



Islamabad POST

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UK offers Pak students 80 scholarships, says high commissioner

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Electricity cost must come down

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Briefs

Gohar steps down from standing committees



FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan on Thursday resigned from four standing committees in the National Assembly (NA), he confirmed in comments to Dawn.com. PTI lawmakers have begun resigning from membership and chairmanship of all standing committees in the NA after instructions from party founder Imran Khan, after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in July and August disqualified a large number of PTI members and leaders in relation to their involvement in the May 9, 2023 riots against Imran's arrest. "I resigned from the committees based on the instructions of the PTI founder and the political committee," Gohar said over the phone.

Canada, India appoint new envoys

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: Canada and India announced new high commissioners to each other's countries on Thursday, in the latest sign of improving ties frayed by former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegation that India was linked to the killing of a Sikh separatist leader on Canadian soil. India's previous high commissioner left Canada in October. Ottawa said he was among six diplomats who were expelled after they were linked to the murder of separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, while India said it had withdrawn the envoy. India also said that same day that it had ordered the expulsion of six high-ranking Canadian diplomats, including the then-acting high commissioner. Trudeau's successor, Mark Carney, and Indian PM Narendra Modi agreed to reinstate senior diplomats when they held their first bilateral meeting in Canada in June.

To control floods

PM stresses urgent need for water storage infrastructure

The prime minister noted that the floods initially struck the northern areas but were now wreaking havoc in Punjab's plains. He offered prayers for those who lost their lives due to floods and torrential rains

DNA / STAFF REPORT

NAROWAL: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday underscored the urgent need to build more water storage infrastructure to minimize the devastating impact of flash floods and protect lives and livelihoods in the country. Speaking at a high-level meeting to review the country's flood situation, the prime minister highlighted that increasing storage capacity was crucial and stressed to begin work immediately.

PICTURE ON BACK PAGE

"Storage capacity is the need of the hour, and without wasting any more time, we should start work in this regard," he said. Shehbaz Sharif stressing the importance of generating resources to fund the construction of dams and water reservoirs nationwide, said "we will have to generate the resources by ourselves". He also called for the speedy completion of ongoing projects including Diamir Bhasha Dam to safeguard against future disasters.

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NDMA urges caution as River levels stay critical

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: NDMA Spokesperson Ali Hassan Thursday warned that river conditions are under critical watch as the department actively issues alerts, urging citizens to stay away from floodwaters, refrain from irresponsible behavior like taking selfies and assist officials during emergency evacuations. While in an exclusive interview with a local news channel, NDMA Ali Hassan said that extreme weather conditions caused by climate change are likely to continue, and another spell of monsoon rain is approaching. He urged citizens to remain alert, take all official advisories seriously and show maturity in

Continued on Page 06

Aug 29–Sept 2

Heavy downpours to hit parts of country

PMD say westerly wave also expected from August 30, setting stage for widespread showers across provinces

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) issued a weather alert on Thursday, warning that another spell of rain, wind and thundershowers is expected to hit parts of the country's upper and central regions from August 29 to September 2. Pakistan has been battered by a brutal monsoon season this year, with landslides and floods triggered by torrential rain killing more than 800 people since June. The system is forecast to bring heavy downpours at times, raising the risk of flooding and landslides. According to the PMD, strong monsoon currents from both the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal will begin penetrating northern Pakistan from August 29. At the same time, a westerly wave is likely to approach from August 30, setting stage for widespread showers across multiple provinces.

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High-level flood in Ravi River at Shahdara

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: In its latest update, the Flood Forecasting Division reported a high-level flood in the Ravi River at Head Balloki and Shahdara, a suburban area of Lahore. It further said that moderate flooding was recorded in the Ravi River at Kot Naina and Jastar. In the Chenab River, a high-level flood was reported at Head Marala and Khanki, the division added. A high-level flood was reported in the Sutlej River at Ferozepur, it added. Floodwaters entered several residential localities of Shahdara,

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80TH NATIONAL DAY OF VIETNAM



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Bilal Azhar Kayani State Minister for Finance, Ambassador of Vietnam Pham Anh Tuan, Heads of Missions of the ASEAN states and others cutting cake to celebrate the 80th National Day of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. – DNA

Shehbaz talks to President Tayyip Erdogan

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif received a telephone call earlier today from His Excellency President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of the Republic of Türkiye. President Erdogan offered his sincere condolences on the ongoing floods across various parts of Pakistan. The Turkish President also expressed his country's solidarity with the people of Pakistan, over the loss of precious lives and property, on account of the devastating floods and offered any assistance that may be required by Pakistan. In this regard, he said that Türkiye stood ready to help in any way possible, including during the rescue and relief efforts. While thanking the Turkish President for his kind and thoughtful sentiments at this difficult time, as well as for his most generous offer of assistance, the Prime Minister said that this telephone call was reflective of the strong, deep rooted, fraternal ties between Pakistan and Türkiye. The two sides had always stood by each other, during challenging times in their history of the most warm and fraternal ties.

After talks 'collapse'

Europeans launch UN sanctions process on Iran, says letter

E3's move to reimpose UN sanctions on Iran is 'illegal and regrettable', says Iranian official

DNA

LONDON: Britain, France and Germany launched a 30-day process to reimpose UN sanctions on Iran over its nuclear programme on Thursday, a step likely to stoke tensions two months after Israel and the United States bombed Iran, according to a letter sent by E3 to the UN Security Council. The trio, known as the E3, said in a statement they had decided to trigger the so-called snapback mechanism before they lose the ability in mid-October to restore sanctions on Tehran that were lifted under a 2015 nuclear accord with world powers.

Continued on Page 06

Norwegian teenager planned mosque attack

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: A Norwegian teenager detained after the killing of an Ethiopian-origin worker at an Oslo hostel also planned an attack on a mosque, police said on Thursday. The 18-year-old was arrested after the killing on Saturday night of Tamima Nibras Juhar,

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan must work for durable, permanent peace in Afghanistan

SHAMIM SHAHID

Amidst its relentless efforts to influence internal matters in war-devastated Afghanistan, Pakistan has also intensified strikes against the banned TTP and other militants on both sides of the border. Although the Taliban officially remained silent on the re-

cent drone attacks, Afghanistan's state news agency BAKHTAR confirmed civilian casualties, including women and children, in displaced Pakistani tribesmen camps in Khost. Ironically, while Pakistan expends resources on political and diplomatic gatherings to win over Afghan elites and pressure the Taliban, it simultaneously pushes for the early evacuation of Afghan refugees. This forced repatriation has deepened uncertainty for millions of Afghans—particularly the youth—about their future, while also fueling resentment inside Pakistan, where many question the violation of basic constitutional and human rights granted to war-affected Afghans.

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UNESCO, Pakistan join hands to boost STEM edu

ISLAMABAD: In a move to advance Pakistan's science and technology landscape, the Ministry of Science and Technology and UNESCO agreed on closer collaboration to promote innovation, research, and ethical use of artificial intelligence. In this regard, Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Mr. Khalid Hussain Magsi, met with Mr. Fuad Pashayev, UNESCO's Representative in Pakistan, on Thursday to explore new avenues of partnership in areas including STEM education, digital innovation, and open science. UNESCO urged Pakistan's active participation in global initiatives such as the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (2024-2033) and the upcoming consultation on the UNESCO Convention on Underwater Cultural Heritage scheduled for October. Khalid Magsi reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to UNESCO's programs, assuring full cooperation from his ministry and pledging to convene a meeting of all stakeholders to strengthen synergy and alignment with UNESCO's priorities. Both sides reiterated their determination to enhance international engagement and foster sustainable development through science, research, and innovation.—APP

Digital Youth Hub portal providing jobs : Rana

LAHORE: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan has said that a new phase of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme was officially launched, focusing on technical education, digital engagement and employment opportunities both nationally and internationally. He was addressing the Chefs Association of Pakistan Membership Award Ceremony, here at Alhamra on Thursday. The chairman PM Youth Programme expressed his deep appreciation for Col (ret) Mubashir Javed, former Lord Mayor of Lahore, who played an instrumental role in the city's transformation. He highlighted how people from other provinces even from Karachi and beyond are now citing Lahore as a benchmark for urban development. "Keep in mind," he noted, "even in the top 12 developed countries of the world, only around 60 percent of students pursue higher education. The rest build their futures through technical and vocational skills in fields such as healthcare, hospitality, and other hands-on trades," added Mashhood. He appreciated Ahmad Shafiq, President of the Chefs Association of Pakistan/Founder COTHM, for his leadership role in promoting technical education across Pakistan. Mashhood said that during his previous tenure as deputy speaker, youth minister, sports minister, and tourism minister of Punjab, he worked closely with Ahmad Shafiq on various development projects. Now, as Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, he emphasised the government's responsibility to engage and empower young people through constructive and positive platforms.—APP

Media strategies urged to counter disinformation, boost resilience

Weaponising information: Strengthening Pakistan's media strategy modern hybrid warfare

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad, convened a Roundtable Conference on 'Weaponising Information: Media Strategies in Modern Warfare' on 27th August 2025. The discussion highlighted the rising significance of information as a weapon in contemporary conflicts, especially in the wake of the May 2025 India-Pakistan escalation. The event was attended by members of academia and intellectuals. CASS is an independent think tank that continues to arrange academic events for academia and practitioners interested in National Security in its wider context. The moderator of the conference, Air Marshal Zahid Mehmood (Retd), Senior Director at CASS Islamabad, set the tone by underscoring the centrality of media in modern warfare and its decisive impact on public perception and battlefield outcomes. Stressing the need for moving beyond reactive responses, he emphasised the importance of proactive media strategies to strengthen Pakistan's resilience against future crises. Mr Amer Zafar Durrani, Founding President of Reenergia and keynote speaker, highlighted the weaponisation of information as a decisive factor in modern conflict, operating across content, distribution, and cognition. He called for a Joint Information Operations Coordination Cell under the National Security Council, supported by Alpowered detection systems tailored to local contexts. Stressing the importance of verification, pro-



enhance tagging, and pre-bunking, he urged policies that counter foreign influence operations while safeguarding civil liberties. He concluded by emphasising digital literacy, regional alliances, and stress-tested protocols as the foundations of Pakistan's resilience in the information domain. The

second keynote speaker, Mr Rehman Azhar, journalist and anchor at Express News, traced the role of media in the recent Indo-Pak May 2025 conflict, highlighting the Indian media's reliance on sensationalism under the patronage of the far-right BJP government. He observed that Indian me-

dia, unlike its Pakistani counterpart, is not warsavvy and thus resorted to exaggerated false claims of victory in the recent conflict. Pointing to the rapid evolution of tools such as bots and deepfakes, he stressed that information warfare is highly dynamic and demands a proactive approach.

He concluded by stressing the importance of the media taking an active role in the pre-bunking stage, rather than playing only a reactive role once crises unfold. In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Javid Ahmed (Retd), President CASS, thanked the speakers for their practical.

KP govt unveils flood relief package, doubles compensation

PESHAWAR: The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has announced a sweeping relief and rehabilitation strategy in response to the catastrophic floods triggered by cloudbursts and torrential rains starting August 15. The districts of Buner, Swat, Shangla, Bajaur, Mansehra, and Swabi were severely affected, with the calamity claiming 406 lives, injuring 245, and causing extensive damage to property and infrastructure. In a message, Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur said that authorities mobilized instantly upon the first reports from Bajaur on the morning of August 15. Rescue agencies, district administrations, and relevant departments were dispatched promptly.

