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Vietnam ambassador for stronger trade ties with Pakistan

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UN Secy Gen appoints Muneeba as ambassador

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Japan honors Pak women Naveen Syed

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Man-Made Disaster

Floods, rampant encroachments and negligence

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif says work is underway to formulate an effective policy to deal with the effects of climate change and monsoons

BUREAU REPORT / DNA

LAHORE: The recent floods that have devastated large parts of Pakistan are increasingly being seen not as a natural calamity, but as a man-made disaster, the result of decades of mismanagement, encroachments, and negligence. While torrential rains have undeniably triggered the crisis, experts argue that the scale of destruction is primarily due to human mistakes – with rivers, waterways, and natural drainage channels recklessly occupied by illegal housing schemes, commercial plazas, and even hotels. In almost every flood-hit district, one finds the same pattern: water bodies narrowed by construction, riverbanks eaten away by unplanned development, and natural floodplains converted into residential colonies. These man-made obstructions have turned ordinary monsoon rains into large-scale destruction, inundating villages and displacing thousands. Yet, the public discourse is disturbingly selective. Authorities and commentators often blame the poor for building mud houses along riverbeds or low-lying areas. Such narratives, analysts say, ignore the bigger culprits: powerful developers, influential housing societies, and businesses that have systematically encroached on land meant for water flow. “Whenever floods come, the poor are scapegoated,” says an urban planning expert in Lahore. “But no one dares to touch the big societies that have blocked drainage channels or the luxury hotels built right along riverbanks. These are the real reasons water has nowhere to go.” A striking example is seen in northern areas where

rivers are flanked by restaurants and guest houses. In Punjab and Sindh, several private housing schemes are reported to have blocked natural stormwater drains. Despite repeated warnings from environmentalists and civil engineers, regulators turned a blind eye, allegedly under political or financial pressure. Meanwhile, On the orders of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, work is underway to formulate an effective policy to deal with the effects of climate change and monsoons. The working paper for this policy will be shared with all provincial governments so that a joint action plan can be developed. The Prime Minister has decided to convene a high-level meeting as soon as the current emergency situation is resolved. The chief ministers of all four provinces and the heads of other relevant institutions will also participate in this meeting. The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan will also be invited to the meeting. A strategy is being developed for the construction of water reservoirs and better water management in all four provinces, Azad Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan. The Prime Minister said that water reservoirs would be constructed in consultation and in complete harmony with all provinces. Climate change is a reality, and its effective preparation can prevent the damages caused by natural disasters, said the Prime Minister. The four provinces, Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, and the federation must work together to protect people from the harmful effects of climate change. This is a national issue on which everyone has to work together, the Prime Minister added.

Climate minister says

Flood devastation due to ‘entrenched elite culture’ in country

“There is no poor man’s hotel on the riverbank – only resorts of the powerful,” says Senator Musadik Malik

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: As country reels under heavy floods and consequent devastation, Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Musadik Malik has said that Pakistan is suffering from an entrenched elite culture, where riverside properties belong only to the powerful rather than the poor. Mistrust persists among provinces over dams and canals, with each suspecting the other of withholding water, he added. “Balochistan believes it is deprived and that Sindh gets water but does not pass it on,” he remarked, adding that consensus on water infrastructure had been lacking. The minister described telemetry as the solution to end lack of trust between the provinces. Work on the project, he said, had already begun and was expected to be completed within a year or so. Malik highlighted that people have cultivated their crops inside riverbeds, that has further aggravated the flood situation. He warned that

Sargodha had begun to feel the impact of flooding and projected that once rivers converge at Panjnad, water flow could rise to one million cusecs. He noted that evacuations were carried out on advance warnings, with both people and livestock moved to safety. In one case, 30 residents initially refused to leave their village but were persuaded to evacuate; floodwaters have since reached the area, he added. The minister stressed that without water reservoirs at the teshil and district level, the country will remain vulnerable. He called for the creation of natural water reserves across Pakistan to deal with future crises. Pakistan is battling torrential monsoon rains that have unleashed flash floods, swelled rivers, and filled dams, with more than 800 deaths reported since late June. Amid the heavy rains, India released excess water this week from its dams, swelling river flows downstream in Punjab. The NDMA said that Pakistan evacuated more than 210,000 villagers near the rivers Ravi, Sutlej, and Chenab that flow from India.

Field Marshal Asim Munir visits flood-hit areas of Punjab

CENTRELINE REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff, visited flood affected areas of Punjab including Sialkot Sector, Shakargarh, Narowal and Kartarpur. The visit was aimed to review the flood situation and the ongoing rescue and relief efforts. COAS was given a comprehensive brief on the prevailing

situation and the preparations for the next spell of rains. COAS appreciated the troops and the civil administration for their coordinated and untiring efforts in rescuing and providing relief to the masses in affected areas. COAS also interacted with the affected Sikh community of the area and assured the community that all religious sites affected during floods, including Durbur Sahib Kartarpur, will be completely revived to their original condition at pri-

ority. He reiterated that it is the responsibility of the state and its institutions to protect the minorities and their religious sites and the state of Pakistan will leave no stone unturned to uphold its responsibility towards the minorities. The Sikh Community welcomed the arrival of COAS with warmth at the flood affected areas of Sialkot Sector. The Sikh Community thanked the Army Chief for the services being extended by the civil administration and the Army during the calamity. COAS also undertook the aerial flyover of Durbur Sahib Kartarpur. During interaction with representatives of civil administration, COAS appreciated the proactive response which helped minimise the loss of lives and property. While interacting with troops, the COAS commended their high morale, operational readiness, and commitment for serving the nation. He appreciated their services for the people during rescue and relief operations under challenging circumstances. Upon his arrival, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir was received by Corps Commander Gujranwala.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Ireland Ms. Mary O'Neil called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House. – DNA

Naqvi, US Envoy discuss cooperation in security

Chargé d'Affaires Baker expressed her condolences over the tragic loss of lives and property caused by the recent floods in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, extending the sympathies of the American people to those affected

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi held a follow-up meeting on Friday with the United States Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker, during which both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral ties and advancing cooperation across multiple sectors. The meeting covered a wide range of issues, including Pakistan-U.S. relations, mutual security concerns, and matters about Pakistanis wanted in the United States. Both parties agreed to

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PM to attend ‘SCO Summit’ in China

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will undertake a visit to China from August 30 to September 4 to attend the 25th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of State Summit in Tianjin. According to a statement issued by the Foreign Office, the premier will hold meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang to discuss various aspects of bilateral cooperation. He will also attend a military parade in Beijing,

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Victory Day speech

Pakistan indebted to Türkiye for all out support: CJCSC

General Sahir Shamshad extended Pakistan’s full support for Türkiye’s position on the issue of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: General Sahir Shamshad, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC), has emphasized the profound and time-tested friendship between Pakistan and Türkiye, highlighting their deep-rooted ties. Speaking at a ceremony to mark Türkiye’s Victory Day, he underscored that Türkiye has always stood by Pakistan in times of need, citing its support during natural disasters, such as floods, and its steadfast



stance on the Kashmir issue. General Shamshad reiterated Pakistan’s full support for Türkiye’s position on the issue of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. He also strongly condemned the genocide of the people of Gaza and the illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir by India. He affirmed Pakistan’s commitment to further strengthening relations with Türkiye. Earlier, Mr. Berk ECE, Chargé d’affaires of Türkiye Embassy in Pakistan read a statement from President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. In his message, President Erdoğan commemorated the 103rd anniversary of the Great Victory, an event that marked the defeat of imperialist forces and the liberation of Anatolia. He praised the heroism of the Turkish army and the nation’s self-sacrificing spirit during the War of Independence, highlighting the importance of the “internal front” created by the unity of the nation and the army. The president’s statement also addressed contemporary global issues, particularly the grim situation in the region.

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Briefs

Pak, Armenia agree to establish diplomatic ties



NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: In a major diplomatic breakthrough, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Friday announced that Pakistan and Armenia have agreed to consider establishing diplomatic relations. He announced the development following his telephonic conversation with Armenian counterpart Ararat Mirzoyan. “Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Ararat Mirzoyan and I held a cordial conversation on phone today, and agreed to consider establishing diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Armenia,” Dar posted on X.

Türkiye severs all trade ties with Israel

DNA

ANKARA: In a significant escalation of diplomatic and economic pressure, Türkiye’s Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan announced that the country has completely cut off all trade with Israel. The announcement, made during a special parliamentary debate on the Gaza crisis, solidifies previous reports and marks a new low in bilateral relations.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. – Editor

General Practice HOSPITAL

We Are OPEN

General Practice Hospital is a state-of-the-art healthcare facility offering comprehensive medical services to the community. Our hospital is equipped with advanced diagnostic and treatment modalities, including specialized OPD clinics, an urgent care unit, a modern radiology unit, well-equipped IPD rooms, operation theatres, an on-site laboratory for precise diagnostics, dialysis services, and comfortable inpatient wards. We are dedicated to providing quality, easily accessible, and patient-centred healthcare in a welcoming and professional environment.

OPD

RADIOLOGY

PHARMACY

LAB

X-RAY

ECG

ULTRASOUND

ENDOSCOPY

CATHETERIZATION

DIALYSIS

ICU

EMERGENCY

AMBULANCE

PHARMACY

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Pediatrics & Child Health

Gynecology & Women's Health

Dermatology & Aesthetics

General Surgery

Urology

Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery

Cardiology

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Uplift projects inaugurated in Attock

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

ATTOCK. Member National Assembly and Member Supreme Judicial Commission Sheikh Aftab Ahmed, along with Brigadier Adnan Rasheed, CEO Cantonment Board Attock, inaugurated several projects for the repair and upgradation of streets and drainage lines in Saddar Cantt, Attock. On the occasion, Vice Chairman Cantt Board Shakeel Bangash, PML-N leader Sheikh Ajmal Mahmood, and a large number of local notables were also present.

Speaking to residents, Sheikh Aftab Ahmed said that the ongoing development works would significantly improve civic facilities and ease long-standing problems faced by the people of the area.

DC Attock restricted gas cylinders in commercial vehicles

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

ATTOCK : Deputy Commissioner Attock Rao Atif Raza has said that there will be no permission to install gas cylinders in commercial and educational transport vehicles carrying students, and strict action will be taken against such transport.

He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting of the District Coordination Committee. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Anil Saeed, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance & Planning Nosheen Israr, Secretary RTA Sardar Zaheer Ahmed Khan, officers of law enforcement agencies, and other concerned officials were also present.

During the review of departmental performance, the meeting was informed that, from July 1 to July 31, 16,631 challans were issued by the traffic police. 18 illegal petrol pumps were sealed, and fines amounting to Rs. 148,000 were imposed. In action against illegal sale of gas cylinders, 45 shops were sealed, and fines of Rs. 210,000 were imposed. To curb the smuggling of Iranian petrol, 10 shops were sealed, and fines of Rs. 70,000 were imposed.

FIA, banks pledge coordination to combat financial crimes

LAHORE: Director Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Lahore Captain (retd) Muhammad Ali Zia chaired a meeting with senior officials from the compliance divisions of Pakistan's national and private commercial banks. The meeting, held at the FIA Lahore office, was attended by heads of compliance from all major national and commercial banks. The primary agenda was to foster institutional coordination on matters related to financial crime prevention, enhance regulatory compliance, ensure timely and efficient exchange of information as well as assess the challenges faced in this domain.—APP

Magsi lauds engineers' role in Pakistan's development



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Khalid Hussain Magsi on Friday asserted that no nation can achieve true progress without the vision and innovation of its engineers, as he conferred the PEC Engineers' Excellence Awards 2023 in Islamabad.

The Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) has conferred the prestigious awards, honoring 30 eminent engineers across eight categories for their remarkable contributions to Pakistan's progress and development. The ceremony was attended by foreign delegates, parliamentarians, bureaucrats, government officials, senior engineers, and prominent figures from diverse walks of life. Addressing the ceremony, Khalid Hussain Magsi lauded PEC's initiative and extended his heartfelt congratulations to the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) for taking this laudable initiative of organizing the PEC Engineers' Excellence Awards 2023. "This prestigious recognition of the exemplary achievements of our eminent engineers, serving in diverse fields, stands as a tribute to their invaluable contributions to the progress and prosperity of our nation", he said.

"These awards are not only a symbol of personal accomplishment but also a national celebration of dedication, ingenuity, and professional excellence that our engineers consistently

demonstrate", he stated.

PEC, under its dynamic leadership, is setting an inspiring benchmark for the younger generation to follow, he said.

The minister highlighted PEC's role in national development, digital transformation, and youth engagement. He praised initiatives such as the Smart PEC Drive, special programs for Balochistan, PEC desks in higher education institutions, the Graduate Engineers Training Program (GET), the introduction of Generative AI courses, and the Young Engineers National Forum.

He further appreciated PEC's achievements on the global front, including securing a six-year extension of Pakistan's membership under the Washington Accord and signing a Mutual Recognition Agreement with China.

