial administrations.

During the briefing, it was told that there was a risk of high-level flooding at Head Marala and Khanki due to increased water discharge in the Chenab River.

Besides, the pressure of high water discharge was reported in the Ravi River at Jastar and Shahdara, and in the Sutlej River at Ganda Singh Wala and Sulemanki, and that the pressure was also being monitored at Khanki, Balloki, and Qadirabad.

The NDMA chairman informed the meeting that Rescue 1122, civil defence, Rangers, PDMA, and other relevant agencies were working with full diligence. The army personnel and police services have been engaged for preemptive evacuations to mitigate damage in some flood-affected areas of Punjab. The meeting was attended by federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Awais Ahmad Leghari, Dr. Musadik Malik, Attaullah Tarar, and Ahad Khan Cheema, NDMA chairman, and relevant government officials.

## NDMA chairman says 210,000 evacuated

FROM PAGE 01  
the catchment zones of the flooded areas, adding that local administrations, NGOs, and other stakeholders have been alerted to take precautionary measures to minimise potential losses. The chairman said the water flow at Panjnad is expected to surge between 600,000 to 700,000 cusecs in the coming days and the NDMA is actively sharing early warning information with the Sindh PDMA and other relevant authorities to ensure timely preparedness.

## Pak condemns Israeli airstrikes on Syria, hospital

FROM PAGE 01  
the Syrian Arab Republic in contravention of international law and principles of the UN Charter. Pakistan expressed its full support for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Syria, and called on the international community to prevent Israel from undermining the peace and stability of the entire region.

## PM to meet Russian President in China

FROM PAGE 01  
President Xi Jinping to review Pakistan-China relations and ongoing cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative. In addition, meetings with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, and other participating leaders are also scheduled. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is expected to arrive in China on August 30.

## SPORTS AUG 20

## PSB removes Shahid Islam as DDG Admin

*PSB Reshuffle: Omer Farooq Rana Appointed as New Deputy Director General (Admin)*

## OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has removed its Deputy Director General (Admin), Muhammad Shahid Islam, with immediate effect and appointed Omer Farooq Rana from the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation & Coordination as his replacement for a period of three years. Shahid, who was recently reinstated after serving a three-month suspension imposed by the Federal Secretary Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) for misguiding senior officials over the credentials of a kabaddi player, has now been confined to overseeing only the rehabilitation and treatment wing of PSB.

According to an official notification: "In pursuance of Cabinet Secretariat (Establishment Division) Notification No.1/420/2024-E-4 and Ministry of IPC Office Order F.No. 11-8/2014-1PCS-I-Admn, the services of Omer Fa-

rooq Rana, Director (BS-19), Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation & Coordination, Islamabad, have been placed against the vacant post of Deputy Director General (Admn), BPS-19, in Pakistan Sports Board on deputation basis for a period of three years on standard terms and conditions or until the availability of a regular incumbent, whichever is earlier."

Meanwhile, PSB also announced several transfers and postings with immediate effect. Abdul Samad (Superintendent, G&G, BPS-17) has been transferred from PSB Headquarters Islamabad to the PSB Coaching Centre, Lahore. Sami-ur-Rehman (Superintendent, BPS-16) has been shifted from PSB Coaching Centre Karachi to PSB Headquarters Islamabad. Aamir Mehmood Siddiqui (Superintendent, Hostel, BPS-16) has been moved from PSB Headquarters Islamabad to PSB Coaching Centre Peshawar, while Abdul Rashid (Waiter) has been posted from PSB Headquarters Islamabad to the PSB Coaching Centre Lahore.



## Wimbledon champions Jannik Sinner and Iga Swiatek get off to good starts at US Open

*Wimbledon champions Jannik Sinner and Iga Swiatek get off to good starts at US Open*



## SPORT DESK

NEW YORK: Iga Swiatek is trying to do something no woman has done since Serena Williams in 2012: win the US Open and Wimbledon in the same season. Jannik Sinner is trying to do something no man has done since Roger Federer in 2008: repeat as US Open champion. By the looks of things on Tuesday in Arthur Ashe Stadium as the now-three-day first round wrapped up, the two players who triumphed at the All England Club last month – and who both served short doping-related bans last year – look ready to contend again in New York. And how. The second-seeded Swiatek was up

first in the US Open's main arena and needed merely an hour to dismiss Emiliana Arango of Colombia 6-1, 6-2. No. 1 Sinner then took only 39 minutes more to finish off his 6-1, 6-1, 6-2 victory over Vit Kopriva of the Czech Republic. "Obviously, every year is different," said Sinner, sporting the white arm sleeve he began wearing after hurting his elbow in a fall during Wimbledon. "You come here starting this tournament, hopefully, the best possible way – which I did." He certainly showed no signs of the virus that forced him to quit in the first set of the Cincinnati Open final against his biggest rival, No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz, last week. Either Sinner or Alcaraz, who have combined to win

the past seven major titles, can own the top ATP ranking after these 15 days. Similarly, Swiatek, Coco Gauff or No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka, the defending champion, can leave New York atop the WTA. On Tuesday, Sinner saved both break points he faced and won 33 of 40 first-serve points.

Swiatek was even more dominant, not only never facing a break point but never even being taken to deuce in any of her eight service games, while accumulating a 26-5 edge in winners. There was a time when some folks, perhaps swayed by Swiatek's dominance on the French Open's red clay, thought she couldn't succeed on the speedier surfaces of hard and grass courts. That certainly was not the case, as her championships at Wimbledon in July and at the US Open in 2022 make obvious. Ten women have split the past 11 trophies in New York; only Naomi Osaka, in 2018 and 2020, won more than one in that span. And Williams, with three in a row from 2012 to 2014, was the last woman to leave as the champion in consecutive years. As for the men, no one has collected two in a row at the US Open since Federer's five straight titles from 2004 to 2008, before he lost in the 2009 final to Juan Martin del Potro. Sinner was asked why that might be. "We are heading toward end of the season, so some players, they are tired. Some players, they are feeling different. Many things can change. It's also the last big trophy of the year."