The coordinated effort resulted in the rescue of 5,566 individuals and the recovery of 430 deceased. The government deployed 176 vehicles and boats, alongside 2,061 rescue personnel, to affected zones. Subsequent relief work has seen the restoration of 136 roads and 65 bridges, the provision of cooked food to approximately 119,000 people, the delivery of 125 truckloads of supplies, and the establishment of 70 medical camps. The provincial government has significantly increased financial compensation for victims. The compensation for fatalities has been doubled to Rs. 2 million per person, while aid for the injured is now Rs. 500,000. Payments for completely destroyed homes have been

raised to Rs. 1 million, and for partially damaged houses to Rs. 300,000. For the first time, shopkeepers will receive compensation: Rs. 500,000 for destroyed shops and Rs. 100,000 for cleaning flooded establishments. Aid for losses to crops, orchards, and livestock has also been pledged. To ensure transparency and efficiency, a digital payment system has been introduced, with a firm deadline set for this Sunday to complete all disbursements. Thus far, Rs. 654 million has been distributed to the heirs of 350 deceased, Rs. 19.5 million to 18 injured persons, Rs. 66.5 million in food stamps to 4,432 people, Rs. 28 million for shops, and Rs. 79 million for damaged houses.—APP

Gilani appeals for urgent relief assistance

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Thursday appealed to philanthropists, welfare organizations, and all relevant institutions to extend maximum support to flood-affected families in this critical hour, ensuring they receive immediate relief and protection. He expressed grave concern over the alarming rise in water levels in Punjab's rivers and the worsening flood situation. Highlighting the dangerous situation in the rivers Chenab, Ravi, and Sutlej, Gilani warned that the flood torrents are now heading toward South Punjab, threatening thousands of households and livelihoods. He urged residents in low-lying and vulnerable areas to take precautionary measures and follow government advisories, stressing the need for timely evacuation to safer locations.—APP

CM Bugti stresses for merit, youth empowerment

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Thursday underscored the importance of merit, good governance, youth empowerment and open dialogue in order to bridge the gap between the state and its youth. Speaking at a matching grants cheques distribution ceremony organized by the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) and the ITC, with support from the European Union, Sarfraz Bugti acknowledged public grievances against the government but clarified that "the state has not committed any sin." "While people may have complaints and grievances against the government, the state itself is not at fault," he added. Bugti highlighted the daunting task of development of Balochistan, the largest province by area, comprising 43 percent of the country's landmass on a modest development budget of Rs 200 billion for the fiscal year. He emphasized that sustained progress hinges on

support from international partners and the federal government. The Chief Minister announced the launch of Balochistan's first-ever Climate and Women Economic Empowerment Endowment Fund, aimed at promoting women's financial independence and environmentally sustainable initiatives. Sarfraz Bugti acknowledged that years of corruption and mismanagement had alienated the youth, but the incumbent is committed to rebuilding public trust. He added that a new youth polig has been introduced to integrate young people into the economic mainstream, with a focus on jobs creation and entrepreneurship. The chief minister revealed that as many as Rs 16 billion interest-free loan program has been earmarked for youth, to be implemented in collaboration with the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP). Bugti added that as revenues

grow from international investments in projects like Reko Diq and Saindak, more resources will be directed toward youth development. He said that the government is working to upgrade infrastructure in divisional headquarters. Bugti also warned against inflated land valuations under the guise of roads expansion, vowing to end such exploitative practices. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of PPAF, Nadir Gul Barech highlighted the success of the Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP) project, noting that each grant and loan empowers small entrepreneurs, generates employment, and adds value to local products. He emphasized that small businesses, when supported, can transform entire communities. Addressing the ceremony, Nadir Gul Barech, CEO PPAF said "Every grant and loan facilitated under GRASP translates into new opportunities for small-scale entrepreneurs.—APP

Tanveer vows to food self-sufficiency, farmers protection

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain on Thursday reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensure food self-sufficiency by protecting farmers' interest and stabilizing the wheat market. Chairing the 8th Wheat Board meeting, the minister reviewed the country's demand and supply position of wheat as well as the availability of critical inputs for the upcoming Rabi season 2025-26, said a news release. He noted that the national availability of wheat stands at 33.47 million metric tons (MMT) against a requirement of 33.58 MMT, leaving a marginal shortfall of only 0.11 MMT. "This gap is insignificant and assured that there is no alarming situation regarding wheat stocks in the country", Tanveer emphasized. He made it clear that, under the present circumstances, Pakistan will not import wheat, as existing reserves are adequate to meet national requirements. "The government's foremost priority is to protect and benefit local farmers rather than markets or middlemen", he added. The minister reiterated that abundant supplies of urea and other inputs are available for the upcoming season, ensuring that the sowing of Rabi crops will not face constraints. He also reassured that despite rising fertilizer prices in the international market, the government is strictly monitoring and controlling domestic fertilizer prices to keep the cost of production within farmers' reach. He cautioned that any strict or abrupt regulatory actions at the provincial level, particularly in Punjab, could create panic in the market and worsen the situation unnecessarily. He noted that following the 18th Constitutional Amendment, powers have been devolved to provinces, which sometimes poses challenges in harmonizing national-level agricultural policies. He stressed the need for better coordination between federal and provincial governments to ensure smooth policy implementation. Tanveer further highlighted that long-term food security lies in enhancing the yield of wheat per acre and reducing the cost of production through improved technology, efficient input use, and farmer support programs. He urged stakeholders to focus on sustainable solutions rather than temporary measures, adding that empowering farmers is central to achieving self-reliance in wheat production. The meeting concluded with the resolve that the food ministry, in close collaboration with provinces, will take all necessary steps to safeguard the interests of farmers and ensure uninterrupted food supplies for the people of the country.—DNA

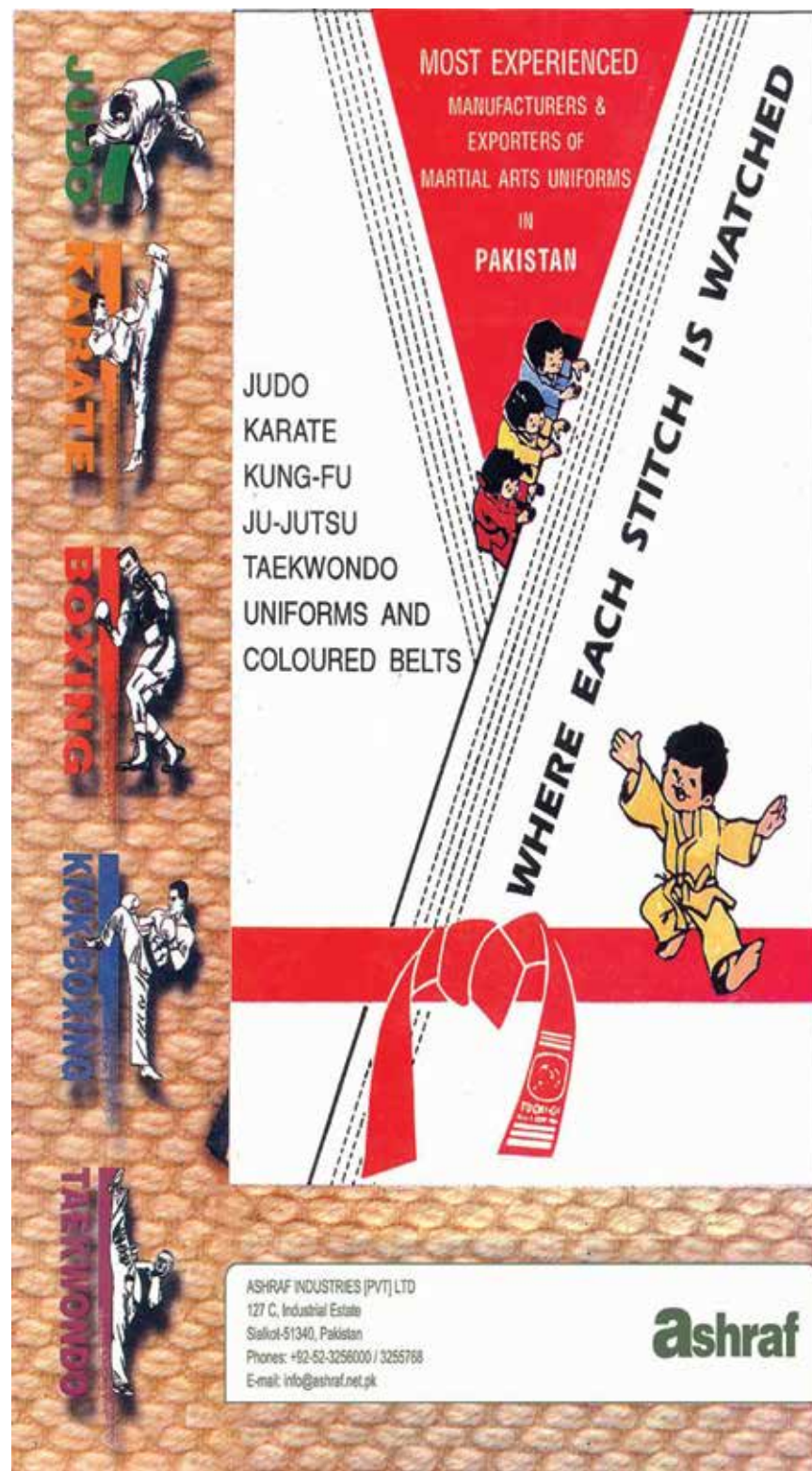
Meeting held to discuss steps for cashless economy at CDA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A meeting was held at the CDA Headquarters under the chairmanship of Member Administration and Estate, Talat Mehmood, to promote a cashless economy in Islamabad. The meeting was attended by CDA Member Finance Tahir Naeem, senior officers from the State Bank of Pakistan, CDA, ICT Administration and representatives from private and commercial banks. The primary objective of the meeting was to take concrete measures in line with the vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to promote a cashless economy in Islamabad. This initiative aims to enable all types of payments through digital means and QR codes, positioning Islamabad as a model and exemplary city for other parts of the country. The meeting involved detailed discussions on transitioning the Federal Capital, Islamabad into a modern and cashless economy. This includes all types of businesses in the city, such as retailers, wholesalers, fruit and vegetable markets, large and small shopping marts, cash

and carries, restaurants, hospitals, pharmacies, laboratories all private and government offices, and even cabs, with a specific focus on digital payments, particularly through QR codes. It was decided that all types of businesses in Islamabad, including small and large merchants, will be required to install QR codes at their premises. The CDA will soon issue a notification making it mandatory to display QR codes at all markets, commercial centers and other public transaction points. Additionally, a comprehensive awareness campaign will be launched to encourage the citizens of Islamabad to adopt cashless payments. The meeting also decided to establish an integrated interface with the banking sector to provide all merchants with direct QR codes. Furthermore, all CDA payments will be made through digital means, and effective measures will be taken to promote the widespread use of QR codes. To oversee Islamabad's transition to a cashless city and review progress, it was decided to form a steering committee. This committee will comprise officers from CDA, ICT,

and the State Bank of Pakistan and commercial banks. Its goal will be to ensure a coordinated strategy and adopt a uniform policy in this regard. Additionally, it will work to remove all obstacles to a cashless economy, integrate sectors that have not yet adopted the system, and make QR code display mandatory for all. CDA Member Administration and Estate, Talat Mehmood emphasized ensuring effective coordination and communication with all relevant institutions, banks and the business community to accelerate this process and establish Islamabad as a fully cashless and digitalized city. In this regard, the CDA has already eliminated all cash transactions within its authority, moved all payments online, and implemented a paperless system internally. CDA Member Administration and Estate, Talat Mehmood, said that these comprehensive measures would promote transparency, ease and swift transactions in Islamabad, providing the public with an opportunity to benefit from the state-of-the-art digital and cashless payment system.



National Days and Armed Forces Days

- AUGUST
- Aug 01/China
Armed Forces Day
- Aug 01/Switzerland
National Day
- Aug 01/Lebanon
Armed Forces Day
- Aug 01 /Syria
Armed Forces Day
- Aug 4/Bukino Faso
National Day
- Aug 09 /Singapore
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Independence Day
- Aug 15/India
Independence Day
- Aug 15/Poland
Armed Forces Day
- Aug 17 /Indonesia
Independence Day
- Aug 24/Ukraine
Independence Day
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Pakistan seeks enhanced bilateral ties with UK

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi stated that Pakistan has always been a proponent of peace and strongly condemns terrorism in all its manifestations. He emphasized that the United Kingdom is an important partner in Pakistan's journey to progress

DNA

ISLAMABAD :Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi held a meeting with British High Commissioner Jane Marriott in Islamabad. Both sides discussed Pakistan-UK relations and ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in various fields. During the meeting, they also held discussions on expanding collaboration in counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, border security, and human trafficking.

High Commissioner Jane Marriott congratulated Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on being conferred with the Nishan-e-Imtiaz and extended her best wishes. She also expressed sorrow and grief over the loss of precious human lives in Pakistan due to floods and rains and exprey condolences to the bereaved families.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi stated that Pakistan has always been a proponent of peace and strongly condemns terrorism in all its manifestations. He emphasized that the United Kingdom is an important partner in Pakistan's journey to progress. He emphasized that Pakistan seeks to enhance bilateral cooperation with the UK in all areas of mutual interest.