Speaking at the ceremony, Chairman PEC Engr. Waseem Nazir congratulated the awardees and underscored PEC's pivotal role in advancing engineering education, practice, and global recognition.

He remarked, "It is indeed a matter of immense pride and pleasure to be among this esteemed gathering of professionals who have significantly contributed to the progress of our beloved country. Today's ceremony is a tribute to their dedication, innovation, and enduring commitment to national service". He said that PEC continues to serve as a Think Tank to the Federal Government, providing technical input for national policies,

while also modernizing the profession through initiatives such as the Smart PEC Digital Drive, Graduate Engineers Training Program, AI-based learning, Pathway-to-Practice desks, and reforms in education and industry. He emphasized PEC's growing international stature as a mentor to emerging engineering councils globally and reaffirmed PEC's commitment to youth empowerment, sustainability, and professional excellence. The ceremony concluded with the conferment of awards on the eminent engineers including

Engr. Muhammad Mazhar Ul Islam, Engr. Dr. Tabassum Zahoor, Engr. Muhammad Abdul Qadir Jhanagir Durrani, Engr. Dr. Tahir Masood, Engr. Amjad Saeed, Engr. Dr. Masroor Ahmed, Engr. Ejaz Hussain, Engr. Prof. Dr. Tauha Hussain Ali, Engr. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Abid, Engr. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Tufail, Engr. Prof. Dr. Madad Ali Shah, Engr. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kamran, Engr. Prof. Dr. Osman Hasan, Engr. Syed Nihal Asghar, Engr. Dr. Ajaz Bashir Janjua, Engr. Ifthikhar Ahmed, Engr. Hafiz Imtiaz Ahmed, Engr. Dr. Salman Raza Naqvi, Engr. Dr. Muhammad Zakir Shiekh, Engr. Dr. Nasir Mehmood Khan, Engr. Muhammad Raza Chohan, Engr. Syed Nafasat Raza, Engr. Fakhar Un Nisa, Engr. Mushtaq Hussain Dawood, Engr. Fahim Iqbal Siddiqui, Engr. Ahsan Azhar Siddiqui, Engr. Rashid Aziz, Engr. Rashid Ahmed, Engr. Barkatullah Kakar, and Engr. Muhammad Imran Khan Cheema.

Musadik calls trees "nature's factory against disaster"

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Malik, on Friday launched the Monsoon Tree Planting Campaign 2025 titled "Planting a Green Future" organized by the Sindh Forest Department.

The minister, accompanied by officials of the department and other participants, planted a sapling before his address, praying for the protection of the people and the growth of young tree into a strong shield for the future. Talking to the media on the occasion, Dr. Musadik Malik warned that devastating floods sweeping across the country had already entered Punjab and were now moving towards Southern Punjab and Sindh. "As the water progresses, its intensity will only grow. I appeal through the media, please move out of the flood's path before it is too late," he urged.

He paid tribute to civil administration, rescue agencies, armed forces, and others working round the clock in flood-affected areas, and said Sindh's leadership had already mobilized across districts. "This is a natural disaster. It cannot be stopped, but lives can be saved if people step aside from its course," he stressed. The minister underscored the vital role of trees in combating climate change.—APP

CM orders implementation of contingency plan

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presided over a high-level flood emergency meeting to review preparedness measures in anticipation of high flows expected to enter Sindh between September 3 or 4 at Guddu Barrage and forecasted rains across the province. The meeting, held at CM House, was attended by provincial ministers Sharjeel Memon, Makhdoom Mahboobzaman, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary Rehabilitation Akhtar Bugti and DG PDMA Salman Shah. Minister Irrigation Jam Khan Shoro, Minister Excise Mukesh Chawala, Minister Irrigation Mohammad Bux Maher, and Minister Industries Jam Ikram Dharejo were assigned to supervise

the flood situation and public welfare on the right and left banks. Divisional commissioners and DIGs participated in the meeting through a video link.

The Irrigation and Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) briefed the Chief Minister that between Wednesday and Thursday night, water inflows ranging between 700,000 to 800,000 cusecs are expected to reach Guddu Barrage. The CM directed the administration to remain on high alert and ensure full rescue and relief arrangements to meet any emergency.

According to the PDMA briefing, 72 rescue boats have been deployed in northern districts and 106 in southern districts, while more than 52,000 families may be affected in case of flooding.

The Chief Minister instructed the deployment of over 30,000 Rescue 1122 personnel in the northern districts and ordered the allocation of boats across vulnerable areas Sukkur six, Ghotki, Khairpur, Shikarpur Nasuhiroferoze, and Dadu each one four and Shaheed Benazirabad three. He also directed that rescue teams with boats be stationed from Sukkur to Dadu. The CM was informed that the Pakistan Navy has kept 26 boats on standby to support relief operations. Reviewing PDMA's stock position, Murad Ali Shah was told that ample relief supplies – including mosquito nets, blankets, first-aid kits, kitchen sets, mattresses, plastic mats, portable toilets, quilts, jerry cans, sleeping mats, tents, de-watering pumps, and generators – were available for deployment.—APP

MoU to enhance clinical training

PESHAWAR: The College of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Paraplegic Centre Peshawar (CP-MR-PCP) and Akbar Kare Institute (AKI) Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here to provide clinical training and practical skills to students of Doctor of Physical Therapy, BS Occupational Therapy, and BS Speech Language Therapy. The signing ceremony was held at the office of Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas, CEO PCP and Principal of the College. Vice Principal Dr. Aamir Zeb Khan, AKI's Head of Department Dr. Saadia Ahmad, and Clinical Lead Dr. Salim Khan were also present. Under the agreement, AKI will facilitate hands-on training for students at its state-of-the-art clinical facilities, bridging the gap between academic knowledge and professional practice.—APP

Haider lauds efforts to eradicate hepatitis

RAWALPINDI: Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan has appreciated the efforts to eradicate the scourge of hepatitis and the services rendered by Localized Hepatitis Elimination and Prevention Program (LHEAP).

The governor said that the organisations like Red Crescent, LHEAP and others are playing a noble role to help the needy segment of society by addressing their health issues.

Dr. Saleem Raza Raja, LHEAP presented the program's quarterly performance report to Governor. The report detailed significant strides in fighting Hepatitis B and C across the province.

The initiative, launched in December 2023 under the Governor's leadership, screened 5203 individuals during the last three months, identifying 2,428 positive cases of Hepatitis

B, C, or co-infections. The report shows that LHEAP initiated free treatment for 726 patients, including 87 with HBV, 639 with HCV, and one co-infected case, while administering 21,426 Hepatitis B vaccine doses. Governor Punjab commended LHEAP for providing all services free of cost including treatments, vaccinations, PCR tests, blood screenings, ultrasounds, and medicines. He praised the program's outreach to 10,984 households, emphasizing its role in advancing public health.

CEO LHEAP, Dr. Asnar while talking to APP I formed that some of the leading business entities, individuals and organizations were regularly contributing their services and funding to the noble cause. He said LHEAP is a flagship initiative of the Punjab Government that reflects a strong commitment to elim-

inating hepatitis and ensuring accessible healthcare. "We do not charge anything from the patients, screening, diagnostics, vaccination and treatment, all services and medicines are provided to the patients completely free of cost", said the CEO. He said that the organization was currently engaged with Dhok Hassu where a considerable number of patients were diagnosed with hepatitis.

"We have screened the area, found 9 positive cases of 29 screenings", he said while highlighting the alarming hike in positive cases.

Dr. Ansar urged the citizens to get examined in case of any symptoms without any delay.

"Massive awareness and supervisory efforts are required to tackle the spreading hepatitis", he added—APP

Dengue situation reviewed in meeting

BAHAWALPUR: A review meeting of the District Emergency Response Committee for Dengue Prevention was held in the committee room of the DC Office under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner General Muhammad Tayyab. The meeting reviewed the measures taken from August 18 to August 24 regarding dengue prevention. Addressing the meeting, the Additional Deputy Commissioner said that the officers and staff of the health department and other concerned departments should work actively in the field for dengue prevention. He directed that precautionary measures for dengue prevention should be followed, water should not be allowed to accumulate in one place, and special attention should be paid to sanitation works. The Additional Deputy Commissioner said that dengue larva surveillance should be done effectively, and the members of indoor and outdoor teams formed for dengue prevention should work actively in the field. He directed that Android user activities should be further increased and all matters should be carried out correctly and transparently. The Additional Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the individual performance of the concerned officers and focal persons regarding dengue prevention. District Health Officer and Focal Person Dr. Khalid Channar briefed the meeting that 5250 suspected cases of dengue have been reported in the district from January 1 to August 24, while dengue larva was found at 59 places. He said that immediate and effective measures have been taken to eliminate dengue larva. He further said that there are 1857 hotspots related to dengue in the district, and complete coverage has been ensured, while 513 indoor and 120 outdoor teams are active in the field throughout the district.

NA body calls for strict oversight of private hospitals

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination on Friday discussed key issues relating to healthcare services, medical education, regulatory oversight, and employee service matters.

A major focus of the meeting which was chaired by Dr. Mahesh Kumar Malani, was regulation of private hospitals and laboratories, and healthcare facilities in Islamabad. Reviewing the report of its Sub-Committee, convened by Dr. Amjad Ali Khan, the committee noted widespread non-compliance with licensing requirements, poor waste management, and lack of transparency in operations. It was revealed that several private facilities were running without valid licenses, while some Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA) board members had conflicts of interest due to their ownership of private setups. The committee directed the Ministry of Health to strengthen IHRA, issue immediate show-cause notices to non-compliant hospitals, and establish a robust licensing and monitoring framework. It also called for categorization of healthcare facilities and fixing of standardized service charges. A compliance report is to be

submitted in the next meeting.

The committee also discussed the availability of life-saving emergency medicines, performance of Basic Health Units (BHUs) and Rural Health Centers (RHCs) in Islamabad Capital Territory, and response in flood-affected areas. Another key agenda item was the plight of postgraduate medical trainees, particularly those in FCPS and MCPS programs.

The committee expressed displeasure that many trainees, especially at Isra University, were working without stipends despite clear government policy.

Reiterating that honorary training was not permissible, the committee directed Isra University to submit a written undertaking to pay stipends and provide disbursement records for the past three months.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP) endorsed the committee's directives. Employee service matters also came under discussion, particularly the cases of Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) employees whose contracts had expired in June 2023, delayed promotions, and mishandling of disciplinary procedures.

The Ministry was asked to resolve these is-

suess immediately and submit a compliance report by next week, while PMDC was instructed to present an inquiry report and ensure merit-based promotions.

On the longstanding issue of foreign medical graduates from Kyrgyzstan, the committee recommended that PMDC allow them to appear in the National Registration Examination (NRE). The Ministry and PMDC were directed to submit within three days a detailed report of all foreign medical institutions recognized since 2020.

Emphasizing the need for timely action, the committee warned regulatory bodies and institutions that failure to comply with directives would have consequences, including barring the Ministry from attending future meetings. The chair underscored the committee's resolve to protect patient rights, uphold medical professionals' entitlements, and improve healthcare delivery systems. The Committee deferred its legislative agenda, including Starred Questions 20, 23, and 49, along with "The Pakistan Nursing Council (Amendment) Bill, 2024" and "The Pharmacy (Amendment) Bill, 2024," to the next sitting.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

AUGUST

Aug 01/China
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Switzerland
National Day

Aug 01/Lebanon
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01 /Syria
Armed Forces Day

Aug 4/Bukino Faso
National Day

Aug 09 /Singapore

Aug 15/DPR Korea
Independence Day

Aug 15/India
Independence Day

Aug 15/Poland
Armed Forces Day

Aug 17 /Indonesia
Independence Day

Aug 24/Ukraine
Independence Day

Aug 25/Uruguay
Independence Day

Aug 30 /Turkey
Armed Forces Day

Aug 31/Kyrgyz Republic
Independence Day

Aug 31/Malaysia
National Day

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Jam vows consistent national policies to boost exports

The Commerce Minister has announced that the government is finalizing a comprehensive Textiles and Apparel Policy and National Industrial Policy for the next five years aimed at making Pakistan’s industry regionally competitive, removing trade barriers, and ensuring long-term export growth, said a press release issued here

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Friday vowed for consistent, predictable national policies to boost exports for sustainable economic development. The Commerce Minister has announced that the government is finalizing a comprehensive Textiles and Apparel Policy and National Industrial Policy for the next five years aimed at making Pakistan’s industry regionally competitive, removing trade barriers, and ensuring long-term export growth, said a press release issued here. While Chairing a meeting with Amir Fayyaz Sheikh, Chairperson Textile Council, Kamran Arshad, Chairman All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA), Rehman Naseem, CEO, Fazal Cloth, and Shahid Sattar, Executive Director APTMA at the Ministry of Commerce, and joined by Haroon Akhtar Khan Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Commerce Minister underlined that Textiles and Apparel Policy will be designed aimed at reducing cost of manufacturing, improving resource productivity and optimizing processes, promoting research and development and product/market diversification, and enhancing Pakistan’s share in global market. He remarked that Pakistan must rely on export growth, adding that the Government is committed to ensure all decisions are taken in consultation with stakeholders. Jam Kamal stressed that, for the first time, the Government and industry are aligned in their determination to revive and enhance momentum of increasing exports. Welcoming industry proposal to analyze



the policies of regional competitors, Jam Kamal shared the observations from his recent visit to Dhaka, where he witnessed first-hand the country’s remarkable success in industrial development and exports of ready-made garments. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Haroon Akhtar Khan emphasized that the new Industrial Policy would go beyond few sectors and address the broader industrial landscape.