## India faces world football ban for second time in three years

*FIFA previously suspended India in August 2022 for third-party influence*

NEW DELHI: India could be banned from world football for the second time in three years after FIFA and the Asian governing body demanded it implement a new constitution by October 30 or risk suspension. World governing body FIFA and AFC sent a joint letter to the All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Kalyan Chaubey expressing "profound concern" at the continued failure to finalise and adopt the constitution. "Failure to meet this schedule will leave us with no alternative but to refer the matter to the relevant FIFA decision-making body for consideration and decision," said the letter, seen by AFP. "AIFF must regard this communication as binding and requiring immediate compliance in order to safeguard its rights as a member of FIFA and the AFC," it added. The AIFF constitution has been in India's Supreme Court awaiting a decision since 2017.

A suspension would mean the Indian national teams and clubs being barred from all international competitions. FIFA previously suspended India in August 2022 for third-party influence after the Supreme Court appointed a committee of administrators to run the AIFF. The ban was lifted a few days later, paving the way for the AIFF to elect Chaubey. India's top-flight club football is currently in disarray. The Indian Super League (ISL) could fold over a dispute between the AIFF and its commercial partner. – Agencies

## 'Mentally exhausted' Gauff struggles through at US Open

NEW YORK: Former champion Coco Gauff stumbled into the second round of the US Open on Tuesday, squeezing past Australia's Ajla Tomljanovic in an error-strewn three-hour battle. Third seed Gauff punched her ticket to the second round after overcoming a litany of self-inflicted errors to win 6-4, 6-7 (2/7), 7-5 in a match that lasted 2hr 57min. "It was a tough match. Ajla was tough, she was getting so many balls back," 2023 US Open champion Gauff said. "It wasn't the best but I'm happy to get through to the next round." Gauff, the reigning French Open champion, had prepared for the US Open by shaking up her coaching team on the eve of the tournament in an effort to fix her shaky service game, replacing coach Matt Daly with Gavin MacMillan, a biomechanics specialist. However on the evidence of Tuesday night, the 21-year-old American still has plenty to work on if she is to have any realistic chance of mounting a deep run in New York. – Agencies

## Thomas Muller changes stance in Ronaldo–Messi 'GOAT' debate

*Change of heart stems from "more romantic" view of game, says former Bayern Munich striker*

## DNA

FORMER Bayern Munich striker Thomas Muller has confirmed changing his opinion on the greatest of all time (GOAT) debate involving Argentinian star Lionel Messi and Portugal legend Cristiano Ronaldo. Messi and Ronaldo, with 13 Ballon d'Ors between them, are widely regarded as the two greatest footballers in history. Yet the debate over who deserves the title of GOAT remains alive as both approach the twilight of their glittering careers. Currently, Ronaldo has 36 trophies – 10 fewer than Messi. The Argentine's 2022 World Cup triumph often takes center stage when comparing the two, given its significance on the global stage. Muller admitted that the World Cup swayed his stance, saying he once leaned toward Ronaldo but switched after Argentina's triumph in Qatar. "Lionel Messi is the GOAT. In my first 10 years as a professional player, I would have chosen Cristiano Ronaldo, but since 2022 World Cup with Argentina, it's been Messi for me."



ISLAMABAD: Younger children are demonstration Martial Arts at local gym of F-9 Park in Federal Capital. – Online

## Pakistani Fighters to Compete Major International MMA Events

*Battle of Truth: Pakistan's MMA Fighters Storm Global Stage with Historic Wins*

## ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Battle of Truth – Pakistan Combat Night has marked a historic breakthrough for mixed martial arts (MMA) in Pakistan, with 13 local fighters securing spots in prestigious international competitions. Eight athletes qualified for the IMMAF World Championship in Georgia, while five booked their places in the Road to BRAVE 100 and the World Championship in Bahrain.

Organised by the Pakistan Mixed Martial Arts Federation (PAKMMAF) with the backing of the Punjab government, the event played to a packed stadium that roared with more energy than a cricket match, creating an electrifying atmosphere until the final bell. Islamabad fighters dominated the Pakistan Open MMA Championship, as Abdul Manan, Moiz Satti, Siddiq Ullah, Ayan Hussain, Shahab Ali, and Sajid Katoshi all won their bouts to secure qualification for the IMMAF World Championship in Georgia.

The Road to BRAVE 100 card was equally dramatic. Aqib Awan outclassed Egypt's Al-Hassan Muhammad in the fly-

weight division, Babar Ali defeated Azerbaijan's Shir Khan Vali in bantamweight, while Zia Mashwani overpowered Iran's Saman Moradmamand. In the main event, Rizwan Ali toppled Egypt's Adham Muhammad to thunderous applause. Women's MMA also took the spotlight, as Eman Khan stunned



the crowd with a first-round knockout against Tunisia's Maha. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, though on an official trip to Japan, closely followed the event's updates. Observers noted that her presence would have witnessed one of the most vibrant sporting atmospheres in Pakistan's recent history. Punjab Sports Minister Faisal Khokhar declared that MMA will be a key pillar in his plan to establish Punjab as the "sports capital" of the country.