Ayaz condemns India's water terrorism, stands with flood victims

The Speaker also directed the concerned authorities and district administrations to ensure timely

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq condemned India's unlawful release of water into Pakistani rivers, calling it a violation of international laws, and expressed deep grief and sorrow over the loss of innocent lives and property caused by the recent floods in various districts of Punjab. In a statement, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq strongly condemned India's irresponsible act of releasing water into rivers without prior intimation. India, in grave violation of international laws, released an extraordinary volume of water all at once, which caused devastating floods in Pakistan and resulted in losses worth trillions. He stressed that this action by India is not only against humanitarian principles but also constitutes a blatant breach of international regulations. He said that the current year's monsoon rains have caused an extraordinary rise in river water levels, causing severe difficulties for the people. He emphasized that in this testing time, the Parliament and the entire nation stand in full solidarity with the affected brothers and sisters. The Speaker also directed the concerned authorities and district administrations to ensure timely and effective relief and rescue operations in the affected areas and to take concrete measures to provide all possible assistance to the victims. He also appealed to the residents living along the riverbanks to move to safer locations as a precautionary measure.—APP

Khichi inaugurates tree plantation campaign at lok virsa

Minister Aurangzeb Khichi Launches Tree Plantation Drive at Lok Virsa, Promotes Environmental Awareness

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Division, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, inaugurated the tree plantation campaign at Lok Virsa by planting a sapling on Thursday. The Minister was accompanied by Parliamentary Secretary for National Heritage and Culture, Ms. Farah Naz Akbar, Member of the National Assembly Nuzhat Sadiq, and Secretary IPC, Mohyuddin Ahmed Wani. On this occasion, the workers of Lok Virsa participated in the campaign and joined hands in planting trees at the Lok Virsa premises. A large number of female students were also present on the occasion and actively took part in the plantation drive. Speaking at the ceremony, Federal Minister Aurangzeb Khan Khichi highlighted the importance of collective efforts in combating climate change and preserving the environment for future generations. He emphasized that insti-



tutions of culture and heritage not only serve as custodians of traditions but also have a role in promoting environmental responsibility. The Minister appreciated the

participation of students and workers, noting that their involvement reflects a shared commitment to both cultural preservation and environmental sustainability.

OGRA directs licensees to adopt digital payments by Oct 31

"This initiative will not only facilitate consumers but also strengthen Pakistan's digital payment ecosystem," said OGRA spokesperson Imran Ghaznavi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has directed all licensed entities under its regulation to adopt digital payment solutions in line with the government's vision of promoting a cashless economy. According to the directive, OGRA regulated businesses, including oil marketing companies, gas utilities, CNG stations, LPG and LNG operators, refineries, and lubricant marketers, must introduce and display digital payment options, particularly the State Bank of Pakistan's Raast QR Code at their outlets. The Authority emphasized that no outlet will be allowed to refuse customers opting for digital transactions. Full compliance is required by October 31, 2025. OGRA said the move supports the State Bank's digitization drive and is expected to improve financial inclusion, transparency, and operational efficiency across the energy sector. Businesses have been advised to coordinate with their banks, microfinance banks, or electronic money institutions to obtain free-of-cost Raast QR codes for timely implementation.

CCP's revival shows the influence of effective leadership

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has emerged as a rare example of how a public sector body can transform itself from dormancy to dynamism. Once considered sidelined and ineffective, the Commission is now recording landmark disposals, recoveries, and enforcement actions that are reshaping Pakistan's regulatory landscape. For years, regulators across Pakistan have pointed to courts and stay orders as the main reason for their lack of enforcement. CCP's recent record challenges this narrative. By actively pursuing litigation and ensuring effective follow-ups, the Commission has reduced its backlog of pending cases by more than half—an achievement acknowledged on the floor of the Senate. In just one fiscal year, 224 cases were decided across different forums—more than ever before in CCP's history. This suggests that the issue was never with the judiciary alone, but with how seriously organizations pursued their cases.—APP

CTO emphasizes merit, courtesy in traffic management

ISLAMABAD: Police Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Captain (R) Hamza Humayun chaired a meeting with staff from the Headquarters and Licensing Branch to review public facilitation measures and service delivery standards. An official told APP on Thursday that during the briefing, the CTO Hamza directed that citizens visiting for driving licenses should be dealt with politely and provided maximum ease in completing the process. He emphasized that the issuance of driving licenses must strictly be on merit and that no compromise on standards would be tolerated. He said officers must adopt professional and courteous behavior while identifying all traffic congestion points in the federal capital for improved flow. He added that strict action would be taken against violators of traffic rules without discrimination. He further said that welfare and provision of facilities to duty staff remain a top priority, while coordination among all units should be strengthened to promote community policing. Public cooperation, he stressed, was vital for maintaining smooth traffic flow.

The CTO Hamza underscored that Islamabad Traffic Police must remain a corruption-free institution. He warned that departmental action would be initiated against any officials found involved in corrupt practices. He said ITP Radio FM 92.4 should be made more effective for timely updates on traffic situations, while immediate response must be ensured to public complaints.—APP

ECC approves funding plan for smooth USC closure

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet here on Thursday approved a technical supplementary grant of Rs. 30.216 billion to ensure the smooth closure of the Utility Stores Corporation (USC) of Pakistan. The meeting of the cabinet committee was chaired by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, according to press release issued by finance ministry.

The decision represents a major step in responsibly addressing the longstanding financial burden of USC on the national exchequer, while also safeguarding the interests of employees affected by the closure.

By approving severance, compensation and payment of outstanding dues, the government is ensuring that workers receive their entitlements, thereby cushioning the social and economic impact of USC's winding up. The ECC of the Cabinet also decided that the Ministry of Industries & Production shall further rationalize the financial requirements for the closure of USC. It was further decided that the assets of USC, including properties, shall be disposed of within the current financial year so that the costs of closure are partially met through sale proceeds.—APP

Literary activities refine personality

RAWALPINDI: Literary activities shape a well-rounded personality, mixing heart and mind for better professionals they build confidence and calmness, helping handle tough decisions. This was remarked by the speakers on the annual Literary Day, celebrated at Watim Medical and Dental College. The event featured competitions in Qur'an recitation, Naat, and Urdu and English debates, in which a large number of students actively participated and showcased their literary skills.

Dr. Najeeba Arif, Chairperson of the Pakistan Academy of Letters, in her presidential address as chief guest emphasized that literary pursuits and creative expression refine the personality of doctors, enabling them to grow as balanced individuals. She urged the future physicians to create harmony between intellect and emotions, avoiding extremes on either side.

"A good doctor must combine the compassion of the heart with the reasoning of the mind," she said and urged the students to benefit from the latest advancements

in medical science and technology, and to contribute positively towards the progress and development of the nation.

Dr. Najiba further highlighted that the literary activities help in inculcating confidence and composure in personality. "The co-curricular activities continually keep on refreshing your thought process and enable you to manage difficult situations in life, specifically for doctors where decision making is important at every step of their professional careers", she added.

The ceremony was marked by a strong sense of patriotism, as speakers highlighted the glorious achievements of the Pakistan Armed Forces in recent national endeavors, and linked them with the spirit of dedication required from young professionals. Professor Idrees Farooq Butt, President of Literary Society in his welcoming address commended the students for their active participation. He reiterated that the society would keep on organizing such events which provide great opportunities for students to express their talent.—APP

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Briefs

PM youth laptop scheme postponed amid floods

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme, designed to distribute 100,000 free laptops to deserving students nationwide, has been postponed in response to the flood crisis affecting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). According to an official sources from Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP), the laptop distribution event, which was initially set to begin in July 2025, has been put on hold to accommodate the relief efforts in flood-affected areas. The youth laptop distribution event has been rescheduled by 2 weeks due to university closures nationwide. A revised date will be announced soon, allowing eligible students to receive their laptops as part of the government's initiative to promote digital literacy among youth. The recent floods have caused widespread destruction, displacing thousands of people and disrupting essential services. APP

Govt pushes shipping sector growth

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC), the country's national flag carrier, has expanded its fleet from 10 to 12 vessels with the addition of two Aframax-class tankers, Swan Lake and P. Aliki, enhancing maritime and energy transport capacity. PNSC Chief Executive Officer Zarar Hussain briefed the Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, during a meeting on Thursday attended by the maritime ministry's Secretary Syed Zafar Ali Shah, other officials and the heads of Karachi Port Trust and Port Qasim Authority (PQA). Minister Junaid Chaudhry highlighted that these new tankers increase the PNSC fleet to 12 ships, reaffirming the government's commitment to strengthening the national shipping sector. He further announced the ambition to grow the fleet to 20 vessels by year-end. He emphasized PNSC's vital role in transporting crude oil and petroleum products, noting Aframax tankers, ranging from 80,000 to 120,000 deadweight tonnes, are favoured globally for their ability to access ports inaccessible to larger Very Large Crude Carriers. This expansion is expected to boost Pakistan's capacity to efficiently handle rising energy imports.—APP

Third edition of young fine arts graduates exhibition at PNCA

This edition demonstrates the remarkable breadth and vitality of contemporary artistic practice in Pakistan, positioning young graduates not only as inheritors of tradition but also as active voices shaping the country's cultural future

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) inaugurated "Shared Distances", the third edition of its annual exhibition dedicated to showcasing the creativity and vision of young fine arts graduates from the twin cities. The exhibition, curated by Noor Fatima, brings together 90 plus artworks by over 40 emerging artists from leading institutions, including the National College of Arts (Rawalpindi), Fatima Jinnah Women University, COMSATS University, and Rawalpindi Women University. The exhibition was formally inaugurated by Mr. Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, Federal Minister of Culture and Heritage, who was joined by diplomats, senior artists, academics, and cultural figures. On the occasion, the minister congratulated the curator Noor Fatima, the Director General of PNCA, Muhammad Ayoub Jamali and the participating artists for creating a platform that highlights the strength of Pakistan's young creative voices. Mr. Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, along with DG PNCA, Ayoub Jammali, planted a tree at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) today, highlighting the importance of tree plantation in combating environmental changes. This initiative not only helps in combating climate change but also promotes environmental conservation, green



spaces, and a healthier ecosystem for future generations. Speaking at the opening, "Shared Distances" Aurangzeb Khan Khichi said: "This exhibition is a testament to the immense talent of Pakistan's youth. It reflects their ability to draw from our cultural heritage while addressing contemporary realities with originality and depth. PNCA's commitment to nurturing young artists ensures that our cultural future remains dynamic and inclusive. I congratulate the curator, the artists, and the PNCA team for making this important platform possible." The exhibition will remain on view until 10th September 2025 at PNCA's galler-

ies in Islamabad. Shared Distances reflects on the complexities of memory, longing, resilience, and transformation. Across painting, printmaking, sculpture, miniature painting, and installation, the works explore the thresholds of perception from intimate personal histories to broader cultural narratives. Together, the artists chart how distance is experienced and reimagined, offering viewers a profound meditation on separation, connection, and the shifting landscapes of belonging. "In a time when connections are fleeting, places shift before they can settle in memory, and the familiar often feels just out of reach, Shared



Distances offers a space for stillness and reflection," writes curator Noor Fatima. "These works reveal the delicate negotiations between presence and absence, intimacy and detachment, and invite viewers to find echoes of their own experiences within them." This edition demonstrates the remarkable breadth and vitality of contemporary artistic practice in Pakistan, positioning young graduates not only as inheritors of tradition but also as active voices shaping the country's cultural future. Participating Artists: Abrish Zahra, Aliza, Amna Ayyaz, Amna Wajahat, Areeba Naeem, Arooj

Fazil, Asma Ali, Aweesa Tariq, Ayesha Afzal, Ayesha Bibi, Ayesha Tanveer, Bakhtawar Nadeem, Eman Ijaz Choudhary, Faseeh bin Amir, Fatima Khan, Fatima Maqbool, Fatimah Mirza, Hazafa Asim, Javeria Khalid, Khizr Tanveer, Laiba Abdullah, Lubna Khat-tak, Mahnoor Shahid, Makayil Rana, Mishaal Jahangir, Mishaim Gardezi, Mishaal Mahsud, Muqet Haider, Nida Zainab, Noor e Sahar, Pakiza Hassan, Qudsia Khurshid, Raeesa Abbas, Ramsha Ali, Samreen Rehman, Saleha Naseem, Sumbal Minahal, Tayyaba Qureshi, Vaneesa Azami, Zainab Akram, Zakia Irfan Khan, Zel-Arsh.

Experts describe "IOMed" potential role in reshaping global dispute resolution

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The China Program at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, hosted a high-level seminar on "China's Mediation Diplomacy and the IOMed Initiative: Global Dispute Resolution in a Multipolar Era." Experts, mediators, and policymakers discussed the significance of the newly established International Organization for Mediation (IOMed) and its potential role in reshaping global dispute resolution. Delivering the welcome remarks, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President of IRS, highlighted China's efforts to promote a more stable, secure and collaborative world order where conflicts would be resolved through dialogue and mediation. He described IOMed as a key step in strengthening cooperative global governance and noted that traditional mechanisms, such as the UN Security Council, have often struggled to resolve conflicts, citing examples such as Gaza, South Asia, and other regional contexts. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to supporting China in all initiatives aimed at fostering world peace and development such as the Belt and Road Initiative, Global Development Initiative, Global Civilizational Initiative and Global Security initiative. Building on this, Mr. Murtaza Solangi, Spokesperson to the President of Pakistan and former Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, underlined that China, as a civilizational power, has long upheld traditions of harmony and conciliation. He observed that both Chinese and South Asian cultures emphasize settlement before judgment. Referring to the launch of IOMed in Hong Kong, joined by 33 founding members including Pakistan, he explained that its mandate covers both state-to-state and international commercial disputes. He stressed that mediation outcomes are built through dialogue and mutual understanding rather than imposed rulings. Moreover,

he said Pakistan stands to benefit directly, as mediation lowers costs, shortens timelines, and protects sensitive economic and political relationships. Citing China's role in facilitating Saudi-Iran rapprochement, he underscored that Pakistan, as China's "iron brother," continues to learn from this tradition of win-win solutions. Adding a diplomatic perspective, Mr. Shi Yuanqiang, Deputy Head of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires at the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad, said the signing of the IOMed Convention by China and Pakistan marked the establishment of the world's first intergovernmental body dedicated exclusively to mediation. He stressed that this milestone coincided with the 80th anniversary of the victory in the anti-fascist war and the founding of the United Nations, reinforcing the UN Charter's call to preserve peace and security. Warning that power politics and coercion are eroding trust among nations, he called for reforms in global governance. He emphasized China's consistent role as a peacebuilder and defender of international order, and praised Pakistan's active support as a founding member, reaffirming Beijing's readiness to work with Pakistan and the Global South to safeguard peace, fairness, and justice. Further elaborating on the legal dimension, Mr. Ahmer Bilal Soofi, distinguished lawyer and international law expert, noted that no other permanent member of the UN Security Council has engaged in mediation as consistently as China. He said IOMed is unique in being the first institution devoted exclusively to interstate mediation, offering flexibility and informality particularly suitable for technical disputes such as water sharing, transit, and trade. He urged Pakistani policymakers to consider referring regional disputes to IOMed, stressing that mediation resonates with local traditions such as jirgas. He added that China's vision of a "shared future for humanity" represents a narrative of collective prosperity, endorsing IOMed as a critical opportunity for the Global South.