He explained that the Policy would comprehensively cover the areas including energy, tariffs and taxation, financing, economic zones and the other areas. He also underlined that facilitation for Greenfield projects, land-lease models under Public-Private Partnership, and one-window model for investor facilitation are also being incorporated. He added that the initiative, under the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif,

would inject new momentum into industrial growth across the country. APTMA delegation urged the government to remove structural inefficiencies and provide enabling environment that hinder competitiveness of export sectors in the global market. The Commerce Minister concluded the meeting with optimism about boosting exports through sustainable policy support and collaborative efforts of stakeholders.

Int’l delegation visits Pakistan to strengthen TVET sector

ISLAMABAD: An international delegation of experts and representatives from leading global institutions visited Pakistan to explore avenues for strengthening and modernizing the country’s Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector. The delegation, comprising Lord Boateng, Member of the House of Lords, UK & Chancellor, University of Surrey; Dr. Amir Saddati, Executive Director, GEMS UAE; Ms. Gulmina Bilal, Chairperson, National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), Pakistan; and Abdul Qadir, City & Guilds Pakistan, held a high-level meeting with Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Ms. Wajiha Qamar at her office. The minister extended a warm welcome to the delegation and appreciated their interest in supporting Pakistan’s TVET reforms. She emphasized that Pakistan is committed to aligning its technical and vocational training systems with global standards to ensure youth empowerment and economic growth. Discussions during the meeting focused on: Policy reforms and institutional capacity building for uplifting the TVET sector, Upgradation and modernization of training programs in line with international best practices, Enhancing collaboration with national stakeholders to ensure inclusive and industry-driven skills development, and Future strategies for sustainable development of TVET in Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, the foreign delegates acknowledged Pakistan’s efforts to prioritize technical education and skills development, terming it a key driver of sustainable socio-economic progress. They assured their full support in promoting innovative partnerships, investment opportunities, and knowledge-sharing to strengthen Pakistan’s TVET sector. The Minister of State underlined that the Government’s vision is to empower youth with demand-driven skills, reduce unemployment, and foster a skilled workforce that meets the needs of the rapidly evolving labor market. She added that the outcomes of such collaborations would not only uplift Pakistan’s TVET sector but also contribute significantly to national economic resilience and productivity. The visit marks another important step towards building sustainable international linkages and partnerships in skills development, reflecting Pakistan’s firm resolve to equip its youth with the tools required to thrive in the 21st-century economy.—DNA

ITP chief directs merit, citizen facilitation

ISLAMABAD: Police Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Captain (ret’d) Hamzah Humayun visited the Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) Headquarters, where he was briefed about various departments within the driving license branch and their procedures. An official told APP on Friday that the CTO personally reviewed the facilities being provided to citizens applying for driving licenses and also met applicants to inquire about the issues they were facing. CTO Hamza instructed all traffic police officers to provide maximum ease and all necessary facilities to citizens,

ensuring that driving licenses are issued purely on merit and with complete transparency. He added that police guides have been deputed to assist applicants, while officers were directed to simplify the process and make it more transparent so that no inconvenience is faced by citizens. The CTO further emphasized that traffic police officers should treat citizens with courtesy and respect, and also stressed educating learners about traffic laws and road safety to build a culture of responsibility and reduce accidents in the federal capital.—APP

Weekly inflation goes up by 0.62pc

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.62 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on August 28, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 331.14 points as compared to 329.11 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 3.57 per cent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 also increased of 0.84 per cent by going up to 321.82 from last week’s 318.59 points. The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,733 to 22,888; Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175, increased by 0.83 percent, 0.73 percent, 0.69 percent and 0.51 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 18 (35.29%) items increased, 06 (11.76%) items decreased and 27 (52.95%) items remained stable. The items, which recorded major increase in

their average prices on a week-on-week basis included tomatoes (14.98%), wheat flour (12.11%), chicken (3.36%), potatoes (1.52%), mustard oil (1.37%), eggs (1.03%), LPG (0.82%), cooked beef (0.81%), garlic (0.78%), lawn printed (0.23%), firewood (0.17%) and long cloth (0.11%). The commodities which recorded major decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included pulse mash (0.43%), pulse masoor and pulse gram (0.28%) each, bananas (0.12%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (0.10%) and onions (0.01%). On year-on-year basis, the commodities that witnessed increase in prices included ladies sandal (55.62%), gas charges for q1 (29.85%), sugar (26.91%), beef (12.99%), gur (12.18%), bananas (11.78%), pulse moong (11.74%), firewood (11.47%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (11.36%), vegetable ghee 1 kg (10.89%), cooked beef (8.93%) and lawn printed (7.64%) The commodities which recorded a increase in their average prices on year-on-year basis included onions (49.31%), garlic (25.98%), pulse mash (23.39%), potatoes (19.96%), pulse gram (18.54%), electricity charges for q1 (18.12%), tea packet (17.93%), pulse masoor (7.05%), rice irri-6/9 (5.47%) and LPG (3.70%).—APP

Rawal dam spillways opened as water level rises

ISLAMABAD: The district administration, on Friday, opened the spillways of Rawal Dam due to rise in water level amid heavy rains. According to the statement issued, the spillways were opened in the early hours as the water level reached the prescribed limit of 1,751 feet mark. The Assistant Commissioner of Nilore was present at the spot to supervise the process. District administration appealed to the citizens to take precautionary measures and cooperate with the teams for safety.—APP

President summons NA session on Sep 1

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday summoned the session of the National Assembly to meet on September 1, 2025. Summoned on the advice of the prime minister, the session will be held on Monday at 1700 hours at the Parliament House.—APP

CERN delegation visits Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation from the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) visited Pakistan from 24 to 28 August 2025, to review the country’s progress as an Associate Member of CERN. During the visit, a team of five top experts from CERN met with the Chairman of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and toured various science and technology institutions, a press release issued by the Foreign Office Spokesperson on Friday said. The institutions included the National Centre for Physics (NCP), Heavy Mechanical Complex-3 (HMC-3), Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS), Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology (PINSTECH), Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Oncology (INMOL), and National Institute for Laser and Optonics (NILOP), among other advanced facilities. The purpose of these visits was to assess Pakistan’s progress in the field of science and technology.—APP

Maintaining road connectivity top priority during floods:NHA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Highway Authority (NHA), Muhammad Sheheryar, visited various flood-affected areas of Punjab to review the condition of road infrastructure. He made the visit following special instructions from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan. Accompanied by senior NHA officials, including members of the Central Zone, the chairman inspected key sites such as the Ravi Bridge on the Eastern Bypass in Lahore, according to the statement issued here on Friday. He emphasized that ensuring uninterrupted road connectivity during the flood period remains the NHA’s foremost priority. “NHA is utilizing all available resources to protect vital road infrastructure. Every possible effort will be made to safeguard highways and bridges,” he said. He added that NHA teams were deployed at all major highways and bridges with adequate manpower and machinery to respond swiftly to any emergency. During the visit, the chairman also met Secretary Irrigation Punjab and assured full cooperation with the provincial government in restoring flood-damaged infrastructure. He reaffirmed that once the flood situation eased, NHA would play an active role in the rehabilitation and restoration process.—APP

SECP okays significant reduction in corporate action timeliness

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has approved amendments to the Companies (Further Issue of Shares) Regulations, 2020, introducing a significant reduction in the overall timelines for bonus and right issues to maximize shareholder value. Historically, bonus and right issues required up to 85 days and 181 days, respectively, to complete the entire process—from initiation to the credit of shares in shareholder accounts, said a release issued here on Friday. Under the revised framework, a bonus issue will now be concluded within just 11 days (an 87% reduction) and a right issue within 53 days (a 70% reduction). Continuing with its inclusive and consensus-driven consultative approach to market reforms, the SECP initially published a consultation paper inviting stakeholder feedback on potential areas for improvement. The SECP held extensive in-person and online engagements with key stakeholders, including the PSX, CDC, NCCPL, leading Consultants to the Issue, legal professionals, and financial experts, and subsequently issued a draft of the amendments for further consultation. All feedback received during this process was thoroughly evaluated before the amendments were approved.—APP

AUGUST 2025

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Briefs

Junaid backs green ship recycling for climate action

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Friday reaffirmed the government's commitment to aligning the ship breaking industry with the Hong Kong Convention (HKC), stressing the importance of tackling climate change through safe and eco-friendly recycling practices. Chairing a high-level review meeting on HKC compliance, the federal minister highlighted that the Gadani ship breaking yard, ranked the world's third-largest, must transform into a hub for sustainable recycling. The federal minister also issued instructions to Ports & Shipping administration to issue the first green yard certificate on Hong Kong Convention compliance within one week. Stretching across 10 kilometers of coastline with around 135 designated plots, Gadani is undergoing a major transition. Eleven yards are now nearing completion for eco-friendly operations, while an additional 20 are set to begin green recycling by June 2026. The Hong Kong Convention, which becomes legally binding on June 26, 2025, requires all nations to adopt safe ship recycling methods that minimize hazardous waste and reduce environmental harm. —APP

Gilani, Ayaz Sadiq discuss parliamentary coop

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani and Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday discussed enhancing institutional cooperation between the two Houses of Parliament and strengthening parliamentary coordination on national and international issues. During a meeting at the Chairman Senate's residence in the federal capital, Gilani briefed the Speaker on preparations for the upcoming Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference, scheduled for November 11-12, 2025. He informed that the event would bring together representatives from more than 45 countries, making it one of the most significant multilateral parliamentary gatherings ever hosted by Pakistan. He said that the conference would deliberate on key global challenges, including regional peace, sustainable development, climate change, and the need for collective strategies to address emerging threats. On the occasion, Ayaz Sadiq extended heartfelt condolences to the Senate Chairman over the demise of his cousin, Syed Tanveer ul Hassan Gilani. —APP

UN Secy General appoints Muniba as goodwill ambassador

We look forward to continuing this journey together, amplifying voices, and creating opportunities for a fairer, more sustainable future

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has officially appointed Muniba Mazari — UN Women National Goodwill Ambassador, renowned public speaker, artist, and human rights advocate — as a Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Advocate on 24 March 2025. This prestigious appointment recognizes Muniba Mazari's unwavering commitment to promoting inclusion, gender equality, and social justice, both in Pakistan and globally. In this role, she will join a distinguished group of global leaders and influencers, including the Prime Minister of Barbados, H.E. Mia Mottley, and Her Majesty Queen Mathilde of Belgium working to raise awareness, inspire action, and mobilize support for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In his official letter, the Secretary-General



al commended Ms. Mazari's inspirational leadership, stating: "Muniba is an inspiration to many and a prominent voice on inclusion and gender equality. I applaud her numerous achievements and unwavering commitment to equality, and I ask that she leverage her talent, influence, and platform to bring the Sustainable Development Goals to the forefront of global attention and action." Speaking about her appointment, Muniba Mazari said "I am deeply honored to be appointed as an SDG Advocate. This is not just a title — it's a responsibility to use my voice for those who remain unheard and to inspire collective action for a healthier, fairer, and more compassionate world. Together, we can accelerate progress for people and the planet." Jamshed M. Kazi, Country Representative of UN Women Pakistan, also congratulated Muniba Mazari on this remarkable achievement, and stated, "Muniba has been an incredible force for change as UN

Women' National Goodwill Ambassador. Her appointment as an SDG Advocate is a proud moment for Pakistan and for women everywhere. She embodies the spirit of resilience, courage, and equality, and we are confident that she will continue to use her powerful voice to promote inclusive, rights-based development and gender equality, both nationally and globally. UN Women Pakistan and the United Nations in Pakistan proudly celebrate Muniba Mazari's appointment as an SDG Advocate. This recognition reflects her inspiring leadership and dedication to promoting equality, inclusion, and social justice. Her growing global role will further strengthen efforts to advance the Sustainable Development Goals and the rights of women and girls in Pakistan and around the world. We look forward to continuing this journey together, amplifying voices, and creating opportunities for a fairer, more sustainable future.