PAKMMAF President Omar Ahmed hailed MMA as more than just a sport, describing it as a cultural force with the potential to rival cricket in scale, commercial value, and national impact. He stressed that the federation's mission is to instill discipline, resilience, and pride among the country's youth. Ahmed also highlighted close collaboration with Pakistan's Special Forces, where MMA training is already enhancing unarmed combat competency. He added that further partnerships are underway to strengthen this integration.

In addition, PAKMMAF has joined hands with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to incorporate MMA into university sports, ensuring young athletes have structured pathways into the sport at the grassroots level.

## PTI lawmakers start quitting committees

## FROM PAGE 01

the commission, though, according to sources, Barister Gohar has denied stepping down so far.

In 2023, the PTI had dissolved the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies, registering its protest against the then-PDM-led federal government.

The PTI has also announced that it will boycott the upcoming by-elections in constituencies of party members disqualified in the May 9 cases, declaring those individuals its "true representatives."

Several constituencies are up for grabs as the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) recently disqualified several lawmakers belonging to the PTI following their convictions in cases related to the May 9 riots.

The ruling allies – Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) – had announced they will jointly contest the upcoming by-elections nationwide.

## Ethiopian airforce chief calls on PAF chief

## FROM PAGE 01

Chief of the Air Staff reaffirmed his commitment to enhancing military partnership between the two Air Forces through joint training initiatives. He assured the visiting dignitary of PAF's steadfast support to the Ethiopian Air Force in its professional pursuits, while reiterating that Pakistan deeply cherishes its cordial relations with Ethiopia and remains firmly committed to providing comprehensive assistance in capacity building, advanced training and operational domains.

Lieutenant General Yilma Merdassa conveyed his sincere gratitude for the warm hospitality extended to him and his delegation. Commander Ethiopian Air Force lauded PAF's robust operational readiness, its evolving Multi Domain capabilities and its credible deterrence posture. He highlighted that the Ethiopian Air Force looks forward to drawing lessons from PAF's rich combat experience, integrated command systems and technological innovations to strengthen its own operational capabilities. The visiting dignitary also expressed keen interest in exploring avenues of technology transfer within the aviation sector, particularly in indigenous development and modernization initiatives.

As part of his visit, the Ethiopian Air Chief received comprehensive briefings at the National ISR & Integrated Air Operations Centre and PAF Cyber Command, where he appreciated PAF's technological advancement and integration of cutting-edge capabilities in modern warfare. The visit of Lieutenant General Yilma Merdassa to Air Headquarters, Islamabad, signifies a resolute commitment of both countries to reinforce military partnership, fostering collaboration and promoting robust relations.

## Earthquake jolts parts of Pakistan

## FROM PAGE 01

recent months, most of them linked to the Hindu Kush region in Afghanistan. Earlier this month, a 5.2-magnitude earthquake hit Islamabad, Rawalpindi and parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Peshawar.

Pakistan sits on a major fault line between the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates, which makes earthquakes common, especially in the north.

Karachi, meanwhile, has seen unusual activity this year, with over 30 mild tremors reported in June. Experts link this to movement along the long-dormant Landhi Fault Line.



## Briefs

Rupee gains  
04 paisa  
against US  
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Wednesday appreciated by 04 paisa against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 281.82 against the previous day's closing of Rs 281.86. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 283 and Rs 283.80, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 0.60 to close at Rs 326.92 against the last day's closing of Rs 327.52, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.90, while the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of 31 paisa to close at Rs379.00 against the last day's closing of Rs379.31. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham remained stagnant at Rs 76.73 and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 01 to close at Rs 75.10.—APP

PSX continues  
with bearish  
trend, loses  
941 more  
points

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index continued with bearish trend on Wednesday, losing 941.03 points, a negative change of 0.63 percent, closing at 147,494.03 points against 148,435.06 points last trading day. A total of 856,664,471 shares were traded during the day as compared to 665,420,243 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 29.286 billion against Rs 31.543 billion on the last trading day. As many as 477 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 129 of them recorded gains and 312 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 36 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Pace (Pak) Limited with 87,764,239 shares at Rs 7.06 per share, Bank Makramah with 58,852,612 shares at Rs5.29 per share and TPL Properties with 42,675,243 shares at Rs 10.69 per share.—APP

Gold price ups  
by Rs1,000 per  
tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs.1,000 and was traded at Rs.361,700 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs360,700 the previous day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also increased by Rs.857 to Rs.310,099 from Rs.309,242 whereas that of 10 grams of 22 karat gold went up by Rs.785 to Rs284,267 from Rs 283,482. The rates of per tola and ten gram silver decreased by Rs.53 and Rs.46 and were traded at Rs.4,068 and Rs 3,487 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$10 to \$3,390 from \$3,380. However, the rates of silver in international market decreased by \$.53 to \$38.35 from \$38.88, the Association reported.