Pak's agri graduates' training program launches in China

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China's City of Chengdu hosted the opening ceremony of the second batch of 1,000 agriculture graduates of the Prime Minister of Pakistan's Initiative for Capacity Building. The event marked the start of a three-month training program for 276 Pakistani agricultural professionals, with 190 participants studying at Huazhong Agricultural University in Wuhan and 86 at the Institute of Urban Agriculture, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) in Chengdu, according to a report carried by China Economic Net (CEN). 86 Pakistani agriculture professionals at the Institute of Urban Agriculture, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) in Chengdu, photo provided by Consulate General of Pakistan in Chengdu. The Chengdu-based program will focus on agricultural mechanization and fruit and vegetable processing technologies, providing a curriculum specifically designed to address the agricultural development needs of Pakistan. The training emphasizes practical skills and industrial placement, ensuring participants can effectively apply their learning. The ceremony featured addresses from officials of both countries. Deputy Director General of CAAS Department of International Cooperation, Mr. Liu Wende stressed the significance of Sino-Pakistani agricultural cooperation and reaffirmed CAAS's commitment to the partnership. Mr. Tanvir A. Bhatti, Consul General of Pakistan in Chengdu, congratulated the trainees, noting that the program would provide them with advanced techniques to enhance productivity, enhance export competitiveness and strengthen rural livelihoods in Pakistan. The ceremony also saw the signing of a training agreement for the current batch and was attended by representatives from Pakistan's Ministry of National Food Security and Research, the Tianfu New Area Agriculture and Rural Affairs Bureau in Sichuan province and the National Nanfan Research Institute (Sanya), CAAS, demonstrating broad support for this international cooperation initiative.

Suki Kinari project extends flood relief support

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Severe monsoon rains and flash floods since July 2025 have wreaked havoc across northern Pakistan, damaging infrastructure, disrupting transport links, and leaving many communities struggling to access relief, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Thursday. On July 24, the Suki Kinari Hydropower Project dispatched an excavator and two dump trucks to Chillas, 128 kilometers upstream, to help clear debris and reinforce embankments. In the following weeks, additional machinery was also deployed near the dam site to assist with flood recovery efforts. The downpours have caused widespread damage to major roads, bridges, and other vital infrastructure, leaving many communities isolated and hampering the delivery of relief supplies. In some of the hardest-hit areas, including parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan, blocked routes and collapsed bridges cut off access for rescue teams.—APP

Mohsin Naqvi's zero tolerance policy against illegal housing societies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mohsin Naqvi, Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics who is known as "Mohsin Speed" with his unmatched ability and visionary leadership to execute and implement policies thus materialising dream into reality are very much in the realm to have a developed, beautiful, and a livable federal capital of the world set against the Margalla Hills, with generous green belts and civic order. However, due to mushroom growth of unapproved housing schemes, cooperative housing projects and creeping encroachments in the past across Islamabad were straining. On the directions of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, officials have adopted zero tolerance policy coupled tough enforcement and encroachment actions with state of the art technology and city-building, aiming to make Islamabad not just encroachment free, but clean, green, beautiful and a model capital of the world. A clear policy line: zero tolerance, backed by technology and institutions, Mohsin Naqvi set the tone by ordering an across the board crackdown on illegal constructions, unregistered housing societies and encroachments throughout Islamabad in urban and rural areas of Islamabad. Officials were directed to adopt to have a zero-tolerance policy, deploy satellite mapping technology and the Land Information & Management System to spot violations, and pursue action without fear or favor. The emphasis was not merely punitive but it was framed as necessary to restore the rule of law and deliver "world-class" urban services to residents of the federal capital, Islamabad which is considered one of the most beautiful capital of the world. Under the dynamic leadership of Mohsin Naqvi, Federal Minister for Interior, from policy to practice: visible, large scale enforcement and encroachment drive started.

The most vivid proof of intent came with the Saidpur Model Village operation in August 2025. Under Naqvi's direction, authorities demolished more than 200 illegal structures and reclaimed more than 200 kanals of National Park land, an action explicitly presented as non discriminatory and data driven, targeting constructions raised



after 2005. Besides recovery, the move aimed to reset land use around a heritage precinct so it can be re-developed transparently as a tourism and culture node. These steps embody the link Mohsin Naqvi's repeatedly draws between enforcement and livability. Beyond marquee, GT Road and Expressway operations, Naqvi convened high level reviews at the CDA Headquarters, instructing that all sectors affected by unauthorized structures be cleared

on a fixed timeline, a rare, time-bound benchmark for a city-wide encroachment drive. The same meetings coupled clearance with service upgrades and security improvements, signaling that the campaign's endpoint is a better-run city, not simply vacant plots.

Cleaning up the urban fabric while building for the future. For a capital to stay clean and green, enforcement must be paired with infrastructure that absorbs growth without chaos. In parallel with anti-encroachment actions, the government advanced mobility projects notably the T-Chowk Flyover and Shaheen Chowk Underpass to ease choke points and reclaim surface space for safer, greener streets. The same coordination forums also advanced upgrades to the Diplomatic Enclave and expansion of civic facilities (including new police stations), showing the anti-encroachment drive is nested in a broader modernization program rather than isolated demolition. How zero tolerance supports a clean and green Islamabad

1. Restoring planned land use: Removing unapproved societies and roadside occupations reduces illegal commercial spillover, protects right-of-way for footpaths, and safeguards designated green belts and national park land. The Saidpur clearances are a case in point, immediately reversing habitat pressure and visual blight on a high-value landscape edge. Making enforcement predictable: Satellite mapping and LIMS minimize discretion, improving fairness while speeding up action. Predictable enforcement deters fresh violations crucial to keep green areas from being nibbled away by incremental encroachments. Linking clearance to access and amenity: Road and public-realm projects (flyovers, underpasses, upgraded precincts) channel growth into planned corridors, cutting ad-hoc spillover that often triggers informal occupations. This is the infrastructure backbone of a cleaner, greener city. Moreover, Governance signals that matter.

The campaign's credibility rests on three governance choices. First, time bound targets create public accountability and keep agencies aligned. Second, city level coordination with CDA, police, and Islamabad Administration in the loop reduces the enforcement eviction reoccupation cycle. The public communication via official briefings and press notes has documented the what, where, and why of operations, lowering rumor and resistance while raising deterrence. Challenges and why staying the course is essential as any zero-tolerance program risks displacement concerns, legal pushback, and the temptation to pause once "headline" sites are cleared. Islamabad's experience shows why persistence matters: violations proliferated over years; undoing them requires months of steady, even handed action plus rapid after care clear signage of land status, transparent auctions where appropriate, quick greening of reclaimed strips, and consistent monitoring through LIMS so that vacated space isn't re-captured. The administration's repeated stress on technology and deadlines suggests awareness of this "last mile" challenge. Under the dynamic leadership of Mohsin Naqvi, from crackdown to city building actions in 2025 push beyond episodic "anti-encroachment drives." They amount to a city building agenda where rule of law, digital governance, and targeted infrastructure move together. The actions against illegal possessions on state lands, enchantments and against illegal housing societies and cooperative societies reclaiming occupied public land while simultaneously investing in mobility, precinct upgrades, and stronger civic policing the campaign ignites enforcement with a positive urban vision. The reclaimed spaces will be formalized, landscaped, and integrated into the public realm, so that Islamabad will not only be encroachment free but it will be tangibly cleaner, greener, more beautiful and more livable closer to the very well planned capital it was always meant to be in future.

Two rapists get life sentences

RAWALPINDI: The criminals involved in a gang rape case have been sentenced to life imprisonment along with financial penalties. The case was registered in January this year nominating two culprits for rapping a 15 year old girl in Rawalpindi Cantt area. According to the details, Haseeb and Sajawal, who were immediately arrested by the police, had confessed the crime during police interrogation. The duo have also been imposed the fine of Rs. 500,000.0 each, along with compensation fine of Rs. 500,000.0 each. The assault occurred in January 2025, when the victim, from a vulnerable low-income family, was allegedly abducted and raped by the two accused. The FIR detailed the abduction, sexual assault and threats to the victim to silence. The court verdict reflects strong and consistent prosecution by the police which led to the sentencing of the criminals. CPO Syed Khalid Hamdani has lauded the police teams for their dedicated performance during investigation and the prosecution. He reiterated that police would protect the citizens with total commitment.—APP

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The recurrent deluge: a story of negligence and corruption

THE tragic cycle of floods in Punjab, a calamity that claims lives and devastates livelihoods with alarming regularity, is not merely a consequence of changing weather patterns. It is, in a large part, a man-made disaster, born of a toxic mix of short-sighted planning, political patronage, and institutionalized corruption. While the recent deluges have once again brought the country to a standstill, they have also laid bare a truth that is both painful and undeniable: we fail to learn from our mistakes, and the cost is paid in human lives. A major contributing factor to the heightened devastation is the widespread encroachment on riverbanks and natural waterways. In a glaring example of this negligence, the very banks of the River Ravi in Lahore have been occupied by illegal housing societies. These developments, built in areas meant to be a natural flood-plain, act as barriers to the river's flow during monsoon season. When the water swells, it has nowhere to go but into these communities, turning residential areas into raging torrents and claiming innocent lives.

This issue is not new. It has been highlighted by environmentalists and urban planners for years, yet the warnings have been consistently ignored. A particularly egregious case involves a prominent housing society on the Ravi, which reportedly had its No Objection Certificate (NOC) rejected during the previous government's tenure due to its location in a flood-prone zone. However, under the current administration, the society somehow secured the necessary approvals, a clear indication of how powerful interests can circumvent regulations and endanger the public for private gain. This pattern is repeated in various other locations across the province, where illegal construction along rivers and drains has transformed natural safeguards into deathtraps. The lack of long-term planning is a hallmark of our approach to disaster management. When the floods hit, there is a flurry of activity—rescue operations, relief camps, and emergency meetings.



The government and officials express their condolences, visit the affected areas, and make promises of rehabilitation. But as soon as the floodwaters recede, the memory of the catastrophe fades. The promises are forgotten, the long-term solutions are shelved, and life goes on, business as usual, until the next calamity strikes. This “firefighting” approach, while a necessary immediate response, does nothing to address the root causes of the problem. The government's failure to provide adequate and affordable housing for its citizens is a critical piece of this puzzle. People, particularly those from lower-income backgrounds, are often left with no choice but to build their homes in marginal, high-risk areas. The allure of cheap land, however dangerous, becomes irresistible in the absence of a viable alternative. This forces them to occupy riverbanks and other waterways, making them the first and most vulnerable victims of any flood. The responsibility lies squarely with the government to develop and implement a comprehensive housing policy that meets the needs of its populace, thereby discouraging these perilous settlements.

The issue of external aid adds another layer of complexity and mistrust. Following the devastating floods of 2022, international donors pledged an impressive sum of over \$10 billion at the Geneva moot in early 2023 for Pakistan's flood relief and rehabilitation efforts. However, according to reports, only a fraction of this amount has been disbursed. Donors are hesitant, and their reluctance is rooted in a deep-seated distrust of Pakistan's ability to manage these funds transparently. The fear is that the money will not reach the intended beneficiaries but will instead be siphoned off through corruption, as has happened in past disaster relief efforts.

This lack of trust is a direct consequence of the rampant corruption that plagues our institutions. From the issuance of illegal NOCs for housing societies to the misappropriation of aid money, corruption undermines every effort to build a resilient and safe society. It is the single most significant barrier to progress. Pakistan cannot expect to move forward, to build a future free from these recurrent disasters, until it confronts and overcomes this systemic issue. The floods are a stark and deadly reminder that while climate change may be a global phenomenon, the severity of its impact on our nation is a problem of our own making. We must address our internal failings with the same urgency and determination with which we respond to the floods themselves.