Businessman donates Rs 10m for flood relief

ISLAMABAD: British-Pakistani businessman Waseem Aslam called on Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday and presented a cheque worth Rs10 million for the relief and rehabilitation of flood victims. Minister Naqvi praised Aslam's generous contribution, describing it as a reflection of the strong humanitarian spirit of overseas Pakistanis. "Pakistan is facing an unprecedented flood in its history," Naqvi said, adding that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab had been among the worst-hit provinces, where large-scale devastation has left millions of people displaced. He assured that the government would not leave the flood victims alone in this difficult time. The donation, he confirmed, will be transferred to the Prime Minister's Flood Relief Fund to support ongoing rescue and rehabilitation efforts. —APP

Pakistan to establish Maritime Complex with Chinese support

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is preparing to establish an integrated maritime industrial complex at Port Qasim with Chinese support, following high-level talks in Islamabad on 20 August 2025. During the meeting, a delegation from Shandong Xinxu Group, led by chairman Hou Jianxin, conveyed its interest in developing the complex alongside a green ship-recycling yard.

In a statement, the Prime Minister's Office said that Shehbaz Sharif had invited Chinese industries to invest in Pakistan, assuring them that the government would "provide all possible facilities for the establishment of Special Economic Zones."

The PMO confirmed that Shandong Xinxu is "interested in establishing a maritime industrial complex in Pakistan" and that the company "will build a green shipbreaking yard in Pakistan." Project Scope and Investment The planned Port Qasim complex would combine port operations with shipbuilding, repair and recycling facilities, alongside industrial clusters for fish and date processing. Shandong Xinxu Group, described as "a high-tech energy enterprise integrating the renewable energy industry chain", has indicated willingness to bring investment and technical expertise.

The development builds on a Memorandum of Understanding signed in July 2025 between the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) and Shandong Xinxu Group to cooperate on shipping and fleet management. The proposed "green" shipbreaking yard would be designed to meet international environmental. —APP

Pakistani businessman brings taste of home to Khunjerab Pass

ISLAMABAD: As summer tourism peaks from June to August, Pakistani businessman Rahber Khan is seeing brisk business at his small restaurant perched on the China-Pakistan border. According to Gwadar Pro, from 9 a.m. to noon, the Eagle Nest Coffee Room serves a fusion of Pakistani and Chinese dishes. "We want to mix both cuisines," Khan said. "I offer special service and even show customers how we Pakistani people enjoy our meals." Khan has been running his restaurant since 2012. Originally from Hunza, a town near the border, he says the warm welcome from local people in Xinjiang has been key to his success. "People here are very kind, especially the Tajik community. They respect and support us a lot," he noted.

With similar tastes for beef, lamb and hearty dishes, Khan feels at home in the region. "Life here is very com-

fortable for me and my family. Pakistan is my first home, but my second home is China," he said proudly.

"I've built a new house, my four children are in universities, and I feel lucky to support them through this business." The Khunjerab Pass, the only land border crossing between China and Pakistan, has long been a vital trade artery along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Once open only eight months a year due to snow and altitude, it became a year-round crossing in December 2024, giving merchants like Khan greater opportunities. Tashkurgan County in China and Hunza in Pakistan signed a sister-city agreement in June 2023 to promote cooperation in border trade, tourism and infrastructure, deepening people-to-people ties across the frontier. Beyond trade, the pass is now a cultural and tourism hub, drawing tens of thousands of visitors each year. —APP

Empowering the visually impaired through technology

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Mobility & Independence Training Centre (NM&ITC), operating under the Directorate General of Special Education (DGSE), Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, successfully concluded a Two-Week National Training Course on Basic Computer Training with Job Access with Speech (JAWS) and Non Visual Desktop Access (NVDA) Softwares for Visually Impaired Persons, held at the National Institute of Special Education (NISE), Islamabad, from August 18 to 29, 2025. The course brought together 43 participants from across Pakistan, including Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, and Islamabad. The trainees ranged from secondary school students to Master's level, along with parents and teachers of visually impaired persons. The content included computer basics, keyboard orientation, Windows navigation, email creation, and practical application of Job Access with Speech (JAWS) and Non-Visual Desktop Access (NVDA) software. The training was led by Mr. Abdul Wahid from Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, one of the pioneers of technology education for the Blind community in Pakistan. The Certificate Distribution Ceremony was marked by inspiring moments. Students from the National Special Education Centre for Visually Handicapped Children, G-7/2 Islamabad, also participated. A special highlight was the heartfelt performance of Fawad Alam, a blind student and recipient of the Prime Minister's

Special Award on Independence Day, who presented a medley of national songs on the Rubab. Trainees shared their personal experiences, narrating how the training had empowered them. Their stories of resilience and achievement served as a beacon of hope and inspiration for the visually impaired students in the audience. The ceremony was graced by Professor Dr. Hafeez ur Rehman, a distinguished social scientist of international repute, who attended as Chief Guest and distributed certificates among the participants. With numerous doctoral supervisions to his credit, Dr. Rehman is also acknowledged by Blind community for supervising Dr. Hafiz Abdul Rasheed, a blind scholar, to his successful PhD in Anthropology at Quaid-i-Azam University. In his remarks, he praised the determination of visually impaired individuals and emphasized the transformative role of technology in promoting inclusivity, a mission strongly advanced by DGSE in leadership of Mo FE&PT. He also stressed upon the need of research in social sector regarding the challenges faced by Persons with disabilities to come up with grounded solutions as emic voices. Director Training Mrs Noreen on behalf of Director General Special Education Capt R Asif Iqbal Asif congratulated the successful trainees and course organizers and also deliberated upon the revamping initiatives being taken at service delivery institutions of the Directorate General of Special Education. The event reaffirmed the commitment of Federal government to empowering persons with disabilities by equipping them with modern skills, enabling greater independence and meaningful contributions to national development.

Stabilizing Syria: Role of regional engagement

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) hosted an eminent speaker session on "Stabilizing Syria: Role of Regional Engagement", featuring Dr. Mahjoob Zweiri, Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Middle East Council on Global Affairs. The session examined Syria's ongoing transition, the challenges of domestic reconstruction and the pivotal role of regional and international actors in ensuring long-term stability. Opening his remarks, Dr. Zweiri stressed that the Middle East was experiencing a critical juncture. He outlined three phases of Syria's recent trajectory: the immediate aftermath of December 8, 2024 events, the evolving dynamics of domestic politics and the regional dimensions shaping Syria's future. Dr. Zweiri highlighted the fragility of the Assad regime at the time and the failure of its regional alliances to provide timely support. The rapid shift in opinion among Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Jordan alongside cautious recognition from Europe and the United States reflected how "regional players have done their homework correctly by engaging with Europe and the United States, trying to respond to their fears and concerns." Turning to domestic politics, Dr. Zweiri noted the importance of national identity and inclusivity in stabilizing Syria. "One identity politics, Syrian identity, means all Syrians are part of the future, regardless of their ethnicity or religion. It is not about who rules now, but about who contributes to Syria's stability," he explained. He also underscored the economic dimension. Improvements in infrastructure, salaries, and trade links with neighboring states were cited as crucial factors restoring public confidence.

Dr. Zweiri described Syria as a vital space for preventing further destabilization in the Middle East. "Syria is a place where you can achieve two major things: maintain the status quo by keeping the country's borders intact and stop any potential civil war," he stated, warning that renewed conflict would destabilize Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and beyond. During the Q&A, Dr. Zweiri emphasized Pakistan's potential contribution through diplomacy, investment, and humanitarian support. "Pakistan has strong ties with Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Jordan. This network can be a great asset to help Syrians," he noted, suggesting that Pakistan's growing technological sector could play a role in Syria's reconstruction. Addressing concerns about Israel's aggression, Dr. Zweiri drew a parallel with post-9/11 U.S. wars, stressing that Israel's current course was unsustainable and driven by political calculations.

The session concluded with an engaging discussion on regional alignments, the pressures of reconstruction and the delicate balance between external support and domestic resilience. The discussion underscored that sustained regional engagement coupled with inclusive governance in Syria, will be central to ensuring long-term peace and stability.

CASS hosts seminar titled 'dominating the skies'



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), hosted a seminar titled "Dominating the Skies: Strategic Use of the Air Medium in Modern Conflicts" on 28 August 2025. The event was widely attended by academics, students, intellectuals, and domain experts. CASS is an independent think tank that continues to arrange academic events for scholars and practitioners interested in national security in its wider context. Ms Nidaa Shahid, Associate Director, CASS Lahore, delivered the opening remarks. In his keynote address, Air Marshal

Asim Suleiman (Retd), President of CASS Lahore, observed that air power is undergoing a profound transformation, driven by the integration of combat aircraft, drones, and precision-guided missiles, which he termed the "Triangle of Air Power". Mastery of this new model enabled the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) to outpace India in both tempo and precision. He credited the current Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu for orchestrating a centralised command system that forged an unprecedented multi-domain kill chain. Zarbe-Karrar, he noted, dismantled India's myths of technological superiority, neutralised its Rafales, S-400s, and BrahMos, and exposed critical

gaps in the Indian Air Force's (IAF) ability to dominate across domains. In his remarks, he stated that while India may have sought to set a "new normal", in reality, it has created a "new abnormal"—one devoid of substance, clarity, and the ability to deliver results. In the end, he praised Field Marshal General Asim Munir and ACM Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu for taking the wind out of India's war-mongering political elite. Dr Rabia Akhtar, Dean, University of Lahore, emphasised that missiles require joint training, ISR, and interoperability for effective deployment. She added that the formation of the Army Rocket Force Command (ARFC) marks

a decisive step and positive move towards conventional deterrence. However, the dissemination of its doctrinal contours will offer more clarity regarding how it will supplement our conventional capabilities. She further emphasised that the ARFC must be equipped with ISR, precision, and an unbreakable kill chain. Air Commodore Khalid Banuri (Retd), Senior Advisor Training, Project Phoenix, Air Headquarters, underscored that AI is transforming the character of warfare as algorithms are increasingly assisting human decision-making. Referring to Zarbe-Karrar as Pakistan's "Oppenheimer moment," he stated that niche acquisitions, realistic training,

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Paradigm shift needed in governance

PAKISTAN, a nation born in the crucible of independence, has been plagued by a cycle of natural disasters and man-made catastrophes. The recent floods in Punjab, which have claimed over 30 lives and displaced countless others, are a grim reminder of this persistent problem. The devastation is not just a result of heavy rainfall, but also a consequence of widespread corruption, negligence, and a lack of long-term planning. While the poor bear the brunt of the tragedy, the elite remain preoccupied with self-serving pursuits, such as “photo shoots” and political maneuvering. This tragedy highlights a systemic failure that has been woven into the fabric of Pakistan since its inception, where the poor are perpetually at the mercy of the apathetic and corrupt elite.

The recent floods in Punjab have affected over 50 villages, causing immense damage to property and infrastructure. While natural calamities are an inevitable part of life, the scale of destruction in this case is a direct result of man-made blunders. The construction of illegal housing societies, residential buildings, and commercial establishments in riverbeds and waterways has exacerbated the problem, blocking the natural flow of water and leading to catastrophic flooding. These unauthorized constructions, often sanctioned through corrupt practices, have turned what should have been a manageable event into a national tragedy. The government’s response to the crisis has been widely criticized for its inefficiency and lack of empathy. While rescue and relief operations are underway, many have pointed out that the ministers and officials are more interested in political grandstanding and media appearances than in providing genuine assistance to the affected people. This apathetic behavior is a hallmark of the Pakistani elite, who have a long history of neglecting the needs of the poor and marginalized. The cycle of disaster and neglect is a familiar one. After a few days, the media attention will wane, the politicians will move on to other issues, and the victims will be left to fend for themselves. The illegal practices that led to the floods will resume, and the stage will be set for the next tragedy.

The root cause of this systemic failure is corruption, which has seeped into every level of government and society. From the land registry office to the environmental protection agency, every department is riddled with corrupt officials who are more interested in personal gain than in upholding the law. Those who are supposed to protect the environment and enforce building codes are often the ones who facilitate illegal construction and exploitation. This rampant corruption has not only destroyed the country’s infrastructure but has also eroded public trust and confidence in the government. The people of Pakistan are tired of this vicious cycle of corruption, neglect, and tragedy. The time has come for a fundamental change in the country’s governance, one that prioritizes the welfare of the people over the interests of the elite. The recurring tragedies in Pakistan are a stark reminder of the urgent need for a paradigm shift in governance. It is time for a new generation of leaders who are committed to fighting corruption, promoting accountability, and prioritizing the long-term well-being of the people.

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Businessmen reject federal budget: FBR powers draw fire

THE business community has strongly rejected the federal budget for the fiscal year 2025–26, particularly objecting to the controversial proposal granting arrest powers to Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) officials. Terming the move “draconian,” several trade and industry bodies have warned the government of a nationwide strike if the provision is not immediately withdrawn. This backlash is not surprising. At a time when businesses are already reeling under inflation, high energy costs, and economic uncertainty, this additional threat of arbitrary arrest has only deepened their sense of insecurity and alienation. Business leaders argue—rightfully—that the move will further erode confidence and deter investment. The FBR, they say, already has a reputation for harassment and overreach. Giving its officials unchecked authority to arrest businessmen without due process could open the floodgates for abuse, vendettas, and corruption. While the intent behind the move may be to tighten the noose around habitual tax evaders, in practice, it may end up targeting genuine taxpayers—those who are already contributing to the national exchequer and struggling to stay afloat.