Business  
community  
committed  
to tackling  
pollution

MULTAN: The business community is fully committed to protecting the environment and curbing air pollution, said former president of Multan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MCCI), Mian Rashid Iqbal. He stressed that solution to industrial challenges does not lie in strict restrictions or closures, but in consultation and mutual cooperation. "If policymakers take industry stakeholders into confidence, not only can pollution be controlled more effectively, but industrial growth and job creation can also be ensured," he noted. Rashid Iqbal emphasized that industries should be supported through technology upgradation, eco-friendly practices, and facilitation instead of blanket bans. He added that environmental improvement was a shared responsibility of the government, business community, and civil society.—APP

CDA launches Swift Water Rescue  
Training with Chinese experts

The Swift Water Rescue Training Program featured a seven-member team of Chinese experts, led by Commander Zhong Yang of the Blue Sky Rescue Team, imparting training to enhance the rescue operational capabilities of local personnel

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: In line with the direction of Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Member Finance CDA Tahir Naeem inaugurated a three-day Swift Water Rescue Training Program as the chief guest at a local hotel in Islamabad, organized in collaboration with a team of International Chinese experts from Blue Sky Rescue International. The event was attended by senior officers and staff from Emergency and Disaster Management, Fire Brigade and Rescue 1122. The Swift Water Rescue Training Program featured a seven-member team of Chinese experts, led by Commander Zhong Yang of the Blue Sky Rescue Team, imparting training to enhance the rescue operational capabilities of local personnel. This training program reflects the commitment to making the capital city Islamabad safer and more responsive through international cooperation and professional capacity building. The three-day training session, from August 27 to 29, will focus specifically on rapid response techniques in light of the monsoon season and potential urban flooding and emergency like sit-



uations.

During the inauguration ceremony, Member Finance CDA Tahir Naeem welcomed the Chinese team to Pakistan. Addressing the event, he said that Pakistan and China share histor-

ical, friendly, and strategic relations. Such training programs will further strengthen mutual cooperation and ties between the two countries. He emphasized that given the impacts of climate change, training rescue

and emergency personnel is critically important for protecting human lives.

Director General of Capital Emergency Services, Dr. Abdul Rahman, addressed the inauguration ceremony and thanked

the Blue Sky Rescue Team for their visit to Pakistan. He mentioned that unprecedented monsoon rains in this year, natural disasters, and various emergency incidents in Islamabad demand greater preparedness and enhanced response capabilities from rescue teams making this training highly beneficial. Commander of the Blue Sky Rescue Team, Zhong Yang, said that the two countries share a long-standing friendship and that their team had previously participated in rescue training in Lahore last year. He mentioned that his team has trained rescue and emergency services personnel not only in Pakistan but also in several other countries and they are deeply committed to enhancing the capacity and capabilities of Pakistani personnel. It is important to note that the purpose of this training program is to elevate the capacity and capabilities of CDA personnel to ensure prompt and effective responses in any emergency situation, particularly during floods and swift water emergencies. The CDA administration affirmed that such training programs will continue to ensure the protection of citizens' lives and property.

Syria, UAE, Jordan  
condemn Israeli attacks  
on Syrian territory

DUBAI: Syria on Tuesday strongly condemned recent Israeli strikes on the village of Tranja in Quneitra province, where a civilian was killed when his home was bombed. The Syrian Foreign Ministry also denounced Israeli occupation forces for infiltration and arrest campaigns in Suwayda town, and for declaring their intent to continue their illegal presence on Mount Hermon and the buffer zone. These actions, it said, are a flagrant violation of the UN Charter, international law, and UN Security Council resolutions, posing a direct threat to regional peace and security. The ministry reiterated its call on the international community, particularly the Security Council, to act urgently to stop the violations, while stressing Syria's legitimate right to defend its land and people under international law. The UAE also condemned the escalation, identifying Israel's repeated incursions into Syrian territory as a breach of the 1974 Disengagement Agreement and international law. It reaffirmed support for Syria's sovereignty and stability, and urged immediate international action to halt the attacks. Jordan echoed these concerns, denouncing the bombing and Israel's continued presence on Syrian land as dangerous escalations. Foreign ministry spokesperson Sufyan Qudah underscored Jordan's solidarity with Syria and called on Israel to end its repeated violations, while urging the international community to compel compliance with international law and protect regional stability.—APP

Iran-Pakistan  
friendship, brotherhood  
deep-rooted: Iran FM

Araghchi praised the resolute and principled positions of the Government and people of Pakistan, as well as of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, in condemning the aggression committed by the Zionist regime and the United States against the Islamic Republic of Iran

TEHRAN : Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan met with Seyed Abbas Araghchi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran this Tuesday noon for talks and exchange of views. During the meeting, Araghchi praised the resolute and principled positions of the Government and people of Pakistan, as well as of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, in condemning the aggression committed by the Zionist regime and the United States against the Islamic Republic of Iran. He described the friendship and brotherhood between Iran and Pakistan as deep-rooted and robust. Araghchi reaffirmed the Islamic Republic of Iran's determination to comprehensively strengthen its friendly relations with Pakistan. The Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, for his part, congratulated the Iranian nation and government on the heroic resistance shown by the Iranian people and armed forces in response to the Zionist regime's military aggression. He also elaborated on the principled positions of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan regarding the imperative of strengthening Islamic unity in confronting the Zionist regime. The meeting also featured an exchange of views on regional and international developments, with particular emphasis on the necessity of convergence among Islamic countries to confront the expansionist agenda of the Zionist regime and to bring an end to the ongoing genocide in occupied Palestine.

US envoy cuts short  
south Lebanon visit  
amid protests

EL KHIAM: Lebanese state media said US envoy Tom Barrack cut short a visit to the south on Wednesday amid protests in two planned stops against US pressure to disarm Hezbollah. The official National News Agency (NNA) reported that Barrack arrived by helicopter at a Lebanese army barracks in Marjayoun near the border, with soldiers deploying in the area. The news agency later reported that the envoy had canceled planned stops in nearby Khiam, which was pummeled by Israel during its latest hostilities with Hezbollah, and in the coastal city of Tyre. A spokesperson told AFP the US embassy did not comment on officials' schedules for security reasons. An AFP correspondent in Khiam saw a group of residents, some waving Hezbollah flags or holding pictures of fighters killed in the conflict, demonstrating against Barrack. Some were standing on a Star of David that had been drawn on the road in blue, near the words in Arabic "America is the great Satan," and "Barak is animal" written in English. The last was a reference to comments by the US envoy at a Beirut press conference on Tuesday which sparked an outcry in Lebanon. Barak told journalists to "act civilized," adding: "The moment that this starts becoming chaotic, like animalistic, we're gone." Bilal Kashmar, an official from the southern municipalities union, said dozens of people had demonstrated in Tyre on Wednesday against Barak's expected visit and Washington's "biased policies." Under heavy US pressure and amid fears of expanded Israeli military action, Lebanon's government tasked the army this month with drawing up a plan to disarm Hezbollah by year end. The Iran-backed group, which enjoys strong support in the south, was left badly weakened by more than a year of hostilities, including two months of open war, with Israel that largely ended with a November ceasefire.—APP