Trump's 50% tariffs on India: Pakistan's big break

Qamar Bashir



India began flexing its muscles globally, confident that Washington's unwavering support would shield it from consequences. This newfound arrogance became visible during disputes with the European Union and the U.S. itself, particularly after the Ukraine war began. European leaders, frustrated with India's defiance over Russian oil imports, confronted New Delhi, but the Biden administration largely shielded India from repercussions.

During the Biden administration, India rose from the status of an ordinary bilateral trade partner to the position of a “strategic partner” and “most favored nation” in the eyes of Washington. Biden's White House envisioned India as a counterweight to China's growing influence in Asia and beyond, pumping extraordinary political, economic, and strategic support into New Delhi. India was projected globally as the next manufacturing hub, replacing China, and U.S. high-tech industries were encouraged to set up captive plants across India. These industries were supposed to produce goods cheaply in India and bring them back to the U.S., granting India unprecedented access to American markets and raising its global geopolitical standing. The scale of respect, economic incentives, and military cooperation lavished on India was unprecedented and elevated its profile on the world stage. But this sudden elevation inflated India's ego, making it more assertive, stubborn, and, at times, confrontational—not just toward its neighbors like Pakistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, but even toward China and, eventually, its Western partners.

India began flexing its muscles globally, confident that Washington's unwavering support would shield it from consequences. This newfound arrogance became visible during disputes with the European Union and the U.S. itself, particularly after the Ukraine war began. European leaders, frustrated with India's defiance over Russian oil imports, confronted New Delhi, but the Biden administration largely shielded India from repercussions. Despite India openly bypassing sanctions, re-exporting discounted Russian oil, and profiting immensely, the Biden White House avoided imposing penalties. For Biden, the strategic calculus was clear: strengthen India's economy, enhance its military capabilities, and project it as the leading democratic bulwark against China in the Indo-Pacific region. Even when India stubbornly refused to align with U.S. and European sanctions against Russia, the administration remained lenient, keeping the long-term vision intact.

All this changed the moment Donald Trump returned to the White House in January 2025. Unlike Biden, Trump viewed the U.S.–India relationship through a cold lens of transactional pragmatism, rejecting the notion of unconditional strategic indulgence. For Trump, India's ballooning trade surplus with the U.S., its hidden tariff barriers, and its profitable energy trade with Russia represented a fundamental imbalance. Within months, Trump reversed nearly all the “goodies” extended under Biden, replacing diplomatic pampering with economic leverage. He demanded that India halt Russian oil imports, end its practice of reselling refined Russian petroleum products to the U.S. and Europe at inflated margins, and lower its prohibitive tariffs on American goods. India's refusal was immediate and absolute. Its leadership, still basking in the privileges earned during the Biden years, rejected U.S. demands and defended its “strategic autonomy.”

Trump responded swiftly and decisively, beginning with a modest 10% tariff on Indian goods, then raising it to 15%, then 35%, and finally imposing an extraordinary 50% blanket tariff by August 27, 2025. This move effectively crippled India's position in the U.S. market, making a significant portion of its exports—worth approximately \$48 to \$58 billion annually—prohibitively expensive for American buyers. Key sectors like textiles, apparel, seafood, gems and jewelry, furniture, machinery, and metals were devastated, facing immediate order cancellations and revenue declines. Analysts forecast that India could lose up to 43% of its U.S. exports, equivalent to nearly \$40 billion annually, with deep disruptions to its manufacturing base and employment market. These tariffs didn't just reflect economic strategy; they symbolized a broader recalibration of U.S. policy, reducing India from a privileged strategic partner back to the status of a transactional trading ally.

This rupture between Washington and New Delhi, though damaging for India, has created a golden opportunity for Pakistan. With India's dominance in U.S. supply chains disrupted, Pakistan stands uniquely positioned to step in and fill the gaps. In 2024, Pakistan's total trade with the U.S. stood at around \$7.2 billion, with exports accounting for roughly \$5.1 billion and growing. During fiscal year 2024–25, Pakistan's exports to the U.S. climbed further to \$5.83 billion, driven largely by textiles, apparel, leather products, surgical instruments, and home furnishings. Now, as American buyers seek alternatives to Indian suppliers affected by tariffs, Pakistan's competitive advantages make it the natural beneficiary. A weaker rupee against the dollar already renders Pakistani products cheaper and more attractive for the U.S. market, especially when coupled with quality manufacturing capabilities in key sectors like textiles and surgical goods.

Adding further strength to Pakistan's position is the July 2025 Pakistan–U.S. Trade and Energy Deal, a landmark agreement reached just weeks before Trump announced the final 50% tariffs on India. This agreement included tariff reductions on Pakistan's key exports—particularly textiles, leather, surgical instruments, agricultural goods, and IT services—giving Pakistani exporters a direct pricing edge over their Indian counterparts. Moreover, Pakistan agreed to align itself closely with U.S. policy goals, including observing restrictions on Russian oil imports and enhancing counterterrorism cooperation. Trump, pleased with Pakistan's consistent support, publicly praised Islamabad's role in regional stability, including its assistance in capturing high-profile terrorists and facilitating U.S. intelligence operations. The agreement also paved the way for future American investment in Pakistan's energy sector, signaling deeper economic cooperation.

Beyond trade policy, Pakistan's standing with Washington has benefited from its responsible diplomacy. Unlike India,

which openly defied U.S. requests and doubled down on Russian oil purchases—reportedly worth \$34 billion annually—Pakistan has avoided confrontation by abstaining from deals that would contravene Western sanctions. Pakistan's neutrality on contentious energy policies, combined with its strategic assistance in regional security matters, has made it a more trusted partner in Washington's evolving Asia strategy. Furthermore, Pakistan's close consultation with the U.S. before its limited strikes on Iran and the unprecedented White House meeting between President Trump and Pakistan's Army Chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, demonstrate growing confidence between the two governments.

The confluence of these developments provides Pakistan with a historic opportunity. With Indian goods now priced out of competitiveness in the American market, U.S. buyers will be urgently seeking substitutes for billions of dollars' worth of textiles, jewelry, seafood, furniture, and machinery. Pakistan can meet this demand by rapidly mobilizing its industrial base, investing in capacity expansion, and aggressively marketing its products. An organized, coordinated approach involving the government, private sector, exporters' associations, and the Pakistani diaspora in the U.S. could allow Pakistan to double, or even triple, its exports within the next few years. Success in capturing these supply chains would not only strengthen Pakistan's economy but also position it as a preferred South Asian partner for other Western economies, including the European Union, which often follows U.S. trade patterns.

However, exploiting this opportunity requires swift, strategic action. Pakistan must identify the product categories previously dominated by Indian exporters and aggressively target those niches. It must incentivize new investments in high-demand industries, ensure international quality compliance, and improve supply chain reliability. If executed effectively, Pakistan can fill the void created by India's loss, gain sustained access to premium global markets, and strengthen its economic sovereignty. In the shifting dynamics of South Asian trade, India's arrogance, fostered by years of pampering under the Biden administration, has collided with Trump's transactional economic realism, leaving it isolated and economically vulnerable. For Pakistan, however, this moment represents more than just a commercial opening—it is a strategic chance to redefine its economic relationship with the United States, elevate its global trade profile, and accelerate industrial growth. The window is open, but it may not stay open for long. If Islamabad and its private sector move decisively, Pakistan could transform this disruption into a long-term opportunity, positioning itself as the primary South Asian beneficiary of the U.S. market and rewriting the region's economic map for years to come.

—The writer is 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

A defence without dams

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Even with the clarity of that mastery, there was still one area where, unfortunately, we stayed indifferent—or perhaps even accepted our ignorance. In this neglected domain, India once again prevailed; not by gun or missile, but by the waters that flow unchecked. Following our triumph in conventional war, India turned to a form of aggression less ostentatious but no less

SINCE its inception in August 1947, Pakistan has been resolute in strengthening its defenses, always aware of the challenges posed by its eastern neighbor. The fledgling state pledged to prioritize its security needs, even at the cost of hardship, and has stayed true to this commitment. Just a few months ago, the world witnessed Pakistan's impressive response to Indian aggression, demonstrating prowess in conventional warfare by dismantling fourteen layers of the Indian threat with remarkable effectiveness.

Even with the clarity of that mastery, there was still one area where, unfortunately, we stayed indifferent—or perhaps even accepted our ignorance. In this neglected domain, India once again prevailed; not by gun or missile, but by the waters that flow unchecked. Following our triumph in conventional war, India turned to a form of aggression less ostentatious but no less potent, releasing waters of rivers under its control into our territory. The consequences are now upon us in the form of catastrophic floods. The wise counsel that one must ever remain alert to the enemy and harbour no expectation of generosity; still, in this matter Pakistan has suffered from prolonged inertia and neglect.

This year, beginning in late June and continuing into August, Pakistan has endured unprecedented floods. Heavy monsoon rains, augmented by cloudbursts, triggered flash floods and landslides across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, and the capital region. As of late August 2025, the National Disaster Management Authority reports that over eight hundred souls have perished and more than one thousand others are wounded. In KP alone, nearly 479 lives were lost and 347 persons were injured. The KP province bore the worst of the calamity, with catastrophic flash floods and landslides claiming hundreds more—over three hundred fatalities—and several areas such as Buner, Swat, Bajaur, Battagram, Mansehra, Shangla, Lower Dir, and Abbottabad were severely affected. In Buner District, tragedy struck with particular severity: at least 158 perished, many

more remain missing, and a rescue helicopter crashed during operations, claiming the lives of five rescuers. Punjab, too, stands in peril; over 150,000 persons have been evacuated from eastern districts such as Kasur and Bahawalnagar, following Indian warnings of dam water releases from swollen rivers. These rivers—Ravi, Sutlej, and Chenab—originating in India, now threaten Pakistan's agricultural heartland and food supply. The deteriorating Kawawali bridge, vital to ten villages, teeters in Fazilka; its collapse would compound the plight of the rural population already facing crop damage and destroyed embankments. As for economic consequences, the devastation is immense. Already, since 26 June, over 1,676 buildings—of which 562 were destroyed—have been reported across Swat, Abbottabad, Charsadda, Malakand, Shangla, Lower Dir, and Torgar. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa alone, infrastructure loss amounts to roughly Rs 20 billion, including thirty-seven schools, eighty-three roads, ten bridges, over two hundred irrigation channels, and nearly seventy water-supply schemes rendered unusable; the irrigation authority's losses alone exceed Rs 10.3 billion. Nationwide, the human and agricultural toll is staggering. Livestock numbering in the thousands have been swept away; thousands of homes destroyed; entire farmlands ruined; and tens of thousands displaced—evacuated to safer ground yet left with shattered livelihoods. The crops of Pakistan, particularly in Punjab and Sindh, are under grave threat, and vast fields of rice, wheat, and sugarcane lie submerged. This ruin of agriculture shall inevitably deepen the food crisis. Economists have already warned that such destruction will intensify inflation, compounding the misery of the common man who already struggles with soaring prices. The flood, thus, is not merely a natural calamity but a peril to Pakistan's economy, its sustenance, and its stability. One must ask: why did we fail to attend to the water sector with equal vigour as defence? Why have key infrastructure projects—dams such as Kalabagh—remained unbuilt, when they could have

stored these waters and forestalled disaster? Here, the responsibility lies squarely upon our leadership. For decades, parochial politics, provincial rivalries, and vested interests have obstructed the construction of Kalabagh Dam. Successive governments, despite enjoying authority and resources, lacked either the courage or the will to build it. Some rulers, had they been truly statesmen, could have secured Pakistan's future by pushing forward this vital project; instead, they chose silence or expediency. As a result, future generations inherit calamity in place of security, floods in place of reservoirs, and perpetual vulnerability in place of stability.

It was not solely external agency that led to this ruin. The broader factors—deforestation, poor urban planning, illegal construction, weakened embankments, climate change aggravating cloudburst and monsoon intensity—have all conspired against us. Experts and residents testify to the swiftness and force of rising torrents: many were dragged to rooftops or stranded; clean water and medical supplies were inaccessible; devastation was widespread.

This calamity stands as a clarion call. Pakistan must redouble its efforts: to pursue storage infrastructure, uphold embankments, strengthen early-warning systems, and enforce land-use regulations. Above all, it must rise above the paralysis of political discord. Agricultural heartlands and rural communities require protection—not only rescue in crisis, but mitigation in peace.

Thus, the nation remains ever committed to its defence, clinging to that creed of resilience. Yet this year, we have learnt anew that defence must include the conservation and governance of vital natural resources. The flood that descended from India's rivers demands not only lamentation, but foresight, preparation, and resolve. Let this disaster awaken in us a renewal of vigilance—for without mastery over both arms and waters, our sovereignty remains incomplete.