The reality is that Pakistan’s tax base is narrow not because of a lack of legislation, but because of inconsistent implementation and selective accountability. There is no doubt that tax evasion is a serious problem. It has long plagued the country, depriving the national treasury of critical revenues needed for infrastructure, health, and education. But blanket punitive measures against the entire business class are not the solution. They risk alienating key economic players who are vital to job creation and growth. Reports indicate that the government is reconsidering this proposal after severe backlash, which is a step in the right direction. However, a mere rollback is not enough. There must be a clear and transparent mechanism to distinguish between habitual tax dodgers and compliant taxpayers. Technology, data analytics, and third-party audits can play a vital role in achieving this without infringing on individual rights or disrupting economic activity. Moreover, the FBR itself needs institutional reform. Without improving internal accountability, training, and efficiency, no legislative change will yield long-term results. Trust between the tax authorities and the business community is essential—and that can only be built through transparency, fairness, and dialogue, not intimidation. Ultimately, while tax reform is crucial for Pakistan’s financial future, it must be pursued with wisdom and balance. Policies that scare away business will only deepen the economic crisis. The government must adopt a consultative approach, address genuine concerns, and ensure that any anti-evasion measures are implemented with justice and due process. A thriving business community and an efficient, accountable tax system are not mutually exclusive—they are two sides of the same coin.

Trump’s 50% Tariffs on India: Pakistan’s Big Break

Qamar Bashir



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...

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 abstain-

ing 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.

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The overlooked crisis of human trafficking

Dr. Muhammad Rizwan Bhatti

HUMAN trafficking, a staggering human rights infringement and contemporary form of servitude, impacts millions worldwide. Moreover, involuntary slavery, forced labor and sexual exploitation are examples of exploitative uses for human trafficking. Coordinated international measures based on solid data, all-encompassing regulations and unyielding political will are necessary to combat human trafficking. The issue in Pakistan is complex, with particular difficulties stemming from the social, economic and geopolitical environment of the nation. The theme of world day trafficking in person (TIP) 2025, “Human Trafficking is Organized Crime – End the Exploitation,” emphasizes that stopping this serious injustice necessitates destroying intricate criminal networks, safeguarding victims and calling for international cooperation. Pakistan, which is located at the intersection of important migration routes, is a country that sees a variety of trafficking activities, such as forced prostitution, child trafficking and bonded labour. To comprehend human trafficking, clarity on a few fundamental ideas is necessary. Human trafficking is the illegal recruitment or transfer of individuals, usually for work or sexual exploitation, by deceit, coercion, or force. The quantitative and qualitative information gathered on human trafficking cases is referred to as Trafficking in Persons (TIP) data. This information is essential for adjusting interventions and assessing their effectiveness. A serious kind of human trafficking that is common in South Asia is bonded labour, which binds individuals to forced labor in exchange for oppressive terms to repay debts. As traffickers also use technology to support their criminal networks, in Pakistan, they are increasingly using digital channels such as social media to attract victims through phony job advertisements and false promises. Human trafficking is largely caused by dishonest recruitment firms that entice victims with false promises of employment overseas. The most common businesses for forced labor are domestic work and brick kilns, where families are frequently obligated by inherited debt. There are two threats highlighted by the startling increase in illegal migration from Pakistan to the EU. Firstly, the startling figure of 24,000 Pakistanis breaking into the EU in just three years, with a 280% increase in 2022, which indicates that, the deterrents in place are not working. Secondly, a huge, multi-billion-dollar criminal organization is fueled by this desperate

movement. Being a profitable Rs80 billion industry, migrant smuggling draws more participants and is challenging to eradicate. The enormous profit guarantees that fresh smugglers continuously fill the hole, which is why simple arrests aren’t effective in its enforcement and eradication of menace. The Pakistani government has made significant progress in combating human trafficking by implementing data-based tools and policy reforms after realizing these difficulties. These initiatives are in line with global frameworks and demonstrate a growing recognition that stopping human trafficking necessitates multifaceted approaches that incorporate partnership, prosecution, prevention and protection. In an effort to enhance legislation against human trafficking and migrant smuggling, the Parliament of Pakistan has passed the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (Amendment) Bill 2025, the Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants (Amendment) Bill 2025 and the Emigration (Amendment) Bill 2025. Furthermore, The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) created the International Classification of Trafficking in Persons (ICTIP) framework, which is one of the most critical worldwide developments. Countries may now discuss trafficking trends and occurrences in a common language thanks to this historic initiative, which offers a standardized framework for gathering and evaluating data connected to human trafficking. A pragmatic strategy based on four essential pillars including prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership underpin the fight against human trafficking. By addressing underlying issues including poverty, prevention seeks to empower and raise awareness in order to lessen the estimated 50 million victims worldwide. The focus of protection is on identifying and helping victims; even if more than 75,000 victims were identified in 2022, rehabilitation depends on improved strategies including survivor-centric support. Traffickers are held accountable through prosecution, although worldwide conviction rates are remarkably low (about 5,000 per year, a 38% decrease since 2015), calling for more robust legal frameworks and international collaboration. Additionally, the equally glaring fact is that as many as 800,000 people are leaving Pakistan annually according to the report of 4th Migration Trends Analysis Report for Pakistan published in the 1st Quarter, 2024. The analysis of latest surveys of UNODC, ILO, IOM and walk free are massively eye opening. Further delving deep, it reveals that UNODC reports a 25% increase in trafficking victims surfaced in 2022 in comparison to pre-pandemic

2019, depicting children and forced labor cases are surging on the alarming proportion. Further, vulnerable groups including Women and girls remained the majority of victims, particularly in sexual exploitation and forced labor. The International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization of Migration (IOM) and Walk Free estimate around 50 million people reside in the grips of modern slavery across the Globe, including 28 million in forced labour and 22 million in forced marriages. Pakistan has made some progress despite obstacles like poverty, illiteracy, social shame and institutional lethargy. By international norms, officials have integrated aspects of victim support and contemporary policing. The creation of national action plans that prioritize the identification, rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration of survivors is one example of this. The destruction of trafficking syndicates through improved investigative methods and judicial reforms is another goal of these initiatives. President Asif Ali Zardari also emphasized the need for international and collective cooperation at recent international gatherings. To combat human trafficking, he advocated for increased cross-border cooperation, legal changes and public awareness initiatives. His remarks underscored that Pakistan’s approach, while still a work in progress, demonstrates a commitment to tackling the issue holistically. Pakistan’s endeavors on the global scene are a part of a larger patchwork of regional and international projects that have yielded encouraging outcomes. Through more vigorous trafficking prosecutions, more financing for victim services and the establishment of inter-ministerial groups tasked with coordinating, nations like Bulgaria and Poland have institutionalized anti-trafficking efforts. These nations have constructed shelters, set up victim counseling facilities, raised the number of convictions and given survivors restitution awards. This is setting benchmarks that Pakistan and other nations can emulate. Such reforms highlight the benefits of an integrated approach combining legal rigor, victim support and interagency cooperation. Notwithstanding, the incumbent DG FIA Raja Riffat Mukhtar has significantly enhanced its endeavors against human trafficking. Recent reports reflect multiple coordinated crackdowns, leading to the arrest of dozens of individuals involved in trafficking, visa fraud and illegal currency exchange networks. Reports from July 2025, for example, describe the capture of 10 individuals, including “most-wanted human smugglers,” and the seizure of large amounts of

illegal money. These unsparing steps, along with increased internal responsibility within the FIA itself, demonstrate a strong commitment to destroying these illegal businesses and safeguarding those who are most in need. Trafficking necessitates laws that prioritize protection and prevention while penalizing offenders. Raising awareness is essential for changing attitudes and lowering demand for exploitative services, both in vulnerable populations and among the general public. Adopting victim-centered law enforcement strategies that protect the rights and dignity of survivors is equally essential. When combined with specific national objectives, Pakistan’s continuous adoption of international standards such as ICTIP enhances accountability and resource allocation, guaranteeing data-driven and actionable initiatives. Additionally, human trafficking is a pervasive issue that intersects with organized crime syndicates, gender inequality, migration and poverty. Conditions of vulnerability, when people are exposed to lies or compulsion due to economic desperation, are ideal for exploitation. Traffickers posing as employment facilitators may prey on migrant workers traveling overseas or relocating within the nation. Due in part to persisting cultural and social biases that restrict their access to social protections and economic opportunities, women and girls are disproportionately victims of sexual exploitation. It is crucial to address these underlying factors in addition to providing urgent law enforcement and survivor support. Given that traffickers act internationally and take advantage of weaknesses in legal systems and enforcement, international collaboration is essential. It is strategically necessary for Pakistan to cooperate with its neighbors, including Afghanistan, Iran, and India. Coordinated survivor care programs can reduce the impunity of trafficking networks, synchronize legal measures, intelligence sharing, and joint investigations. The foundation for long-lasting, transnational responses is laid by the pledges made by the international community, which are backed by institutions such as the International Labour Organization, UNODC, and numerous civil society organizations. The overarching message is that fighting human trafficking is a complex issue that calls for consistent commitment, a solid body of evidence, judicial integrity, survivor-centered support and cross-sector collaborations. This is important for politicians, advocates and the general public.

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Briefs

Pakistan indebted...

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He lamented the ongoing "inhumane massacres" in Gaza and Palestine, stating that those who seek security through bloodshed will never achieve their goals and will eventually be held accountable. He expressed unwavering support for the Palestinian people, who have bravely held on to their land despite enduring countless attacks. President Erdoğan also called for a united "front for humanity" to establish lasting peace and stability in the region. He thanked all those who have spoken out against the atrocities in Gaza and reaffirmed Türkiye's commitment to standing with the oppressed against the oppressor, regardless of their faith or location. The message concluded with a tribute to Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the martyrs and veterans who sacrificed their lives for the nation's freedom and future. The event underscored the strong political, military, and diplomatic bonds between Pakistan and Türkiye, which are rooted in a shared history and mutual support.

Naqvi, US Envoy...

FROM PAGE 01
expand collaboration in border security, counter-narcotics operations, coast guard capabilities, and forensic sciences, aiming to build more robust institutional linkages between the two countries. Chargé d'Affaires Baker expressed her condolences over the tragic loss of lives and property caused by the recent floods in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, extending the sympathies of the American people to those affected. During the talks, Minister Naqvi welcomed U.S. President Donald Trump's recent remarks on working jointly with Pakistan to increase oil reserves, describing the statement as a "positive and encouraging development." He emphasized that Pakistan offers significant opportunities for American investors, particularly in the energy sector, and assured that the government would provide every possible facilitation to U.S. businesses seeking to invest in Pakistan. "American investors can greatly benefit from investment prospects in oil and other key sectors. The Government of Pakistan is committed to ensuring that they are fully supported," Naqvi stated. Chargé d'Affaires Baker reaffirmed that the United States attaches "special importance" to its relationship with Pakistan and expressed Washington's willingness to deepen cooperation in both economic and security domains. The meeting was also attended by Federal Interior Secretary Muhammad Khurram Agha and Additional Interior Secretary Major General Noor Wali Khan, underscoring the significance of the dialogue for future collaboration.

PM to attend..

FROM PAGE 01
commemorating the 80th anniversary of the World's Anti-Fascist War, alongside President Xi and other world leaders. The prime minister is further scheduled to interact with leading Chinese businessmen and executives to enhance trade, investment, and economic ties, and address the Pakistan-China B2B Investment Conference in Beijing. The Foreign Office said the visit is part of high-level exchanges aimed at deepening the "All Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership," advancing the second phase of CPEC, and maintaining regular communication on key regional and global issues. The three-day important 25th meeting of SCO Heads of States is planned for 31 August, September 1 and 2. This year's summit will be the largest since the SCO was founded in 2001, a Chinese foreign ministry official said last week, calling the bloc an "important force in building a new type of international relations". Among the attendees at SCO summit, set to take place in the northern port city of Tianjin from August 31 to September 1, will be Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alongside leaders from Central Asia, the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.

Pakistan to play in hockey Pro-league for the first time

Pakistan will join Argentina, Australia, Belgium, England, Germany, India, Netherlands, and Spain in the upcoming men's season of the FIH Hockey Pro League – the seventh edition of the competition. They will replace Ireland who were relegated at the end of the previous season, following their ninth-place finish in the league

DNA

BERN: The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has confirmed that the Pakistan men's hockey team, nicknamed the Green Shirts, have accepted the invitation to participate in the upcoming 2025-26 season of the FIH Hockey Pro League. Pakistan were promoted through the FIH Hockey Nations Cup played in Malaysia earlier this year. Whilst New Zealand won that event against Pakistan in the final, Hockey New Zealand later indicated that the Black Sticks would not proceed with the invitation to join Pro League this time. Therefore, as stipulated in the regulations, FIH extended the invitation to the runners-up, namely Pakistan, who have confirmed their participation. FIH President Tayyab Ikram said: "Great to see Pakistan back in elite competition – this is a truly impactful milestone for world hockey. Their return marks not only the comeback of a team with such a rich and storied history, but also an exciting boost to the visibility



and reach of the FIH Hockey Pro League. I can already anticipate an enhanced visibility of the Pro League with Pakistan's participation. Congratulations to the Pakistan men's team for qualifying through the FIH Hockey Nations Cup and earning their place in the 'League of the Best' for the very first time. This achievement is a strong example of how creating more opportunities at every level of our sport fosters growth and provides a natural pathway to the very top."