Israeli protesters demand  
hostage deal as cabinet meets

TEL AVIV: Thousands of demonstrators massed in Tel Aviv on Tuesday, seeking to pour pressure on the government to end the war in Gaza and strike a deal to return hostages, as the security cabinet convened. The first protests began at daybreak as demonstrators blocked roads in the commercial hub, where they waved Israeli flags and held up pictures of the hostages, AFP journalists reported. Israeli media said others rallied near the US embassy branch in the city, as well as outside the houses of various ministers. Hours later as the sun set over Tel Aviv, thousands more gathered in "Hostage Square," which has served as a focal point for the protest movement for months. People in the crowd sounded air horns, blew whistles and banged on drums as they chanted: "The government is failing us, we won't give up until every hostage is home." "I'm here first and foremost to protest, and to call for the government to make a deal and bring all the hostages home and to end the war," said demonstrator Yoav Vider, 29. Following the cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu later spoke at an event Tuesday evening, remaining vague about the government's intentions as Israeli media reported the meeting had been inconclusive. "We have just come from a cabinet meeting. I don't think I can elaborate too much," said Netanyahu. "But I will say one thing: It started in Gaza, and it will end in Gaza. We will not leave those monsters there." The security cabinet approved a plan in early August for the military to take over Gaza City, triggering fresh fears for the safety of the hostages and a new wave of protests that has seen tens of thousands take to the streets. Netanyahu last week ordered immediate talks aimed at securing the release of all remaining captives in Gaza, while also doubling down on the plans for a new offensive to seize Gaza's largest city. That came days after Hamas said it had accepted a new ceasefire proposal put forward by mediators that would see the staggered release of hostages over an initial 60-day period in exchange for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. In Doha on Tuesday, Qatari foreign ministry spokesman Majed Al-Ansari told a regular news conference that mediators were still "waiting for an answer" from Israel to the latest proposal. "The responsibility now lies on the Israeli side to respond to an offer that is on the table. Anything else is political posturing by the Israeli side." Earlier in the day, the families of hostages in Tel Aviv lambasted the government for failing to prioritize a deal that could see those still held captive in Gaza released. "Prime Minister (Benjamin) Netanyahu prioritizes the destruction of Hamas over releasing the hostages," said Ruby Chen, whose son was abducted by militants in October 2023. "He believes it is OK and it is a valid alternative to sacrifice 50 hostages for political needs," he said in a speech to one of Tuesday's demonstrations. Israel has been under mounting pressure both at home and abroad to wrap up its campaign in Gaza, where famine has been declared and much of the territory has been devastated. On Monday, Israeli strikes hit a Gaza hospital, killing at least 20 people, including five journalists working for Al Jazeera, the Associated Press and Reuters, among other outlets. Governments around the world, including staunch Israeli allies, expressed shock at the attack. The Israeli military on Tuesday said its forces were targeting a camera operated by Hamas in two strikes that killed the reporters. "Six of the individuals killed were terrorists," it said, adding that the chief of staff instructed "to further examine several gaps," including the "authorization process prior to the strike." Hamas later rejected the allegations, calling them baseless. The war in Gaza has been one of the deadliest for journalists, with around 200 media workers killed in the nearly two-year Israeli assault, according to press watchdogs. Later Tuesday, Gaza's civil defense agency reported that at least 35 people were killed in attacks throughout the Palestinian territory. Media restrictions in Gaza and difficulties in accessing many areas mean AFP is unable to independently verify the tolls and details provided by the civil defense agency or the Israeli military.—APP

At Trump's marathon cabinet meeting  
the show must go on... and on

WASHINGTON :US President Donald Trump is famed as a political showman – and during a record-breaking three hour and 16 minute cabinet meeting, the show went on, and on, and on. The extraordinary performance on Tuesday was the 79-year-old Republican's longest ever televised press event, the White House and US media said. The former reality TV star free wheeled through his favorite topics during the marathon session, before his top officials seated around the huge wooden table took turns to praise the "greatest president" in history. "This has never been done before," a beaming Trump said as the meeting finally wrapped up. "There's something really nice about the openness of what we're doing – it's an open government, that's what we are." – But while the White House likes to boast about Trump being the "most transparent" president in history, access doesn't always equate to openness. And as Trump had taken part in three separate Oval Office events on Monday lasting nearly three hours, some wondered what more he could have to say a day later. The frenetic pace of Trump's first months back in power has partly eased. Peace efforts in Ukraine and Gaza have largely stalled, key trade deals to avoid tariffs have been sealed, and breaking news has been in shorter supply. But Trump is rarely at a loss for

words. After the press were admitted to the White House Cabinet Room at 12:11 pm local time (1611 GMT), he gave a 45-minute opening monologue, including a brief interlude when he asked a reporter to give her account of being mugged in Washington, where he has launched a crime crackdown. Many of Trump's comments appeared designed to push the buttons of opponents who accuse him of authoritarianism and un-presidential behavior. He said he would ask for the death penalty in murder cases within the US capital and talked about Americans possibly wanting a "dictator" who could cut crime – but insisted he wasn't one. When mentioning Attorney General Pam Bondi, Trump said: "I would never say she's beautiful because that would be the end of my political career." Trump in 2023 was ordered by a New York jury to pay \$5 million for sexually abusing and defaming writer E. Jean Carroll. Other comments seemed likely to keep foreign diplomats busy figuring out the mercurial leader of the world's top superpower. Asked about the Russian foreign minister questioning the legitimacy of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in peace talks, Trump declared that "everybody's posturing. It's all bullshit." Yet in the same breath he said that Zelensky, whose country was invaded by Russia in 2022, was "not exactly innocent."