Briefs

PM stresses urgent need for water...

FROM PAGE 01

The prime minister noted that the floods initially struck the northern areas but were now wreaking havoc in Punjab's plains. He offered prayers for those who lost their lives due to floods and torrential rains.

He praised the coordinated efforts of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Pakistan Army, and other relevant civil departments for their dedicated work during rescue and relief operations. "This sense of cooperation between the Punjab government and relevant departments has helped minimize losses," he added.

Recalling floods in 2022, that primarily affected Sindh and Balochistan, PM Shehbaz warned that Pakistan remained one of the top ten countries most affected by climate change, making such disasters likely to recur in coming years. He urged all departments to enhance preparedness and adopt short, medium, and long-term strategies to confront future challenges through robust decision-making. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives and damage to crops and infrastructure caused by the floods. She emphasized that no deaths occurred due to negligence or lack of coordination.

NDMA urges caution...

FROM PAGE 01

handling flood-like situations, especially in vulnerable areas such as Sialkot, where water levels are already posing serious risks. Ali Hassan emphasized that river flows remain under strict monitoring, particularly in upper Punjab and adjoining regions. He noted that the water level in key rivers, including the Chenab and Jhelum and Ravi has continued to rise, with a noticeable increase recorded on Thursday afternoon, adding, the steady inflow poses a potential threat to low-lying areas, and timely evacuations are crucial to minimizing damage.

He further appealed to the public to avoid visiting flood-prone zones for any reason, including photography or sightseeing and to cooperate fully with rescue teams and local administration during evacuation operations. Hassan stressed that the NDMA, along with provincial departments, is fully mobilized to manage the evolving situation, but public cooperation is essential to ensure safety and prevent avoidable incidents. In response to a question during the exclusive interview, Ali Hassan said that another monsoon spell is also expected and warned that more severe weather conditions and heavy rains are likely in the coming weeks due to ongoing climate change patterns.

Heavy downpours to hit...

FROM PAGE 01

Kashmir is expected to be hit hardest, with heavy to very heavy rain forecast between August 29 and September 2, particularly in Neelum Valley, Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot, Poonch, Bagn, Haveli, Kotli, Bhimber, and Mirpur. In Gilgit-Baltistan, areas including Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghanche, and Shigar may also see rain, with isolated heavy falls expected from August 30 to September 1. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, rain and thundershowers are forecast across Dir, Chitral, Swat, Kohistan, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Malakand, Bajaur, Mohmand, Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan, Swabi, Khyber, Orakzai, Kurram, Waziristan, Khan, and Dera Ismail Khan during the same spell. Islamabad and northern Punjab are also on alert. The weather forecast authority says widespread rain with heavy downpours is expected in the capital, Rawalpindi, Murree, Galliat, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Lahore, Faisalabad, and nearby districts from August 29 to September 2.

Trophy for Pak, Afghanistan, UAE T20I tri-series revealed

Pakistan, Afghanistan, UAE Begin Tri-Series Ahead of Asia Cup Preparation

DNA

SHARJAH: The trophy for the T20I tri-series featuring Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was unveiled here on Thursday.

The trophy unveiling ceremony took place at the iconic Sharjah Cricket Stadium and was attended by Salman Ali Agha, the captain of Pakistan, along with Rashid Khan from Afghanistan and Muhammad Waseem from the UAE. The T20I series will be played from 29 August to 7 September at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium in the UAE. This series will serve as a launching pad for the teams to prepare for and acclimatise to the conditions ahead of the eight-team ACC Men's T20 Asia Cup, scheduled to take place in the UAE from 9 to 28 September.

It's worth noting that initially, Pakistan were slated to host Afghanistan in a bilateral series in August. However, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) floated the idea of turning the contest into a tri-nation event



and shifting it to the UAE, a move aimed at helping players adapt to the conditions ahead of the Asia Cup. The opening match of the tri-series tournament will be played between Afghanistan and Pakistan on Friday, 29 August, with the first ball to be bowled at 7:00 pm local time.

Each team will play the others twice, giving all sides at least four matches before the top two teams qualify for the final, scheduled on 7 September.

Tri-series schedule
(all matches at Sharjah Cricket Stadium)
29 August – Afghanistan v Pakistan
– 7pm local time
30 August – UAE v Pakistan
– 7pm local time
1 September – UAE v Afghanistan
– 7pm local time
2 September – Pakistan v Afghanistan
– 7pm local time
4 September – Pakistan v UAE
– 7pm local time
5 September – Afghanistan v UAE
– 7pm local time
7 September – Final – 7pm local time

Messi brace propels Miami into Leagues Cup final

Messi Scores Brace as Inter Miami Defeats Orlando 3-1 in Leagues Cup Semis

DNA

UNITED STATES: Lionel Messi scored twice late on as Inter Miami fought back to beat Orlando City 3-1 and reach the final of the Leagues Cup on Wednesday. After missing two straight matches with a right thigh injury, Messi converted a penalty in the 77th minute to pull Inter level at 1-1 then combined with Jordi Alba to put the hosts ahead in the 88th.

Telasco Segovia added a third in injury time as Miami returned to the final of the Leagues Cup, the cross-border competition featuring teams from Major League Soccer and Mexico's Liga-MX. Inter won it in 2023, Messi's first season in MLS. "We are at a loss for words when it comes to discussing Leo (Messi)," said Javier Morales, the Inter assistant coach who was at the helm as Javier Mascherano watched from the stands serving a red card suspension. "He trained only two or three days and then he played 90 minutes and the way he played, created situations, scored goals."

Messi, who had played once since he was injured on

August 2, admitted he felt some trepidation. "I prepared to be in this match because I knew how important it was, against a very tough opponent who had beaten us in both games we faced this year," he said. "The truth is in the first half I felt a little scared, but in the second I loosened up a bit more." Miami will travel to Seattle for Sunday's final after the Sounders beat reigning MLS Cup champions Los Angeles Galaxy 2-0 in California. Goals from Pedro de la Vega in the seventh minute and Osaze Rosario in the 57th lifted the Sound-

ers, who held on with 10 men after Nhouhou Tolo was sent off in the 83rd minute for a sliding tackle on Gabriel Pec. The finalists are both assured of berths in the 2026 CONCACAF Champions Cup, with the winner of the third-place playoff between Orlando and Los Angeles also punching their ticket to the regional tournament. In a high-energy first half in Fort Lauderdale, Croatia's Marco Pasalic silenced the crowd at Inter's Chase Stadium with a goal in first-half added time. Luis Muriel slipped a pass into the area and Maximiliano Falcon's attempt to clear it instead saw the ball deflect back to Pasalic, who rifled a left-footed shot into the net. Inter players appealed saying the ball hit Pasalic's arm but VAR confirmed the goal.

Orlando, who had twice humbled their cross-state rivals this season, continued to stymie Inter in the second half. Luis Suarez forced a save from Orlando keeper Pedro Gallese while Messi twice threatened in the area only to find himself swamped in a sea of defenders. - Momentum shift - Orlando lost some momentum in the 59th minute when Guatemalan referee Walter Lopez denied them a penalty after Sergio Busquets' foul on Ivan Angulo.



Hasan taking pressure in his stride ahead of T20 Asia Cup

Pakistan's Hasan Nawaz bats during the third T20 international cricket match between New Zealand and Pakistan at Eden Park in Auckland

DNA

DUBAI: Emphasising that there is no pressure on him, Pakistan's young batting sensation Hasan Nawaz on Wednesday said that he was taking the forthcoming T20 Asia Cup in the UAE as a challenge. "Look, there's always pressure. Every game comes with pressure but we enjoy it. It [Asia Cup] is a big tournament, and if you perform well, you make a big name for yourself. I take it as a challenge. Whether it's any team or any condition, it's a challenge for me, and I'll do my best to overcome this challenge," top-order batter Hasan said while talking to reporters at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Wednesday. The Salman Ali Agha-led Pakistan are set to compete in the Asia Cup that runs from Sept 9 to 28 in the UAE. The Green-shirts are in Group 'A' alongside arch-rivals and defending champions India, Oman and the UAE while Group 'B' comprises Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong. The matches will be staged in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Prior to the continental event, Salman and his men will test their muscle against Afghanistan and the UAE in a T20 tri-series in Sharjah starting on Friday.

National football team camp in full swing

Pakistan U-23 Football Team Gears Up for AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers at Islamabad Camp

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National football team camp in preparations for the AFC U-23 Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers is underway here at Jinnah Stadium of Pakistan Sports Complex. The camp will continue under the supervision of head coach Nolberto Solano while George Castanera has taken the responsibilities of the associate fitness coach. The final 23-member squad for the qualifiers will be announced soon, said a press release. Pakistan will play its first match against Iraq on September 3 while the second match against hosts Cambodia on Sept 6 and last match of group stage against Oman on Sept 9.

Each Sport to Get Departmental Patronage

The participants reviewed mechanisms for providing jobs to athletes, the revival of departmental teams, and the role of departmental heads in supporting sports federations. Proposals were also discussed regarding sponsorship opportunities and the strengthening of sports structures

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In a major development for Pakistan's sports sector, the government has decided to revive departmental sports and create sustainable employment opportunities for athletes, with each sport to be placed under the patronage of a dedicated government department. To implement Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's directives, a high-level meeting was chaired by Federal Secretary for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Mo-hyuddin Wani. The meeting was attended by representatives of various departments, sports federations, and other stakeholders. The participants reviewed mechanisms for providing jobs to athletes, the revival of departmental teams, and the role of departmental heads in supporting sports federations. Proposals were also discussed regarding sponsorship opportunities and the strengthening of sports structures. The meeting suggested introducing a grading system for elite sports to streamline support and development. A key recommendation was to assign each sport to a dedicated department, with departments asked to share their preferences with the IPC Ministry in the coming days. It may be recalled that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had already directed concerned departments to restore departmental sports and create jobs for athletes, aimed at ensuring financial stability and safeguarding careers. Previously, departmental teams and jobs had been abolished under former Prime Minister Imran Khan's orders – a move that drew sharp criticism from sports circles and federations, leaving hundreds of athletes jobless and damaging the domestic sports structure. With the latest initiative, the government seeks not only to revive the traditional departmental sports culture but also to strengthen Pakistan's sports ecosystem through sustainable employment, sponsorships, and institutional backing for athletes.

Ayesha Mumtaz Punches into Belt & Road Boxing Final

Ayesha, who previously won a bronze medal at the ASBC Asian Junior and School Boxing Championships 2024 in Al Ain City, Abu Dhabi, continued her impressive form by knocking out China's Chen Xindong in the second round of the semifinal bout

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's rising boxer Ayesha Mumtaz of Pakistan Army has reached the final of the Women's U18 48kg category at the 3rd Belt & Road International Boxing Gala in China, securing at least a silver medal for the country. Ayesha, who previously won a bronze



medal at the ASBC Asian Junior and School Boxing Championships 2024 in Al Ain City, Abu Dhabi, continued her impressive form by knocking out China's Chen Xindong in the second round of the semifinal bout.

Pakistan's squad also registered strong performances with multiple boxers advancing to the quarterfinals and semifinals, reflecting the nation's growing progress in international boxing. Pakistan Boxing Federation (PBF) Chairperson Begum Ishrat Ashraf and President Lt Col (R) Muhammad Nasir Ijaz Tung lauded the contingent's discipline and conduct. PBF President also congratulated Ayesha on her remarkable feat and expressed confidence that she will go on to win the final and further raise Pakistan's flag high.

High-level flood in Ravi River at Shahdara

FROM PAGE 01

causing hardships for residents in areas including Farukhabad, Aziz Colony, and other adjoining neighborhoods. The district administration has started evacuating families from affected houses and set up relief camps in two schools of Farukhabad. According to officials, food is being provided to flood-hit residents, while announcements are being made in mosques to urge people to move to the camps. Flight operations at Sialkot International Airport will remain suspended until 10pm on Friday, according to the airport spokesperson. The spokesperson said that drainage work is underway as the airport administration and machinery are actively engaged in removing water. He confirmed that all installed equipment remains safe. Floodwaters entered the southern side of the airport after breaching a protective embankment, but the main facilities – including the terminal building, parking area, and runway – remain secure, the spokesperson added.

Europeans launch UN sanctions...

FROM PAGE 01

They have held several rounds of talks with Iran since Israel and the United States struck its nuclear installations in mid-June, aiming to agree to defer the mechanism but they deemed that talks in Geneva on Tuesday did not yield sufficiently tangible commitments from Iran.

The E3 have pressed ahead now over accusations that Iran has violated the 2015 deal that aimed to prevent Tehran from developing a nuclear weapon. The United States, which was party to that deal, pulled out under President Donald Trump in 2018, and held failed indirect negotiations earlier this year with Tehran. The E3, whose ministers informed US Secretary of State Marco Rubio of their decision on Wednesday, said they hoped that Iran would engage by the end of September to provide commitments over its nuclear programme that will convince them to defer concrete action. "The E3 are committed to using every diplomatic tool available to ensure Iran never develops a nuclear weapon. That includes our decision to trigger the 'snapback' mechanism today through this notification," they said in the letter. "The E3's commitment to a diplomatic solution nonetheless remains steadfast. The E3 will fully make use of the 30-day period following the notification in order to resolve the issue giving rise to the notification."