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Ronaldo Stays Front and Center as Saudi League Kicks Off

The Portuguese star joined the Saudi Pro League in December 2022, other big names followed after him

SPORT DESK

ABU DHABI: Ronaldo is still a name above all others when attention turns to the Saudi football league's season-opening round. Just like it was earlier this month when more than 30,000 fans turned out in Hong Kong to watch Al-Nassr defeat Al-Ittihad 2-1 in the first semifinal of the Saudi Super Cup on Aug. 19, he's part of the league's growth and marketing plans. "The majority can only be described as Cristiano Ronaldo fans," Chris KL Lau, a Hong Kong resident and fan, told The Associated Press. "The match had an electric buzz and each time Ronaldo had the ball there was excitement." The Portuguese star was mobbed the following day when he visited the city's official

Cristiano Ronaldo museum. "Fans have traveled from across China, Saudi Arabia and the Asia-Pacific to see

him," Lau said. After Ronaldo left Manchester United and joined the Saudi Pro League in



December 2022, other big names followed to Riyadh, Jeddah and elsewhere, including Karim Benzema, Neymar and Riyad Mahrez. The 'Big Four' – Al-Nassr, Ittihad as well as Al-Hilal and Al-Ahli – were taken over by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund in 2023 and have budgets as big as ambitions. The league season kicked off Thursday with three games. Ronaldo's Al-Nassr opens Friday against Al-Taawoun. While the five-time Ballon d'Or winner is still the international face of the league, backers are working to expand the reach of the league. But the importance of Ronaldo's presence was evident in the second game at Hong Kong Stadium between Al-Ahli and Al-Qadisiyah, when organizers announced a crowd of 16,000.

Giannis Shines as Greece Wins, Poland Tops Slovenia in EuroBasket Openers

DNA

LIMASSOL: American-born guard Jordan Loyd hit seven 3-pointers and finished with 32 points to help Poland outlast Slovenia and Los Angeles Lakers star Luka Dončić 105-95 Thursday in both teams' EuroBasket opener. Loyd's efforts spoiled a strong effort by Dončić, the slimmed-down NBA star, who finished with 34 points and nine rebounds in the Group D matchup in Katowice, Poland. Poland led 47-46 at the half, then outscored Slovenia 33-23 in the third quarter to take control. Fellow NBA and Milwaukee Bucks star Giannis Antetokounmpo had a much easier outing, scoring 31 points in 29 minutes for Greece as they downed Italy 75-66 in Group C in Limassol, Cyprus. Greece shot 62 percent from the field and hit seven 3s in the victory. In another Group C matchup, Toronto Raptors forward Sandro Mamukelashvili scored 19 points to lead Georgia to an 83-69 upset victory over defending champions Spain. Mamukelashvili added seven rebounds and six assists as Georgia outperformed Spain 46-29. Spain shot poorly in a disjointed performance – only making 6 of 13 free throws – but still only trailed 61-58 in the fourth quarter when Georgia went on an 11-2 run to take a decisive lead. American-born guard Kamar Baldwin had 12 points for Georgia, including a 3-pointer in the final seconds. Juancho Hernangomez led Spain with 13 points in the Group C game at Spyros Kyprianou Arena. "They deserved to win. They played way better. They played more physically than us," Hernangomez said.

Pak-China agricultural cooperation makes breakthrough in sugarcane research

ISLAMABAD: China-Pakistan agricultural cooperation has delivered breakthroughs in sugarcane research, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday. Dr. Talha Javed and Dr. Faisal Mehdi, two Pakistani experts at the Institute of Tropical Bioscience and Biotechnology, Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS), have achieved the breakthroughs in sugarcane molecular breeding and disease resistance research respectively, injecting new impetus into the collaborative innovation between the two countries in the tropical agricultural sector. In the realm of sugarcane molecular breeding, Dr. Talha Javed and his team verified the function of the PR1 gene (SnpPR1.04) and cultivated two transgenic ROC22 seedlings carrying this gene through an Agrobacterium-mediated transformation system, laying a crucial foundation for the development of disease-resistant sugarcane varieties. Additionally, via transcriptome sequencing, the team further uncovered the activation mechanism of defense responses mediated by PR1 expression. Meanwhile, in the sugarcane disease resistance research project led by Dr. Faisal Mehdi, after treatment with endophytes, the growth status and photosynthetic rate of sugarcane improved significantly, while its antioxidant activity and hydrolase activity were greatly enhanced, effectively boosting crop's stress resistance. – APP

PFF name squad for AFC U23 Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has announced the national squad for AFC U23 Asian Cup 2026 Saudi Arabia Qualifiers to be held in Cambodia. Under the guidance of Head Coach Nolberto Solano, the squad features a mix of talented players ready to compete at the international level, said a press release. The final travelling squad comprises 23 players. Goalkeeper: Adam Najeeb, Hassan Ali, Umair Arooj; Forwards: Mkeal Abdullah, Umair Bahader, Furqan Umer, Ali Raza, Suleman Ali, Adeel Younas; Midfielder: Tufail Khan, Hayyaan Khattak, Muhammad Junaid, Ali Zafar, Adnan Justin. – APP

Afridi, Younis, Akhtar Join Zalmi for Flood Relief Match

Zalmi Chairman Javed Afridi said the initiative reflects cricket's power to unite in times of crisis. This is more than just a match – it is our duty to stand with those affected

PESHAWAR: Some of Pakistan's biggest cricketing names, including Shahid Afridi, Younis Khan and Shoaib Akhtar, will take the field in the upcoming Flood Relief Exhibition Match organised by Peshawar Zalmi in support of victims of the recent floods in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The fixture, scheduled for August 30 at the Imran Khan Cricket Stadium, is being staged under the slogan "Khel Se Khidmat" (Service through Sports) in collaboration with the Directorate General of Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the provincial government. The 22-member roster boasts a mix of current stars and legendary figures. Alongside Afridi, Younis, and Akhtar, the lineup features Babar Azam, Mohammad Hafeez, Inzamam-ul-Haq, Rashid Latif, and Azhar Ali. Former fast-bowling greats Waqar Younis and Mohammad Irfan, as well as all-rounder Azhar Mahmood, are also set to participate. Fans can also expect a stellar spin department with Saeed Ajmal, Yasir Shah, Abdul Rehman, and Zulfiqar Babar among those confirmed. Peshawar Zalmi will take on Legends XI in what promises to be one of the most high-profile charity fixtures seen in recent years. All proceeds from ticket sales will go directly towards flood relief and rehabilitation efforts across the province. Zalmi Chairman Javed Afridi said the initiative reflects cricket's power to unite in times of crisis. "This is more than just a match – it is our duty to stand with those affected. Cricket has always been a unifying force, and through this event, we aim to turn passion into meaningful support," he said. Provincial Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhar Jahan praised the initiative, calling it "a reflection of empathy and solidarity with those who have suffered due to the floods." Organisers expect the event to draw a full house, with fans not only witnessing a rare gathering of cricket icons but also contributing directly to rebuilding lives and communities. – APP

RISJA to organise capacity-building workshops

The decision was taken at the General Council meeting of RISJA, held at the National Press Club, Islamabad, under the chairmanship of President Abubakar bin Tallat

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Aiming to enhance the professional growth of sports journalists, the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Sports Journalists Association (RISJA) has announced capacity-building workshops and upcoming sports activities as part of its future roadmap. The decision was taken at the General Council meeting of RISJA, held at the National Press Club, Islamabad, under the chairmanship of President Abubakar bin Tallat. During the session, General Secretary Arslan Shirazi presented a detailed briefing on the association's quarterly performance report, while members held in-depth discussions on the roadmap for the upcoming quarter. The planned workshops will focus on improving journalistic skills, including modern reporting techniques, digital media training, and ethical standards in sports journalism. In addition, RISJA intends to organize friendly sporting events for its members to promote fitness, teamwork, and a healthy lifestyle within the journalist community. The house congratulated senior member and RISJA Patron Abdul Mohi Shah on his nomination for the Presidential Award (Tamgha-i-Imtiaz). Members also

expressed gratitude to the federal government, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination, Cabinet Division,

Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme, and other stakeholders for their continued support of RISJA's initiatives, expressing hope that this cooperation

would further strengthen in the future. A large number of members attended the meeting and shared valuable suggestions regarding organizational affairs.



Pakistani businessman brings taste of home to Khunjerab Pass

ISLAMABAD: As summer tourism peaks from June to August, Pakistani businessman Rahber Khan is seeing brisk business at his small restaurant perched on the China-Pakistan border.

According to Gwadar Pro, from 9 a.m. to noon, the Eagle Nest Coffee Room serves a fusion of Pakistani and Chinese dishes. "We want to mix both cuisines," Khan said. "I offer special service and even show customers how we Pakistani people enjoy our meals." Khan has been running his restaurant since 2012. Originally from Hunza, a town near the border, he says the warm welcome from local people in Xinjiang has been key to his success.

"People here are very kind, especially the Tajik community. They respect and support us a lot," he noted. With similar tastes for beef, lamb and hearty dishes, Khan feels at home in the region. "Life here is very comfortable for me and my family. Pakistan is my first home, but my second home is China," he said proudly. "I've built a new house, my four children are in universities, and I feel lucky to support them through this business." The Khunjerab Pass, the only land border crossing between China and Pakistan, has long been a vital trade artery along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Once open only eight months a year due to snow and altitude, it became a year-round crossing in December 2024, giving merchants like Khan greater opportunities. – APP

Govt to provide help in missing persons' case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Friday constituted a special committee to provide legal aid to address the issues of families of missing persons, a press release said. The committee aims to provide legal aid to those families whose cases are being investigated by the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances (COIOED) in family law-related matters. The commission was set up in 2011 to trace the missing persons and fix responsibility on the individuals or organisations responsible. In the first half of 2025, a total of 125 missing persons cases were submitted there. "The families of missing persons having any such issue, especially relating to National Database and Registration Authority regarding issuance of Computerised National Identity Card/Form-B for various purposes, may submit their grievances, in writing, to the Special Committee through any mode of communication, including email (coioed@gmail.com) or WhatsApp (0321-5101070), followed by submission of hard copies," the press release read. It added that the families could also visit and meet COIOED Islamabad Assistant Registrar Saadia Rashid at the Directorate General Civil Defence Building on any working day for submission and discussion on their issues.

JI Senator to lead delegation to Gaza

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former JI senator Mushtaq Ahmed Khan leading Pakistani delegation on Global Sumud Flotilla Former Jamaat-i-Islami senator Mushtaq Ahmed Khan, who is leading Pakistan's delegation on the Global Sumud Flotilla for Gaza, has made remarks before departing for Tunisia. In a video on X, he appeals to the Pakistani government to "expedite visas for the members of his delegation", to the ulema to raise the issue of Gaza in their sermons and to the Tunisian government to allow the delegation members entry. "I urge the citizens of Tunis to stage massive protests in their city on September 4, to increase pressure on the government to help the people of Gaza," the former senator said.

Briefs

Rupee gains
03 paise
against US
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Friday appreciated by 03 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 281.77 against the previous day's closing of Rs281.80. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 282.8 and Rs 283.6, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by 94 paise to close at Rs328.88 against the last day's closing of Rs327.94, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.91, while the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of 17 paise to close at Rs380.06 against the last day's closing of Rs380.23. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham decreased by 01 paise to close at Rs 76.71, while the Saudi Riyal stood stagnant and closed at Rs 75.09, respectively.—APP

Gold price ups
by Rs 1,200
per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs1,200 and was traded at Rs.363,800 on Friday against its sale at Rs362,600 the previous day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also increased by Rs. 943 to Rs.311,814 from Rs. 310,871 whereas that of 10 grams of 22 karat gold went up by Rs.864 to Rs285,839 from Rs 284,975. The rates of per tola and ten gram silver remained stagnant at Rs.4,121 and Rs 3,533 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$12 to \$3,411 from \$3,399 whereas the rates of silver in international market remained constant at \$38.88, the Association reported.—APP

Besieged
Sudan city
faces fiercest
paramilitary
assault yet

AL-FASHIR, Sudan: In a Sudanese city long besieged by paramilitary forces, the war has taken an even more violent and terrifying turn, leaving residents facing hunger and death with little chance of escaping. The paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), at war with the regular army since April 2023, has launched its fiercest assault to date on El-Fasher, the only major city in the western Darfur region still in army hands.

Witnesses, volunteer groups and aid workers have reported in recent weeks intensifying RSF bombardment of El-Fasher and a nearby displacement camp, with relentless artillery fire, drone strikes and ground incursions.