Then it was the turn of the assembled cabinet members to outdo themselves by flattering Trump. Everyone got a turn. "This is the greatest cabinet working for the greatest president," said Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, seated to Trump's left. "I'm having the time of my life working for you, Mr President. Steve Witkoff, Trump's special envoy for Ukraine and the Middle East, won a round of applause after he said his "only one wish" was for his boss to win the Nobel Peace Prize. As the test of stamina neared the two-and-a-half-hour mark, Trump finally opened the meeting to questions – after briefly sympathizing with broadcast reporters who had spent the whole time holding long boom microphones over the table. "Are you getting tired?" Trump asked. It was then left to one reporter to break it to the headline-loving president that his mammoth press conference had been trumped by the announcement of Taylor Swift's engagement to American football star Travis Kelce. "I wish them a lot of luck," Trump replied, despite his earlier criticism of Swift over her support for his 2024 election rival Kamala Harris. Finally, at 3:27 pm (1927 GMT), Trump ushered out the press. NBC and the RollCall Factbase said it was Trump's longest on-camera event, with the latter timing it at three hours, 16 minutes and 41 seconds. —APP

India's textile,  
jewelry  
industries  
expect blow as  
Trump's 50%  
tariff takes  
effect

NEW DELHI: Donald Trump's 50 percent tariffs on Indian exports to the US took effect on Wednesday, with the first impact expected to be felt by labor-intensive sectors such as textiles and jewelry. In an unexpected move earlier this month, the US president imposed an additional 25 percent punitive levy on Indian goods, citing New Delhi's purchases of Russian oil. This added to his prior 25 percent tariff on many imports from the South Asian nation, raising the total duty to 50 percent. While India has referred to the tariff regime as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable," it has continued talks with Washington, with the Ministry of External Affairs saying on Wednesday that earlier this week "officials advanced bilateral initiatives" and "discussed trade and investment." New Delhi and Washington have been in tariff talks since the beginning of the year, in the wake of the US' ongoing global tariff campaign. In February, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with Trump in Washington, D.C. to discuss strengthening bilateral ties, trade relations, and the procurement of new US weapons and aircraft.—APP

Bangladesh  
police warn of  
'crisis' as rape  
cases surge

DHAKA: Bangladesh's leading women's rights group reported on Wednesday a dramatic surge in rape cases it blamed on worsening security, with police calling the general law and order situation a "crisis." Fauzia Muslim, president of Bangladesh Mohila Parishad group, said the number of sexual assaults in the first six months of 2025 nearly equalled the total for all of last year – a period that also included the turmoil during mass protests that toppled the government in August 2024. "Violence against women increases when there is a deterioration of law and order," Muslim told AFP, warning of "a deliberate attempt in society to create an 'anti-women' atmosphere." The rights group based its findings on sexual assault cases published in national newspapers. According to those reports, 364 rapes were recorded in 2024, compared with 354 cases in the first half of 2025. The group said that the real figures were likely much higher. Police data shows that more than 11,000 women and children faced different types of repression in the first six months of 2025, up from just over 9,000 in the same period last year. Police did not comment specifically on the rise of sexual assaults, but said a wider deterioration of the security situation was troubling.—APP

Australian  
school bus  
crashes,  
killing girl and  
injuring 11  
others

SYDNEY: An Australian school bus veered off the road and crashed on Wednesday, killing a girl and injuring 11 others, Victorian state emergency services said. The bus was carrying 28 students from Christian College Geelong when it failed to negotiate a left-hand turn on a rural road near the city of Geelong and rolled over, police said. The crash scene was "incredibly confronting" for emergency workers, said Paul Lineham, a senior officer with Victoria Police, at a news conference. "One loss of life is one loss too many and when it comes to children, as a parent myself, it really does hit home and my heart goes out to the parents when they first found out their kids were involved," he said. One child was flown by air ambulance to hospital with serious injuries, while a further 10 people including the driver were taken to hospital by road, said David Shearer, from Victoria's ambulance service. The 76-year-old driver has since been discharged from hospital and is currently assisting police with their investigation into the crash, Lineham said.—APP



## Briefs

ECC  
greenlights  
summary  
seeking relief  
for power  
consumers

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet has approved a major relief package for national grid electricity consumers, allowing Rs50 billion, collected through levies on captive power plants, to be passed back to the general public. The ECC meeting, chaired by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, was held at the Finance Division on Tuesday. The committee considered a summary submitted by the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan and States and Frontier Regions for the release of funds for flood relief in Gilgit Baltistan in line with the prime minister's directives. The committee approved the release of Rs3 billion for the timely provision of tents, medicines, food and other essential supplies for the affected families, as well as for reconstruction of the damaged infrastructure and early recovery measures to support the affected communities. The ECC considered a summary from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on a Technical Supplementary Grant of Rs11 billion in favour of the Pakistan Television Corporation (PTVC) against Tariff Adjustment and Net Metering, and approved Rs3.813 billion, with the remaining to be released on a quarterly basis for payment of salaries, pensions and operational expenses of the state broadcaster.