Meanwhile, Britain, France, and Germany's move to reimpose all UN sanctions on Iran is "illegal and regrettable", a senior Iranian official told Reuters, adding that Tehran was reviewing its options including withdrawing from the Non-Proliferation Treaty. "The move is an action against diplomacy, not a chance for it ... However, Iran will continue diplomacy with the E3 ... (But) Iran will not concede under pressure," added the senior official. The E3 had offered to extend the snapback for as much as six months to enable serious negotiations if Iran resumes full UN inspections – which would also seek to account for Iran's large stock of enriched uranium that has not been verified since the June strikes – and engages in talks with the United States.

Norwegian teenager planned mosque attack

FROM PAGE 01

a 34-year-old social worker, at the Oslo hostel where she was a staff member and the suspect was a resident. The youth is now the subject of a murder and terrorism enquiry after police said he had expressed "opinions hostile to Muslim people". The suspect "declared that he had the intention of committing an attack against a mosque at Hoenefoss", a town about 60 kilometres (40 miles) north of the Norwegian capital, police said in a statement.

Briefs

RCCI to lead exporters' delegation to Bangladesh

RAWALPINDI: President of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), Usman Shaukat, called on Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, at the Ministry of Commerce to discuss strategies for strengthening export-led growth and enhancing regional trade. The meeting focused on RCCI's upcoming trade delegation to Bangladesh, aimed at exploring new regional markets and tapping into non-conventional sectors, including pharmaceuticals. With bilateral trade currently below \$1 billion, RCCI's initiative to lead an exporters' delegation underscores its commitment to deepening trade ties and creating new business avenues. The planned delegation visit and business opportunities conference will provide a platform for industrial collaborations, joint ventures, technology transfer, business-to-business (B2B) linkages, and chamber-to-chamber partnerships. RCCI President Usman Shaukat briefed the Minister on these initiatives and their potential to boost bilateral economic cooperation.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries, Haroon Akhtar Khan, RCCI Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi, and senior government officials also attended the meeting.

Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan and SAPM Haroon Akhtar Khan assured their full support for RCCI's initiatives. The Minister shared insights from his recent visit to Bangladesh, where he met with senior advisers on industries, food, and commerce, along with prominent business leaders and chambers. He emphasized that these engagements have laid the groundwork for enhanced bilateral trade and new opportunities for collaboration between Pakistan and Bangladesh.—APP

Lebanese politicians file lawsuit against Hezbollah chief

BEIRUT: A group of prominent Lebanese politicians on Wednesday filed a criminal lawsuit against Hezbollah chief Sheikh Naim Qassem, accusing him of inciting war and sedition.

The plaintiffs include current and former MPs as well as senior political figures in the country. The suit is the first of its kind to target a member of Hezbollah's senior leadership. It cites inflammatory speeches by Qassem, the party's secretary-general, and accuses him of "inciting war, sedition and the overthrow of constitutional authority." MP Ashraf Rifi told Arab News that the lawsuit, which was accepted by the court, targets "anyone the investigation reveals to be a perpetrator, accomplice or instigator.—APP

Cholera outbreak in northwest Nigeria kills 8, infects over 200

ABUJA: A cholera outbreak in Bukkuyum district of Zamfara state, northwest Nigeria, has claimed at least eight lives and infected over 200 people across 11 communities, residents and local officials said on Thursday, as limited health care access and insecurity exacerbate the crisis. Cholera, a water-borne disease, is not uncommon in Nigeria where health officials cite widespread shortages of clean water in rural areas and urban slums. The affected rural communities, including Nasarawa-Burkullu, Gurusu, and Adabka, have been overwhelmed, with many patients treated at home due to the lack of primary health care facilities. "We have over 21 patients presently admitted, although three died due to delays in reaching Nasarawa General Hospital," Muhammad Jibci, village head of Gurusu told Reuters by phone late on Thursday. Ya'u Umar, another resident from the affected communities, said 53 people were infected in his village. "We don't have medicine or drips. Bandits prevent us from going to the city," he said.—APP

PN hands over command of combined task force 151 to brazilian navy

Expressing his thoughts on his tenure as Commander CTF 151, Cdre Sohail Ahmad Azmie thanked his staff and international partners especially Republic of Korea and Japan for their consistent commitment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy has successfully relinquished command of Combined Task Force 151. Commodore Sohail Ahmad Azmie of Pakistan Navy handed over the Command to Rear Admiral Marcelo Lancellotti of Brazilian Navy. The ceremony was presided by Vice Admiral George Wikoff, Commander of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), at HQ CMF, Bahrain. Since assuming the command in January 2025, Pakistan Navy led CTF-151 mission, built and maintained close partnerships with regional and international navies especially European Union Naval Forces' Operation ATALANTA. The coordination was manifested by coordinated patrols such as the ENDURING RESOLVE and the OCEAN WATCH. Hallmark of the tenure was professional conduct of Focused OPERATION SEA SPIRIT, where CTF-151 marshalled 13 CMF partner nations, naval assets from 6 countries, and 8 Regional Coordination Centres. To strengthen CMF's objectives, Cdre Sohail Ahmad Azmie conducted a series of Key Leadership Engagements across the region that reinforced the importance of collaboration in



promoting maritime security. Expressing his thoughts on his tenure as Commander CTF 151, Cdre Sohail Ahmad Azmie thanked his staff and international partners especial-

ly Republic of Korea and Japan for their consistent commitment. He further added that PN takes pride in its active participation within CMF and its efforts re-

flect a steadfast commitment to contribute towards regional maritime security. The incoming Commander CTF 151, Rear Admiral Marcelo Lancellotti ex-

pressed his gratitude to Pakistan Navy and remarked that together with CMF nations we will strengthen cooperation and ensure the safety of maritime commons.

Germany launches drive to add military recruits without conscription for nowFollow

BERLIN: Germany's leaders on Wednesday launched a drive to attract more people into voluntary military service as the country scrambles to strengthen its armed forces in the face of growing fears about Russian aggression, a project that some in the governing coalition say doesn't go far enough. Germany, a leading NATO and European Union member, has moved to modernize its long-neglected military since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. That year, it set up a 100 billion euro (\$117 billion) special fund to modernize the Bundeswehr, much of which has been committed to procuring new equipment. New Chancellor Friedrich Merz's coalition this year pushed plans through parliament to enable higher defense spending by loosening strict rules on incurring debt. Merz has said repeatedly he wants the Bundeswehr to be "the strongest conventional army in Europe." The government is redoubling its efforts to attract more recruits, which the military struggled to do in recent years. Germany had some 181,000 active servicepeople at the end of last year. But the government says it needs to increase that in the long term to 260,000, plus some 200,000 reservists. "The Bundeswehr must grow — the international security situation, above all Russia's aggressive behavior, make this necessary," Defense Minister Boris Pistorius said Wednesday. "We need not just well-equipped forces, we are going at full speed on that ... we also need a Bundeswehr that is strong in terms of personnel. Only then is deterrence toward Russia really credible." Pistorius spoke after Merz's Cabinet approved his plan for a new military service system. It aims to draw sufficient recruits without reviving compulsory conscription for men, which was suspended in 2011, but leaves the door open for parliament to do so if not enough people volunteer. The plan foresees more attractive pay and conditions for people who agree to join the military for short periods and what Pistorius describes as attractive training offers for those who join up for at least six months, as well as flexibility on how long people can serve. Beginning next year, the government plans to send questionnaires to young men and women turning 18 about their willingness and ability to serve in the military. Starting in mid-2027, young men will be required to undergo medical examinations, though not to sign up for the military. The plan still needs parliamentary approval. It was authorized at a Cabinet meeting held for the first time in many years at the Defense Ministry. Before the decision, NATO's supreme commander in Europe, US Gen. Alexus Grynkeiwich, briefed ministers on the security environment. But there has been tension in the conservative Merz's coalition with Pistorius' center-left Social Democrats over whether the new system should foresee an automatic return to compulsory service if the military can't draw enough volunteers. Some conservatives pushed unsuccessfully for compulsory service. But Pistorius says the conditions aren't in place at the moment as sufficient barracks and trainers aren't currently available. The plan allows for the government to move toward compulsory service "if, in the course of the next one, two or three years, we see that the target figures aren't being reached," Merz said. He added he was "confident, at least from today's point of view, that in any case to begin with we will reach the figures we need." A senior conservative ally of the chancellor, Bavarian governor Markus Söder, told ARD television Sunday that Pistorius' plan is "a first step in the right direction.—Agencies

China to promote satellite communication industry

BEIJING: China will promote the high-quality development of the satellite communication industry by optimizing business access, according to a set of guidelines unveiled by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. The guidelines aim to promote the launch of satellite communication services, stimulate the vitality of innovation in the commercial space sector and foster new drivers of productivity in an orderly manner, all of which is aimed at supporting China's transformation into a manufacturing power and a cyber power, as well as the construction of a Digital China By 2030, China aims to improve the management system, policies and regulations for satellite communication, optimize its industrial development environment, and boost the integrated development of infrastructure, industrial supply, technical standards and international cooperation, according to the guidelines. New business models and forms such as direct satellite connection for mobile phones will be applied widely, and the number of satellite communication users will exceed 10 million, per the guidelines. They state that the country will support the accelerated development of low-orbit satellite internet, promote the application of direct satellite connection for mobile phones and other terminal devices, encourage the exploration of new satellite communication businesses, and expand market access for private enterprises. They also encourage the application of satellite communication in various industries and fields, including agriculture, transportation, energy and urban governance. They promote the cross-integration of satellite communication with new-generation information infrastructure, including areas such as the industrial internet, vehicle networking and air-borne communication.—DNA

ICCI, ASEAN chamber ink MoU to foster bilateral economic cooperation

KUALA LUMPUR: In a significant step towards enhancing bilateral economic cooperation, the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and the ASEAN Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The MoU was signed by Abdul Rehman Siddiqi, Senior Vice President ICCI, and Dato Muhammad Zamry Abu Samah, Vice President ASEAN Chamber of Commerce, in the presence of prominent business representatives. The ceremony was chaired by Ms. Tahira Javed, Trade Counsellor at the Embassy of Pakistan in Malaysia, who assured the Embassy's and the Government of Pakistan's full support in facilitating Malaysian companies to explore business opportunities in Pakistan. She also reaffirmed assistance for Pakistani entrepreneurs aiming to expand their ventures in Malaysia. Also present on the occasion were Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, Vice President ICCI, Imran Minhas, Convener Delegation Committee, and Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, Convener ASEAN Committee, who witnessed the signing of the MoU. Under the MoU, both chambers agreed to promote mutual trade, investment opportunities, and joint manufacturing facilities in Pakistan and Malaysia, thereby strengthening private-sector linkages and creating new avenues for sustainable growth. — DNA



ISLAMABAD: Member of the Senate of Spain, Vicente Azpitarte Pérez, called on Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. They discussed the importance of strengthening parliamentary exchanges and enhancing cooperation between Pakistan and Spain in political, economic, and cultural fields. — DNA

Electricity cost must be Rs 26 per unit, says SM Tanveer

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Patron-in-Chief of the United Business Group (UBG), S.M. Tanveer, has said that the battle for truth has been won, and now the battle for the economy must be fought. He said that they struggled against Independent Power Producers (IPPs), which led to cheaper electricity, but until the per unit cost of electricity comes down to Rs. 26, they will not rest. Every common man, factory, and shop needs affordable electricity. He said that with the growing population, new administrative units should be created, and local people should be appointed as in-charges according to the capacity of their respective areas. Only then will the country progress. The United States, with a population of 300 million, has 52 states, whereas Pakistan is still operating with only four provinces despite a population of 250 million. Every division must be empowered. He was addressing a press conference yesterday at the Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries, accompanied by FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh, UBG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari, UBG Central Core Committee Member Ahsan Bakhtawari, ICSTI President Owais Satti, and Chairman Saqib Abbasi. S.M. Tanveer said that the government has assured them that a ten-year industrial poli-

cy has been prepared, which no government will be able to alter. The people, he added, need electricity at Rs. 26 per unit to keep the economy running. Alongside creating administrative units, they must also be empowered. "If smaller provinces are to be made, then let them be created. And if administrative units are to be formed, then they must also be given authority," he remarked. He said China's economy is \$19 trillion, while Pakistan's economy is very small in comparison. Pakistan has a population of 250 million but still only four provinces. Exports, including cotton, are declining because whenever

the idea of building canals or barrages is raised, protests begin. Due to climate change, glaciers are melting, water is being wasted, and Pakistan is losing \$20–25 billion annually just through wasted water.