The United Nations says El-Fasher, the North Darfur state capital where about 300,000 people live, has become an "epicenter of child suffering." Those able to escape the increasingly unlivable city have said the road out is lined with dead bodies.

Mohamed Khamis Doua, a humanitarian worker who fled to El-Fasher in April from the Zamzam displacement camp, said the city faces "famine and other disasters." He told AFP that disease is rampant, clean water is gone and medicine is unavailable, impacting especially the many wounded by shrapnel or gunfire.

"We're pleading with all parties to intervene, stop the fighting and help save the lives of those still left." El-Fasher, which the RSF has besieged since May 2024, is effectively sealed off — no aid, no trade and hardly any way out. Constant bombardment and restricted communications make it nearly impossible to share images of life inside El-Fasher, and residents say filming certain areas exposes them to attacks. Rare footage obtained by AFP shows children crouched around a single pot of food in a smoke-filled communal kitchen, their faces gaunt and expressionless.—APP

Top business leaders unveil roadmap for economic revival

Patron-in-Chief of United Business Group (UBGS) SM Tanveer said that decentralization and strengthening the district industrial unit are pivotal for sustainable economic development in the country

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: A high-profile press conference was held at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), jointly addressed by leading figures of Pakistan's business community, including S. M. Tanveer, Patron-in-Chief United Business Group (UBG), Atif Ikram Shaikh, President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), and Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President ICCI. The event was conducted by Malik Sohail Hussain, Chairman Coordination FPCCI, and attended by prominent business leaders, former ICCI presidents, and senior FPCCI officials. Addressing the media, Patron-in-Chief UBG S. M. Tanveer said that "Pakistan is a blessing of Allah and we are determined to work alongside the government to ensure its prosperity and development while enhancing its stature in the comity of nations." He stressed that every division and district of the country has an export potential of at least \$5 billion, which, if tapped effectively, can help

Pakistan expand its exports to \$200 billion. Paying glowing tributes to the armed forces, particularly the Pakistan Air Force, Mr. Tanveer remarked that "we have already won the 'Marka-e-Haq,' and now we are fully committed to winning the 'Marka-e-Maeshat' (economic battle)." He highlighted that with Pakistan's GDP at \$412 billion compared to India's \$4 trillion, China's \$19 trillion, and the USA's \$29 trillion, it was imperative to harness local resources, particularly in exports, agriculture, and industry. He noted that there is little to no value addition in the agriculture sector and announced that FPCCI will present a six-year roadmap for agricultural reforms within the next two months. He also voiced concern over the deterioration of the textile sector and pointed out that Pakistan wastes water worth \$25 billion annually. Mr. Tanveer called for reducing the interest rate to single digits, ideally 6%, to stimulate industrial and investment growth. On the economic front, he described the \$40 billion trade deficit, unemployment, inflation, rapid population growth, and poverty

as "ticking bombs," stressing that only united and dedicated efforts can help the country overcome these challenges. Speaking on the occasion, FPCCI President Atif Ikram Shaikh outlined FPCCI's Vision 2030, aimed at boosting exports to \$100 billion in the near term. He said that FPCCI's Research and Development (R&D) department has worked extensively on district and sectoral economies, preparing a roadmap to empower divisions and districts. "If each of the country's 38 divisions is given a \$5 billion export target, achieving \$200 billion in exports is possible," he asserted. Mr. Atif Ikram urged the government to take FPCCI's proposals seriously, adding that "FPCCI has always played on the front foot for national economic causes and will continue to do so with full dedication." In his welcome address, ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi reaffirmed the collective resolve of the business community to support reforms for sustainable economic growth. "We acknowledge the challenges our economy faces, but we firmly believe that with the right reforms, policy consistency

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Macron backs
Lebanese sovereignty

DUBAI: French President Emmanuel Macron reaffirmed France's support for Lebanese sovereignty and security on Friday, following a deadly Israeli drone strike that killed two Lebanese soldiers in the southern town of Naqoura earlier on Thursday. In a statement posted on X, Macron said he had spoken with Lebanon's President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam to discuss the country's security situation and the path forward. The French president praised Lebanon's efforts to reassert state authority on arms and announced new diplomatic initiatives to support stability and reconstruction. "I commended the courageous decisions taken by the Lebanese executive to restore the state's monopoly on the use of force," Macron said, urging the Lebanese government to adopt a national plan expected to be presented to the Cabinet in the coming days. He reiterated that any successful stabilization plan must include the "complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon and an end to all violations of Lebanese sovereignty." "France has consistently stated its readiness to play a role in the handover of the remaining positions still occupied by Israel," he said. The plan Macron referred to is understood to involve efforts to disarm non-state actors operating along the southern border, particularly Hezbollah, and strengthen the presence of the Lebanese Armed Forces in coordination with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon. UNIFIL's mandate was renewed unanimously by the UN Security Council this week, a move Macron called an "important signal."—APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, chairs a meeting with Dr. Sajid Ali, Country Representative of CIMMYT Pakistan, to discuss collaboration on improving wheat yields and ensuring food security.

Pakistan rice road
show 2025 launches,
strengthening trade ties

ISLAMABAD: Following the successful first leg of the Pakistan Rice Road Show 2025 in Accra, Ghana, the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) officially launched the second phase today in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. This landmark two-day event at the Novotel Plateau Hotel brings together 28 of Pakistan's top rice exporting companies to showcase their premium Basmati and affordable milled rice offerings to prospective Ivorian buyers and importers, said release issued here on Friday. In a video address to the gathering, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan emphasized that these road shows are about building enduring partnerships rather than mere trade transactions. The minister highlighted that Pakistan, as the world's fourth-largest rice exporter producing over nine million metric tons annually, is well-positioned to address West Africa's growing rice needs through consistent supply, competitive pricing, and high-quality varieties. He noted that Pakistani rice exports, valued at over US\$ 4 billion in 2023-24 and reaching more than 100 countries globally, demonstrate the country's capacity to serve as a reliable partner for West African food security. Mahmood Akhtar Mahmood, Ambassador of Pakistan to Côte d'Ivoire, positioned Pakistan's mission as a vital bridge between Côte d'Ivoire and Pakistani exporters. The Ambassador emphasized Pakistan's unique position in the global rice market, noting the country's 8% share in global rice trade and its status as the major exporter of brown Basmati rice worldwide. He highlighted Pakistan's robust agricultural sector that cultivates rice across 3.35 million hectares with an exportable surplus capacity of 6 million metric tons that can comfortably meet the combined import needs of Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal.—APP

FPCCI welcomes Thomas
E. Schultze as the Consul
General of Germany

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has said that the newly-appointed Consul General of Germany in Karachi, H. E. Mr. Thomas Eberhard Schultze, has apprised the business, industry and trade community from the apex platform of FPCCI that the business visas will be given priority in the visa issuance to Pakistani citizens as economic relations top the agenda. Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh stressed that Pakistan has the world's best textiles and related products; and Germany should welcome the textile exporters of Pakistan through trade fairs and exhibitions – and, facilitate greater market access to them. It is pertinent to note that senior German diplomat visited FPCCI Head Office, Federation House Karachi, to attend a high-profile, interactive and consultative session with the business community. H. E. Mr. Thomas Eberhard Schultze, German Consul General in Karachi, stated that Pakistan is an important market for the German companies as it has a large middle-class with reasonable purchasing power; and, German companies have a long-established presence in the region; which dates back to over 100 years. He also expressed his optimism that Pakistani visa applicants have increased a lot in the recent years. Ambassador Schultze continued that collective efforts are required to increase the numbers vis-à-vis bilateral trade, investments, JVs, industrial collaborations and other areas of economic relations. He also shed light on the geoeconomic position of Pakistan at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, Middle-east and Europe. Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, invited the business community and chambers of Germany to be their partner in growth and development of Pakistan; whereas, he outlined the principle objective of FPCCI's Vision 2030 as achieving \$100 billion in annual exports for the country. He put forward the top areas of B2B cooperation as startups, research & development, women empowerment, vocational training and facilitation of business tourism. Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon expressed his pleasure that the German Consulate has appointed a prominent woman member of FPCCI, Ms. Sahibzadi Mahin Khan, as their focal person on trade and investment for Sindh and Balochistan region. Mr. Hanif Gohar, former SVP FPCCI and currently the Chairman of FPCCI's Central Standing Committee on Diplomatic Affairs, requested that the German consulate should issue long-term visas to the business community after due diligence of their papers as it can result in enhanced collaborative partnerships between the private-sectors of two countries. Additionally, he proposed that Pakistan has a large, young and skilled pool of human resources; which can be employed across various industries, sectors and regions of Germany. Ms. Sahibzadi Mahin Khan, Convener of FPCCI's Central Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Trade and Investment, acknowledged that German Consulate has always been supportive of initiatives of women empowerment in the country.—DNA

Pak Heritage Day marked at
Gracie Mansion, New York

DNA

NEW YORK: The Consul General of Pakistan in New York, Mr. Aamer Ahmed Atozai, and Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, attended the historic observance of Pakistan Heritage Day hosted for the first time by the Mayor's Office at Gracie Mansion, the official residence of the Mayor of New York City. The event was graced by Honorable Mayor Eric Adams, senior city and state officials, political leaders, diplomats, and a large number of prominent Pakistani-American community members. A moment of silence was observed in remembrance of the victims of recent floods in Pakistan. In his remarks, Consul General Atozai expressed appreciation to Mayor Adams for recognizing the contributions of the Pakistani-American community and for celebrating Pakistan Heritage Day. He underscored that Pakistan's heritage is not only rooted in its independence in 1947 but also in its ancient civilizations, pluralistic traditions, and cultural richness that continue to inspire the world. He highlighted the role of the Pakistani-American community as an integral part of New York's civic and economic fabric, excelling in diverse fields



including medicine, academia, technology, public service, and the arts. Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad in his address congratulated the community on Pakistan's 78th Independence Day and commended their role in strengthening Pakistan-U.S. relations. He reiterated that Pakistan is fully capable of defending its sovereignty while continuing to work for peace, progress, and mutual cooperation with the international community.

Both Pakistani envoys conveyed deep gratitude to the Mayor's Office for International Affairs, led by Commissioner Aissata Camara, for its unwavering support to the Pakistani-American community and for making the landmark celebration of Pakistan Heritage Day possible. In his address, Mayor Eric Adams congratulated the Pakistani-American community on the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan and praised their outstanding contributions to New York City's social, cultural, and economic life. He reaffirmed his administration's commitment to strengthening the city's engagement with all global communities, including the vibrant Pakistani diaspora. The event concluded with reaffirmation of the enduring bonds of friendship between Pakistan and the United States and recognition of the Pakistani-American community as a vital bridge between the two nations.

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More than
800 Iraqis
repatriated from
notorious Syria
camp Follow

DAMASCUS: More than 800 Iraqi nationals left northeast Syria's Al-Hol camp on Thursday, the facility's director told AFP, the latest batch to quit the notorious camp that holds suspected relatives of Daesh group fighters. Jihan Hanan, director of the Kurdish-administered camp, said that "there are approximately 850 people departing today." She added that since the start of the year, about 10,000 Iraqis have left Al-Hol in 11 batches. Kurdish-run camps and prisons in Syria's northeast hold tens of thousands of people, many with alleged or perceived links to IS, more than six years after the group's territorial defeat in Syria. Al-Hol is northeast Syria's largest camp, and its residents have been living in dire conditions. Umm Mahmud, 60, an Iraqi woman departing the camp, told AFP: "We've suffered greatly in Al-Hol, psychologically, physically and financially." "Look at the children, look how happy they are. It's like a holiday," she said. Hanan said the camp now housed approximately 27,000 people, including some 15,000 Syrians and about 6,300 foreign women and children from 42 nationalities, in addition to some 5,000 Iraqis. While many Western countries refuse to take back their nationals, Baghdad has taken the lead by accelerating repatriations and urging others to follow suit.—APP

UAE opens
Gaza water
pipeline

DUBAI: The UAE on Friday inaugurated a 7.5-km pipeline that will deliver desalinated water from Emirati desalination plants in Egypt to the Gaza Strip. It will provide relief to Palestinian families who have endured a severe shortage of drinking water since the Israel-Hamas war began in late 2023.

The pipeline, built under the UAE's Operation Chivalrous Knight 3, has a capacity of about 2 million gallons per day, serving about 1 million people.

It is connected to the Al-Bu-raq reservoir in Khan Younis, with a capacity of 5,000 cubic meters, ensuring additional areas gain access to clean water, state news agency WAM reported.

The UAE has previously established six desalination plants, provided reservoirs and tankers, and maintained wells for Palestinians in Gaza, WAM added.

The UAE is also cooperating with other countries and organizations, including Jordan and Indonesia, to conduct airdrops under the Birds of Goodness operation, delivering essential food supplies for the people of Gaza.—APP

Lebanon says
Israeli drone
explodes after
crash, killing
two soldiers

BEIRUT: Lebanon's army said two personnel were killed Thursday after an Israeli drone that had crashed in the country's south exploded, the latest deadly incident for Lebanese troops near the Israeli border.