After sugar  
price shock,  
flour soars  
as wheat  
costs spike

## MONITORING DESK

LAHORE: Wheat and flour prices have surged sharply, with wheat climbing by Rs300 this week to Rs3,100 per maund (40kg). The hike follows a month-long upward trend, during which wheat gained nearly Rs1,000 per 40kg and the price of a 20kg flour bag rose by about Rs500. This recent hike is part of a broader trend, as both wheat and flour prices have been steadily increasing. The steep increases have raised alarm over market manipulation and the absence of effective government oversight. Critics claim that the provincial government's abrupt decision to cease regulating the wheat market without prior notice has created an environment conducive to price manipulation. This lack of oversight may have empowered wheat hoarders to artificially inflate prices, further exacerbating the situation. According to Pakistan Flour Mills Association (PFMA) Chairman Asim Raza, the government has been facing challenges in controlling wheat prices. Raza warned that the ongoing rise in wheat prices is likely to trigger a corresponding increase in flour prices in near future.

PM reaffirms commitment to  
cement economic ties with JapanPM Reaffirms Commitment to Strengthen Pakistan-Japan  
Economic Ties, Boost Investment Opportunities

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to enhancing diplomatic, economic, and trade relations with Japan, emphasizing the government's commitment to ensuring a safe and secure environment for foreign investments. During a meeting with Taro Kato, Director General of the Mining & Metals Finance Department at the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), here, the prime minister noted that cooperation between the two countries in the industrial and trade sectors had remained constructive, and both sides are committed to renewing and expanding their economic partnership. He assured that Pakistan would provide all possible facilities to Japanese banks and investors to encourage investment in the country. Highlighting Pakistan's potential, the prime minister said the country could benefit significantly from Japan's advanced technology and professional expertise in agri-

culture, IT, textiles, and other key sectors. He also pointed out that international financial institutions and global investors were showing growing interest in Pakistan's economic and development projects, encouraged by

the government's investor-friendly policies. "Pakistan's cost-effective labor market offers a competitive environment for international investors," the prime minister added. Taro Kato thanked the government and

people of Pakistan for their warm hospitality. He expressed a strong desire to further deepen economic cooperation and noted the increasing interest of Japanese investors and banks in Pakistan's economic projects.

Former CPNE Secretary  
General Aamir Mehmood  
passes away in Karachi

President Asif Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Information Minister condole death of Aamir



## DNA

KARACHI: Former Secretary General of the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE) and senior journalist associated with Kiran and Khawateen Digest

Group, Aamir Mehmood, passed away in Karachi on Wednesday afternoon. The late Aamir Mehmood was the son of journalist Mehmood Riaz and nephew of renowned writer Ibn-e-Insha. The CPNE leadership expressed deep sorrow and grief over his demise. CPNE President Irshad Ahmad Arif, Secretary General Ijaz-ut-Haq, Vice President Tahir Farooq, and other office-bearers extended condolences, describing him as a dynamic and influential figure in journalism. They prayed for the departed soul's forgiveness and eternal peace.

The All-Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) leadership also expressed condolences, calling Aamir Mehmood's death a significant loss for the journalistic fraternity. They prayed for his soul and extended sympathies to the bereaved family. Meanwhile, President Asif Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Information Minister have condoled death of Aamir Mahmood and prayed to God to rest his soul in peace.

UN to establish  
new mechanisms  
on governance  
of AI

NEW YORK: The UN Secretary-General António Guterres has warmly welcomed the General Assembly's decision to establish two new mechanisms within the United Nations to promote international cooperation on the governance of artificial intelligence (AI). In a statement issued today by the spokesman for the UN Chief, the international organisation said that the establishment of the United Nations Independent International Scientific Panel on AI and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance marks a significant step forward in global efforts to harness the benefits of artificial intelligence while addressing its risks. "This pathbreaking milestone underlines Member States' commitment to build on the Global Digital Compact adopted as part of the Pact for the Future in September 2024," added the statement. "The Secretary-General will shortly be launching an open call for nominations for the Scientific Panel, which will present its annual reports at the Global Dialogue on AI Governance to take place in July 2026 in Geneva and 2027 in New York. - APP

Trump to chair  
'large meeting'  
on post-war  
Gaza: US envoy

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump will host a meeting on Wednesday on post-war plans for Gaza, his envoy Steve Witkoff said Tuesday. "We've got a large meeting in the White House tomorrow, chaired by the president, and it's a very comprehensive plan we're putting together for the next day," Witkoff said in a Fox News interview, without providing more details. He was asked if there was "a plan for the day after in Gaza," referencing the end of Israel's war in the Palestinian territory that began in October 2023. Trump stunned the world earlier this year when he suggested the United States should take control of the Gaza Strip, clear out its two million inhabitants, and build seaside real estate. Trump said the United States would remove rubble and unexploded bombs and turn Gaza into the "Riviera of the Middle East." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised the proposal, which was heavily criticized by many European and Arab states. Witkoff did not elaborate on the plan he touted Tuesday, but said he believed that people would "see how robust it is and how it's, how well meaning, it is." - APP

Pakistan concerned  
about sabotage of Nord  
Stream pipelines: envoy

The Pakistani envoy underscored the need for ensuring the safety and security of critical civilian and energy infrastructure especially that of transnational nature was not jeopardized during hostilities

## DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Nearly three years since the destruction of the Nord Stream gas pipelines, which transported Russian gas to Europe, Pakistan is calling for ensuring that deliberate targeting of transnational infrastructure would be addressed through proper scrutiny and accountability. "The deliberate sabotage in September 2022 of Nord Stream offshore natural gas pipelines in international waters was an alarming and reprehensible act," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, told the UN Security Council on Tuesday. Between September 26 and 29, 2022, several explosions were recorded, causing ruptures and leaks in three of the four Nord Stream pipelines in the Baltic Sea. These explosions were investigated by Danish, German, and Swedish officials as an act of sabotage. "Pakistan is seriously concerned on premeditated and deliberate attacks against critical energy and civilian infrastructure of other States, including those carried out by terrorist entities," Ambassador Jadoon said while participating in a debate on Nord Stream under agenda item 'Threats to International Peace and Security'.