Tanveer stressed that new units and provinces must be created, but all sectors should also be strengthened. On the issue of sugar, he said small traders' strike continues. If the government provides cheap sugar, traders will also be able to sell it to the people at lower prices. He said the Pakistan Army has achieved victory against a cowardly enemy, and now traders must win the economic war.



He called for gradually reducing the interest rate from 11% to 6%, stating that the economy cannot function until the rate is lowered. "We stand with the Prime Minister and the government, but we must also correct our own mistakes. Lahore is not the whole of Punjab; other districts also need improvement," he added. He emphasized that Pakistan urgently needs a comprehensive and long-term industrial policy to overcome the current economic crisis. Around the world, development is based on industrialization, but unfortunately, industries have always been neglected in Pakistan. He said the government must focus not only on large cities but also on smaller cities and districts to promote industries under a District Economic Model. Through this model, local industries can be established, providing new employment opportunities for youth, reducing population pressure on big cities, and supporting both agriculture and business.

S.M. Tanveer added that the energy crisis, high interest rates, and heavy taxation have put industrialists under severe strain. If the government adopts business-friendly policies, reduces electricity and gas tariffs, and gives incentives to exporters, Pakistan can not only increase exports but also strengthen foreign exchange reserves. He said traders' and industrialists' voices must be heard at every level, because they are the ones who can economically move the country forward.

UK party leader to boycott Trump state dinner over Gaza

LONDON: A UK opposition party leader will boycott a banquet thrown by King Charles during Donald Trump's state visit to Britain next month over the US president's stance on the war in Gaza. Liberal Democrats leader Ed Davey said he wants to send a "strong message" by declining the invitation to the lavish dinner. Trump is due to visit the UK from September 17 to 19 for an unprecedented second state visit, which will include a banquet thrown in his honor by the king. "I feel a responsibility to do whatever I can to ensure the people in Gaza are not forgotten during the pomp and ceremony," Davey, leader of the third largest party in parliament, wrote in The Guardian on Wednesday. "Boycotting the state banquet is not something I ever wanted to do, but I believe it is the only way I can send a message to both Trump and (UK Prime Minister Keir) Starmer that they cannot close their eyes and wish this away," he added. "I have come to the conclusion that on this occasion I must refuse." _APP

Asian markets mixed after Nvidia earnings

TOKYO: Asian markets were mixed Thursday after AI powerhouse Nvidia's quarterly earnings beat expectations, but its shares slipped over worries about the company's stalled business in China. Investors had been awaiting the key earnings update from the California-based firm, whose robust growth has largely driven strong gains for tech stocks in recent months. The AI giant posted a profit of \$26.4 billion on record revenue of \$46.7 billion in the recently ended quarter, but shares fell in after-market trading as important data centre revenue declined. The earnings report comes amid market worries about an AI spending bubble that could burst and hurt the chip giant's fortunes. "The information feeds into niggling fears of slowing investment in the AI space and lower growth going forward," Kyle Rodda, senior market analyst at Capital.com in Melbourne told Bloomberg News. During Thursday trading in Asia, Tokyo, Shanghai and Seoul finished up, while Taipei fell. Hong Kong was down 0.7 percent in afternoon trade. In Japan, media reported Thursday that Tokyo's chief negotiator for the trade agreement with the United States, Ryosei Akazawa, had postponed his planned trip to Washington. Akazawa said Wednesday he hoped to use this trip to pressure the US administration to implement reduced tariffs agreed upon in July.—APP

CCP's revival shows effective leadership influence

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has emerged as a rare example of how a public sector body can transform itself from dormancy to dynamism. Once considered sidelined and ineffective, the Commission is now recording landmark disposals, recoveries, and enforcement actions that are reshaping Pakistan's regulatory landscape. For years, regulators across Pakistan have pointed to courts and stay orders as the main reason for their lack of enforcement. CCP's recent record challenges this narrative. By actively pursuing litigation and ensuring effective follow-ups, the Commission has reduced its backlog of pending cases by more than half—an achievement acknowledged on the floor of the Senate. In just one fiscal year, 224 cases were decided across different forums—more than ever before in CCP's history. This suggests that the issue was never with the judiciary alone, but with how seriously organizations pursued their cases. Beyond courtrooms, CCP has revived its enforcement drive.—APP

Briefs

Trump moves to limit US stays of students, journalists

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration aims to tighten the duration of visas for students, cultural exchange visitors and members of the media, according to a proposed government regulation issued on Wednesday, part of a broader crackdown on legal immigration. President Donald Trump, a Republican, kicked off a wide-ranging immigration crackdown after taking office in January. The latest move would create new hurdles for international students, exchange workers and foreign journalists who would have to apply to extend their stay in the US rather than maintain a more flexible legal status. The proposed regulation would create a fixed time period for F visas for international students, J visas that allow visitors on cultural exchange programs to work in the US, and I visas for members of the media. Those visas are currently available for the duration of the program or US-based employment. There were about 1.6 million international students on F visas in the US in 2024, according to US government data.

ECC Approves Funding Plan for Smooth USC Closure

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet, chaired by the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, today approved a technical supplementary grant of Rs. 30.216 billion to ensure the smooth closure of the Utility Stores Corporation (USC) of Pakistan. The decision represents a major step in responsibly addressing the longstanding financial burden of USC on the national exchequer, while also safeguarding the interests of employees affected by the closure. By approving severance, compensation and payment of outstanding dues, the Government is ensuring that workers receive their entitlements, thereby cushioning the social and economic impact of USC's winding up. The ECC of the Cabinet also decided that the Ministry of Industries & Production shall further rationalize the financial requirements for the closure of USC. It was further decided that the assets of USC, including properties, shall be disposed of within the current financial year so that the costs of closure are partially met through sale proceeds.

CM Maryam reviews situation at Ravi River

NEWS DESK

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Thursday visited the Ravi River at Shahdara where she boarded a boat to inspect the flood situation more closely. Later, talking to the media after visiting the flood situation at Shahdara, she said that the province has experienced severe and continuous rainfall in recent weeks, leading to dangerous water levels in all three major rivers. "I have never seen so much water in the Ravi River. Our rivers were under immense pressure. Had we [Punjab govt] not prepared in time, the damage could have been catastrophic." She also praised the efforts of local administration and rescue teams, saying that no lives were lost due to administrative negligence. Over 50,000 people and a large number of livestock have been successfully relocated to safer areas, she added. Reiterating her government's commitment to relief and recovery, Punjab chief minister said that her govt would reach every affected individual and ensure compensation for losses.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding the flood situation in Punjab, in Narowal on 28 August 2025. – DNA

Putin, Kim Jong Un to attend Chinese parade

Only one Western leader will be among the 26 foreign heads of state and govt attending the parade

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korea's Kim Jong Un will attend a military parade in Beijing, marking the first public appearance of the two leaders alongside President Xi Jinping in a show of collective defiance amid Western pressure. No Western leaders will be among the 26 foreign heads of state and government attending the parade next week with the exception of Robert Fico, prime minister of Slovakia, a European Union member state, according to the Chinese foreign ministry on Thursday. Against the backdrop of China's growing military might during the "Victory Day" parade on September 3, the three leaders will project a major show of solidarity not just between China and the Global South, but also with sanctions-hit Russia and North Korea. Russia, which Beijing counts as a strategic partner, has been battered by multiple rounds of Western sanctions



imposed after its invasion of Ukraine in 2022, with its economy on the brink of slipping into recession. Putin, wanted by the International Criminal Court, last travelled in China in 2024. North Korea, a formal treaty ally of

China's, has been under United Nations Security Council sanctions since 2006 over its development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. Kim last visited China in January 2019. Those attending the parade marking

the formal surrender of Japan during World War II will include Belarus President Aleksandr Lukashenko, Iran's President Masoud Pezashkian, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto and South Korea's National Assembly Speaker Woo Won-shik, said Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Hong Lei at a news conference. Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic will also attend the parade. The United Nations will be represented by Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua, who previously served in various capacities at the Chinese foreign ministry, including time as the Chinese ambassador to Italy, San Marino and Myanmar. On the day, President Xi Jinping will survey tens of thousands of troops at Tiananmen Square alongside the foreign dignitaries and senior Chinese leaders. The highly choreographed parade, to be one of China's largest in years, will showcase cutting-edge equipment like fighter jets, missile defence systems and hypersonic weapons.

Economy enters FY2025-26 on a high note

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The national economy has entered Fiscal Year 2025-26 with positive momentum, building on last year's gains and setting an optimistic tone for the period ahead, supported by a stronger external and fiscal position, according to a recent report released by Finance Ministry here Thursday. "Pakistan's economy started FY2026 with positive developments from the sustained improvements in FY2025 and setting a promising tone for the months ahead," says Monthly Update and Outlook for August 2025. Government measures for investment facilitation along with reforms to support private sector-led growth, easing inflation, and accommodative monetary policy may likely to further reinforce business confidence. A favourable global environment, stronger demand from trading partners, and the recent trade deal of Pakistan with the U.S. are expected to boost exports, while workers' remittances will help contain trade deficit pressures from tariff rationalization-driven imports. However, flood-related damages may add fiscal pressures and disrupt food supplies in affected areas, the report says adding inflation is projected to remain within the range of 4.0-5.0 percent in August, 2025. According to the report, CPI inflation remained moderate, suggesting that inflationary expectations were well-anchored through a mix of administrative measures and policy reforms along with prudent economic management.

DPM Dar, German FM resolve to strengthen bilateral coop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar received a call from German Foreign Minister Dr. Johann Wadepuhl on Wednesday night. During the discussion, the two leaders affirmed their resolve to further strengthen mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation. Besides underscoring the importance of high-level contacts, they also exchanged views on regional issues.

Just 20% of 2022 aid pledges secured as Pakistan faces new floods

WB estimates Pakistan requires \$348bn in the next 7 years to address climate, development challenges

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is bracing for another wave of flash floods sweeping across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and now Punjab, underscoring the country's growing vulnerability to climate-driven disasters. A Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) conducted after the 2022 deluge – which displaced millions and caused massive damage – put losses at \$14.9 billion and recovery needs at \$16.3 billion. While donors pledged \$10.9 billion at the 2023 Geneva conference, only about 20% has been mobilised in the three years since, leaving critical recovery and resilience-building efforts stalled. Images of inundated villages, destroyed crops, and displaced families serve as

a stark reminder of the cost of inaction and the growing urgency for global climate justice and accountability. The World Bank estimated that Pakistan required \$348 billion for the next seven years to address climate and development challenges. Three years after the catastrophic floods of 2022, Pakistan's ambitious recovery and reconstruction agenda – underpinned by the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) and the Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction Framework (4RF) – faces significant setbacks. While the total recovery needs were estimated at \$16.3 billion over a 3-to-5-year horizon, the actual financial progress stands at less than 20% of the target. Launched in October 2022, the PDNA assessed the economic damages and losses at \$14.9 billion and \$15.2 billion, respectively, across 17 sectors. These were consolidated into four Strategic Recovery Objectives (SROs) in the 4RF. The 4RF became the foundation of Pakistan's pitch to international donors at the Geneva Conference in January 2023, where \$10.9 billion in pledges were secured. Despite strong commitments, only \$3.4 billion worth of projects have been executed. Donor financing remains heavily skewed, with multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, ADB, AIIB, and IDB accounting for 90% of total pledges. – Agencies

UK scholarships empower 80 Pakistani future leaders

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chosen for their leadership potential and commitment to driving positive change, they join a cohort of nearly 2,000 Chevening alumni and 1,500 Commonwealth alumni, working across all sectors including education, governance, health, and climate action. This year, 32 Chevening Scholars will begin their academic journeys pursuing fully funded master's degrees in the UK. The cohort includes over 60% women, and representation from nearly all of Pakistan's provinces. This year's cohort includes a scholar funded by Mansion house to study MSc Business Analytics from University College London. In addition, 48 Commonwealth Scholars have been selected to study at leading UK institutions. This includes shared scholarships, master's programmes, and PhD programmes, fully funded by the UK through the Commonwealth Scholarship. The British High Commission Islamabad marked the start of the scholars' journey through a reception, celebrating their achievement. British High Com-



missioner, Jane Marriott CMG, OBE said: "These scholars are embarking on a journey of a lifetime. They will have access to the best minds and opportunities. What's more, when they return, they will join a powerful global network of accomplished Chevening and Commonwealth alumni who are creating real change worldwide." Rida Tariq, an incoming Chevening Scholar, shared her motivation: "For me Chevening is not just a scholarship, it's a platform for collaboration and a chance to connect with a global community of leaders dedicated to making a real difference. I am eager to learn from diverse perspectives, build lasting relationships, and gain the knowledge and skills needed to bring meaningful change in Pakistan." Future leaders can now apply for Chevening scholarships to study a one-year Masters degree in the UK, and Chevening fellowships including the 2-month long South Asia Journalism Programme (SAJP) and 5-month long Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies fellowship (OCIS). Applications will close on October 7, 2025. Applications for Commonwealth Scholarships will open later this year.