Under a November ceasefire that sought to end more than a year of hostilities including two months of open war between Israel and Hezbollah, Lebanon's army has been deploying in the country's south and dismantling the Iran-backed group's infrastructure there with the support of UN peacekeepers.

"While army personnel were inspecting an Israeli enemy drone after it fell in the Naqura area, it exploded, leading to the death of an officer and a soldier and wounding two other personnel," the army said in a statement.

President Joseph Aoun said in a statement that "the army is once again paying in blood the price of maintaining stability in the south."

He said it was the fourth deadly incident for the army since it began deploying in south Lebanon after the ceasefire. Earlier this month, six Lebanese soldiers were killed in a blast at a weapons depot near the border that a military source said belonged to Hezbollah. Aoun noted Thursday's incident coincided with the United Nations Security Council's extension of the UN peacekeeping force's mandate ahead of its withdrawal at the end of 2027.—APP

Briefs

India's powerful Hindu group chief urges three-child families

At 1.46 billion, India is world's most populous nation but total fertility rate drops to less than two children per woman

NEW DELHI: The head of India's powerful Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh (RSS) said that Indian families must have three children each, warning about the long-term risks from the current trend of declining birth rates.

At 1.46 billion, India is the world's most populous nation but the total fertility rate has dropped to less than two children per woman, according to the UN Population Fund's 2025 report, as economic growth gathers momentum.

Mohan Bhagwat, chief of the RSS that is the ideological parent of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, said the population must remain "controlled, yet sufficient".

Speaking at a lecture to mark the 100 years of the founding of the RSS on Thursday, Bhagwat suggested that "in the national interest, every family should have three children and limit themselves to that".

His call for larger families reflects anxiety among nationalist leaders and some regional politicians about long-term demographic stability, national capacity, and cultural identity. — Agencies

PDMA DG urges residents to act promptly on evacuation calls

ISLAMABAD: PDMA DG Irfan Ali Kathia said Friday that ensuring public safety is the Punjab government's main focus under the CM's instructions, with all stakeholders actively engaged, and urged people in South Punjab, especially near Nankana and Trimmu Barrage to comply with evacuation calls due to rising water levels.

In an exclusive interview with a local news channel, PDMA DG Irfan Ali Kathia discussed the unprecedented flood situation caused by the rising water levels in the three major rivers. He emphasized that despite the severe conditions, the provincial government, along with cabinet members, political parties and district administrations have been working in perfect coordination to manage the crisis. This super flood, which has not been seen in the past 38 years, is being handled with careful deliberation, he noted.

DG Kathia expressed deep concern over the loss of lives, with reports confirming 20 fatalities, but he clarified that there was no administrative negligence. — APP

UN chief renews call for immediate ceasefire in Gaza

NEW YORK: UN Secretary-General António Guterres reiterated his call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in the Gaza war as he condemned what he described as an "endless catalogue of horrors" in the strip. "Gaza is piled with rubble, piled with bodies, and piled with examples of what may be serious violations of international law," Guterres said. "The levels of death and destruction in Gaza are without parallel in recent times. Famine is no longer a looming possibility — it is a present-day catastrophe. People are dying from hunger. Families are being torn apart by displacement and despair," he added. He called for an immediate and permanent ceasefire and the release of all Israeli captives. Safe, unfettered humanitarian access to reach the most vulnerable families is the top priority right now, World Food Programme Executive Director Cindy McCain said after visiting the Gaza Strip where she witnessed firsthand immense destruction and desperation. — APP

Vietnam envoy calls for stronger trade, cooperation with Pakistan

Ambassador Tuan recalled the historic declaration of independence by President Ho Chi Minh on September 2, 1945, which paved the way for Vietnam's journey of self-determination



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan, Pham Anh Tuan, has reaffirmed his country's commitment to expanding bilateral ties with Pakistan, particularly in the areas of trade, investment, and people-to-people exchanges. Speaking at a reception to mark the 80th National Day of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Ambassador welcomed the Chief Guest, Minister of State for Finance and Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani, senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, members of the diplomatic corps, and distinguished guests. Heads of ASEAN countries along with other distinguished guests

graced the stage with their presence.

Ambassador Tuan recalled the historic declaration of independence by President Ho Chi Minh on September 2, 1945, which paved the way for Vietnam's journey of self-determination. Highlighting the country's progress since the introduction of the Đổi Mới (Renovation) policy in 1986, he noted Vietnam's transformation into a dynamic developing economy with a GDP of \$475 billion in 2024, a growth rate of 7.1 percent, and a global leadership role in exports of pepper, cashew nuts, rice, coffee, textiles, and seafood. He also pointed to Vietnam's rising profile in the digital economy, with software and IT service exports surpassing \$11 billion in 2024, making the country a hub

for outsourcing and digital investment.

Turning to bilateral relations, Ambassador Tuan said Vietnam and Pakistan have enjoyed 53 years of diplomatic ties, which have grown across politics, trade, and cultural cooperation. He revealed that two-way trade reached \$850 million in 2024 and is expected to cross \$1 billion by 2025.

A significant step forward, he said, was taken at the 5th Meeting of the Pakistan-Vietnam Joint Trade Committee in Hanoi in July 2025, where both sides agreed to start negotiations for a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) this year.

The envoy proposed enhanced cooperation through trade fairs, exhibitions, and investment forums, and expressed readiness to facilitate Pakistani businessmen in Viet-

nam. He highlighted Pakistan's strengths in cotton, pharmaceuticals, and surgical instruments, while noting Vietnam's strong exports of tea, rubber, pepper, dry nuts, textiles, chemicals, and IT products.

"Together, we can deepen our economic partnership for mutual benefit," he said, adding that Vietnam values the continued support of Pakistan and the international community. The evening also featured various cultural performances, which the guests enjoyed greatly, adding color and warmth to the celebrations. The Ambassador concluded by reaffirming Vietnam's dedication to peace, friendship, and development, expressing hope that relations between the two countries would continue to flourish.

Fault at Ravi headworks in India triggers flooding in Lahore

India fails to notify Pakistan about surge in Ravi River or reported technical issue with Madhopur Headworks

LAHORE: Flooding struck large swathes of land in the country, especially parts of Lahore, after a technical fault developed at the Ravi headworks in India, causing a surge of water downstream that worsened the flood situation in low-lying areas, The News reported on Friday citing officials. What is even more alarming is that India failed to notify Pakistan about the floods in the Ravi River or inform authorities regarding the technical issue with the Madhopur Headworks. In light of this emergency situation, the Pakistan's Indus Water commissioner failed to address the urgent matter with India to ensure that such occurrences are managed and preventive measures are established for the future. According to reports, India only shared three flood alerts to Pakistan since Sunday. One was concerning floods in the Tawi, a tributary of the Chenab River, and the other two alerts were related to floods in the Sutlej River. Reportedly, up to four floodgates of the Madhopur Headworks failed, resulting in flooding numerous villages and submerging vast areas of agricultural land. In the backdrop of decades of neglect, the 54 floodgates at Madhopur Headworks have seen minimal upgrades over the years. Situated on the Ravi in the Gurdaspur district near Pathankot

in Indian Punjab, the Madhopur Headworks channels water into the Upper Bari Doab Canal (UBDC) for irrigation in East Punjab, supplying water to Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Tarn Taran and surrounding areas through canals. The mishap triggered water releases reaching 220,000 cusecs at Shahdara near Lahore, inundating vast areas, displacing thousands of people and submerging agricultural lands. According to the Flood Forecasting Division, an exceptionally high flood was being witnessed until Thursday night. Authorities attribute part of the crisis to uncontrolled water flows from India's Madhopur Headworks, where a malfunction led to unabated downstream flooding, heightening risks for Lahore residents.

Even local Indian officials reportedly condemned it as "sheer negligence," calling for accountability and highlighting crores spent annually on upkeep. Repairs are delayed until waters recede, with 55,000 cusecs currently flowing into Pakistan, reports add. The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), governing Indus Basin rivers, requires timely flood data sharing to prevent disasters. In conclusion, this crisis underscores the need for enhanced IWT compliance and climate-resilient infrastructure. With more rains forecast, bilateral dialogue is crucial to avert future escalations.

Hundreds of bureaucrats embezzled BISP funds

85 officers of Grade 20, 630 officers of Grade 19 among those who received payments, discloses BISP secretary

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: A sub-committee of PAC was informed on Thursday that hundreds of government officers and bureaucrats had embezzled funds intended for beneficiaries of BISP. The panel directed that criminal charges be initiated against the officials involved, spanning grades 17 to 22. Chaired by Moin Amir Pirzada, the sub-committee met to review audit objections concerning the Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division, BISP and Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal. Members were told that government employees, pensioners, and even their spouses had unlawfully received BISP

payments. Audit officials said government servants were not eligible to benefit from the programme. The convener questioned why recoveries had not been made so far. The BISP secretary responded that the beneficiaries belonged to different departments and the organisation lacked a recovery mechanism. He disclosed that 85 officers of Grade 20 and 630 officers of Grade 19 were among those who received payments, adding that even Grade 22 officers were on the list, and most of them belonged to the provincial cadres. Expressing outrage, committee members asked why no mechanism for recovery had been developed so far. The secretary of the division admitted that the department lacked such a mechanism. "Don't they feel ashamed of misappropriating a mere seven thousand rupees?" remarked a member in anger. Officials from FIA told the committee that 879 FIRs had been registered and 292 arrests made, while challans had been submitted to the courts.

Pakistani female gets prestigious Japanese award

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: On August 28, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan has announced the conferment of Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendations 2025 upon Ms. Neveen Syed, Chairperson of the Lahore Floritage Sogetsu Study Group in recognition of her significant contributions towards the promotion of cultural relations between Japan and Pakistan. Lahore Floritage Sogetsu Study Group is a cultural organisation of Japanese-style flower arrangement, Ikebana. Ms. Neveen Syed, Chairperson of the Lahore Floritage Sogetsu Study Group, has been working selflessly and with full dedication to spread Japanese culture by providing opportunities to introduce Japanese

culture to Pakistani people by holding Ikebana flower arrangement classes and exhibitions in Pakistan.

H.E. Mr. Akamatsu Shuichi, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, has conveyed his heartfelt congratulations to Ms. Neveen upon the conferment of Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendations for this year which is the acknowledgement of her efforts and dedication towards enhanced cultural relations and people-to-people interactions.

In addition, Ambassador expressed his expectation that Ms. Neveen continues to play an essential role in the promotion of Ikebana in Pakistan and has acted as a bridge of friendship and goodwill between the two countries. The Commendations conferment ceremony will be held later on where Ambassador Akamatsu will confer the Commendations on behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Iran rejects European trio's decision

TEHRAN: Iran warned that the move by the three European countries (France, Britain, and Germany) to trigger UN sanctions mechanism against Tehran will severely undermine the ongoing path of cooperation between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Following the announcement of the activation of the so-called snapback mechanism by the European trio, Iran's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Thursday that this escalation is provocative and unnecessary, warning that it will be met with appropriate responses.

The ministry stressed that the course chosen by the three European states, if not contained, will have serious consequences for the credibility and structure of the UN Security Council. The statement added that the resort to the so-called snapback mechanism, without following the required process and presenting legally grounded evidence, not only undermines trust in the Council's decisions but also endangers international peace and security.

Earlier today, France, Britain, and Germany triggered the mechanism that allows for reimposition of sanctions on Iran over what they described as its failure to meet nuclear commitments. — APP

Pak pushes for swift int'l support to help Haiti

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has called for international support to address Haiti's worsening security situation, amid escalating violence and a humanitarian crisis, while advancing a Haitian-led political process. "Haiti confronts a crisis of extraordinary complexity: governance collapse, rampant criminal networks, and a deepening humanitarian emergency," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, told the UN Security Council on Thursday.

Speaking in a debate on the situation in Haiti, the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, he underscored the need for coordinated international support alongside a Haitian-led and owned process to restore security, advance the political process, rebuild institutions, and expand humanitarian relief. — APP

Sindh preparing to deal with threat of 'super flood'

KARACHI: DSindh Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro has said that the province is preparing for a possible super flood as major rivers across the region continue to swell, posing a serious threat to low-lying areas. Speaking on the morning show Geo Pakistan on Friday, the provincial minister said that the current situation in the Chenab River has not been seen in over a decade. "Such a flood-like situation in Chenab has occurred after 10 to 12 years," he said, adding that 1.1 million cusecs of water are heading towards the Trimmu Barrage. Authorities, the minister said, are closely monitoring the flow of all major rivers, including the Chenab, Ravi, and Sutlej. "We are tracking the river flow carefully and preparing for all scenarios," Shoro emphasised that the option of breaching embankments [bunds] is not on the table. "We do not consider breaching as a viable option," he said, adding that emergency measures are being put in place across all vulnerable areas. Shoro said that provincial ministers have been deployed to monitor embankments, and local commissioners and deputy commissioners have already identified locations for relief camps. — DNA



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