"An attack on these facilities and critical infrastructure undermines commercial operation of such entities and also creates a dangerous precedent - that must be effectively addressed," he added. In this regard, the Pakistani envoy underscored the need for ensuring the safety and security of critical civilian and energy infrastructure especially that of transnational nature was not jeopardized during hostilities. "This requires the enforcement of applicable international law and the strengthening of international cooperative frameworks to deal with such attacks." Also, he said, accountability for all such incidents and deliberate attacks must be ensured by bringing the perpetrators to justice. "In this context, we have taken note of the progress made by the relevant German authorities including the arrest of one suspect. We also note that Germany's national investigations are still ongoing." Pakistan, he added, hopes that the inquiry and investigations, once concluded to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, would help establish facts, address legitimate concerns of all those affected by it, and reinforce the crucial norm that all such attacks will be met with proper scrutiny and accountability in a transparent, objective manner and legally sound.

IIOJK's  
heavy  
rains cause  
floods,  
kill 30

Authorities battling to restore telecom services as communication rendered "almost nonexistent", says CM

## NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: Heavy rain set off a landslide on a famed Hindu pilgrimage route in occupied Jammu, killing at least 30 people, the ANI news agency said on Wednesday, while floods prompted official warnings for people to stay indoors at night. Weather officials forecast more rain and thunderstorms with gusty winds for the mountainous region of Ladakh, while heavy rain is set to lash the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Authorities were battling to restore telecom services as communication was "almost nonexistent", said Omar Abdullah, the chief minister of the occupied territory.

Tuesday's landslide near the shrine of Vaishno Devi on the pilgrims' route killed at least 30 people, said ANI, in which Reuters holds a minor stake. It was the latest havoc from downpours in the Himalayan region that have killed 60 people, with 200 missing in Kishtwar in IIOJK last week.

Authorities also ordered the closure of educational institutions in Jammu, which weather officials said was deluged with 368mm (14.5 inches) of rain on Tuesday.

The rivers Tawi, Chenab, and Basantar overflowed beyond their alert levels, causing floods in low-lying areas, Jammu district official Rakesh Kumar told reporters. Television images showed vehicles falling into a big hole after a bridge collapsed on the Tawi river, while some highways linking Jammu to the rest of India were also damaged.

India's neighbour and arch-foe Pakistan has also grappled with monsoon rains in recent weeks. On Tuesday, Pakistan said its sprawling eastern province of Punjab faced a "very high to exceptionally high" danger of flooding from a combination of heavy rains and India's decision to release waters from two dams. The number of displaced in the province now exceeds 150,000, including nearly 35,000 who left voluntarily after flood warnings triggered by heavy rain since August 14, officials said.

UN nuclear watchdog chief  
says inspectors 'back in Iran'

"We are discussing what kind of practical modalities can be implemented to facilitate restart of our work," says Grossi

## DNA

WASHINGTON: The head of the United Nations nuclear watchdog has said a team of its inspectors are "back in Iran," the first to enter since Israeli and US strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities this year. Iran suspended cooperation with the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) following a 12-day war with Israel in June, with Tehran pointing to the IAEA's failure to condemn Israeli and US strikes on its nuclear facilities. "Now the first team of IAEA inspectors is back in Iran, and we are about to restart," director general Rafael Grossi told Fox News' "The Story" in an interview aired on Tuesday. "When it comes to Iran, as you know, there are many facilities. Some were attacked, some were not," Grossi said. "So we are discussing what kind of [...] practical modalities can be implemented in order to facilitate the restart of our work there." The announcement came as Iran held talks with Britain, France and Germany in Geneva on Tuesday, with Tehran seeking to avert a sanctions

snapback which the European powers have threatened to impose under a moribund 2015 nuclear deal. Iran's deputy foreign minister Kazem Gharibabadi, who attended the talks, said it was "high time" for the European trio "to make the right choice and give diplomacy time and space". Britain, France and Germany - parties to the 2015 deal - have threatened to trigger the accord's "snapback mechanism" by the end of August. Tuesday's meeting was the second round of talks with European diplomats since the end of the June war, which was triggered by an unprecedented Israeli surprise attack. The conflict derailed Iran's nuclear negotiations with the United States. It also cast a chill on Iran's ties with the IAEA, with Tehran blaming the UN agency in part for the attacks on its nuclear facilities. Israel says it launched the attacks to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon - an ambition Tehran has repeatedly denied. The 2015 nuclear deal was torpedoed in 2018 when Donald Trump, during his first term as president, unilaterally withdrew the United States and slapped sanctions on Iran. Meanwhile, the European trio - parties to the landmark 2015 Iran nuclear deal - have threatened to trigger the accord's "snapback mechanism" by the end of August. The move would reimpose sweeping UN sanctions lifted under the agreement unless Iran agreed to curb its uranium enrichment and restore cooperation with International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors.

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